

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item E-1 & E-3
April 29, 2008
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Slesnick Donald D. Slesnick, II

Vice Mayor William H. Kerdyk, Jr.

Commissioner Maria Anderson

Commissioner Rafael "Ralph" Cabrera, Jr.

Commissioner Wayne "Chip" Withers

City Staff

City Manager, David Brown

City Attorney, Elizabeth Hernandez

City Clerk, Walter J. Foeman

City Clerk Staff, Billy Urquia

City Planner, Scot Bolyard

Public Speaker(s)

Time: 1:11:35 p.m.

City Attorney Hernandez: An Ordinance of the City of Coral Gables, Florida, repealing Ordinance No. 1515, relocating a dedicated easement for public use from Lot 10 to 9, Block 17, Industrial Section (Gables Gateway); providing for a repealer provision, a savings clause, a severability clause, providing for codification; and providing for an effective date. (PZB Vote: 5-0) (Passed on First Reading April 8, 2008).

Commissioner Anderson: I'll move it.

Mayor Slesnick: Would you? Okay, it's been moved by Commissioner Anderson...

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: Second.

Mayor Slesnick: Seconded by Commissioner Kerdyk. Would you explain E-3, please?

Scot Bolyard (City Planner, Planning Department): Good afternoon...

Mayor Slesnick: Excuse me...

Mr. Bolyard: I am sorry. Oh, Okay, I am sorry.

Mayor Slesnick: ... I am asking the City Attorney to explain this.

City Attorney Hernandez: Oh, I apologize. E-3 has to do with an amendment to the prior approval of the City Commission dealing with dedicated alley and easement. The property owner requested that the City Commission and the City Commission approved on first reading the relocation of the easement alley.

Mayor Slesnick: Okay, so if we approve E-1, we would move to E-3?

City Attorney Hernandez: Yes, sir.

Mayor Slesnick: Okay, Scot.

Mr. Bolyard: Thank you. Good afternoon, Mr. Mayor, Commissioners. Before you this morning, this afternoon is Gables Gateway project. It was previously heard on April 8th, where it was approved, an ordinance. It was approved on first reading, and we discussed the site plan resolution. At that meeting the Commission requested further information regarding three items. The first of which is the location of bike racks and bike storage. We have provided those locations on Exhibit F, and you see them, you can see the bike rack locations on the first page circled in red, and then the bike storage is located on the third and fourth parking levels. And, the second request is to show the proposed improvements at the intersection of Granello and Greco Avenues. This has been provided as Exhibit G, and along with that is a list of all the required off-site roadway improvements, and the final request was to re-evaluate the loss of on-street parking. Planning held a meeting with the applicant and the directors of parking and public service to determine if any additional on-street parking spaces could be acquired. As a result of the meeting, an alternative plan for on-street parking has been provided and those spaces will remain, providing for a total of nine parking spaces, up from the six which is currently proposed. Planning's recommendation is in favor of the alternative plan with nine proposed on-street parking spaces. And, if you don't have any questions at this point, I will turn it over to the applicant.

Mayor Slesnick: Well, if you hold on.... You addressed the three, could we show those somehow?

Mr. Mario Garcia-Serra: Sure.

Mayor Slesnick: OK.

Mr. Garcia-Serra: Definitely, we will show those graphically now. For the record, Mario Garcia-Serra with offices at 1221 Brickell Avenue, representing the applicant LG Coral Gables, LLC, accompanied today by two of my client's representatives Mr. Joe Wilburn, Mr. Omar Del Rio, as well as Robert Behar and Patrick Darling (phonetic) of Behar Font, the project architect, and Tim Plummer of the David Plummer and Associates, the traffic engineer. The three issues which came up at the April 8th meeting when we had first meeting, which was mentioned by Scot, now can be summarized basically as bicycle racks/bicycle storage, the issue of traffic improvements specifically improvements at the intersection of Granello and Greco Avenues and then the issue of on-street parking and the lost of on-street parking and seeing if we can redesign the plan to save some of those on-street parking spaces. Firstly, with bicycle racks and bicycle storage, Robert, if you can come up here. We have a ground floor plan of the project and Robert is pointing right now to where two bicycle racks will be located, right there at the end close to the drop-off area for the project, and then the third bicycle rack , if you can point that out, down around Ponce.

Commissioner Cabrera: Cool.

Mr. Garcia-Serra: The idea being of course the two bicycle racks are located on the driveway, primarily being used, I suspect by the residents and/or their visitors who are coming to the project because they will enter right through the circular drive area nearer to the main building, and the outside bicycle rack on Ponce being used mainly by clients and customers of the retail which are all going to be accessed from the sidewalk on the outside of the project. Robert, if you can put up... The bicycle storage here where you are watching is where residents store their bicycles for longer periods of time, are going to be located on the third and fourth parking levels. If you could just point out right there Robert where... there you go, very nice. And, on the fourth floor level pretty much the same area just one floor up for the residents also. So, that's bicycle racks and bicycle storage. The next

issue which we will discuss we will go in the order of how controversial or how much discussion they generated was the intersection of Granello and Greco Avenues. If you can get that graphic, I think it might be up against the wall over there. No, no, not yet, right. We are going with that one, yep. Okay, if you could put up the aerial first. The aerial is going to show the eight different traffic improvements which we are doing in connection with this project. The majority of course are in the area around the project site, but if you will remember from when this project first came to you, two years ago, the old Gables Gateway project, we were also requesting to do two improvements in the residential neighborhood to the west, which were left over from the Village of Merrick Park. These were recommendations for the traffic study done for the Village of Merrick Park, but the actual improvements were never done, so we will now be financing and taking care of those improvements which is a round-a-bout and a reconfiguration of the intersection in that residential neighborhood. The...

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: Can I ask you, can I ask you a question Mario, just because you are talking about the impact?-Is this, Does this project, since you started three years ago on it, follow under our new impact, impact's ordinance, impact fee ordinance?

Mr. Garcia-Serra: Since this is a substantial modification to the old project, yes, this project will have to be paying impact fees.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: Okay, and do you know how much that impact fee will ...is?

Mr. Garcia-Serra: The impact fee we estimated... they were over one million dollars, right, Omar? Remember the mosaic it was one point one million, I think around there.

Mr. Omar Del Rio: (inaudible – spoken off the microphone)

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: No, no, no. Believe me, believe me, good try. Good try, that has like no chance, but...

Mr. Garcia-Serra: It's in the vicinity of one million to one million and a half.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: So, by you changing it substantially, you fell into that million impact fee...

Mr. Garcia-Serra: Exactly.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: ... or else it could be a million to a million and a half dollars? Right?

Mr. Garcia-Serra: Exactly, exactly.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: Thank you.

Mr. Garcia-Serra: And now, the particular improvement which was subject of discussion at the last meeting was the intersection of Granello and Greco, we have another graphic on that. And Tim, if you don't mind just give a quick explanation of what's, of what's going on there in that intersection, how we are re-configuring...

Mr. Tim Plummer: (inaudible – off microphone).

Commissioner Cabrera: I thought you stuck around because you wanted one of those water bottles.

Mr. Plummer: (inaudible – off microphone).

Commissioner Cabrera: Yeah, okay.

Mr. Plummer: Thank you, Mario. Tim Plummer, with David Plummer and Associates, 1750 Ponce de Leon Boulevard. From the original project, an improvement came forward from Alberto Delgado regarding the intersection of Granello and Greco; and its main function is to improve its operation and safety. Right now, that's a skewed intersection that Granello... hits Greco, comes in at about a 70 degree angle, we have now changed the direction of it, so that the intersection is a 90 degree angle, so you have better site triangles for on-coming traffic.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: Oh, Okay, excellent.

Mr. Garcia-Serra: Now, the third topic and the one that generated the most discussion was the issue of on-street parking. There we have graphics to

help us also. If you can put up the graphic on the existing situation. Okay. This is the existing situation along our property. You have twenty-two and-a-half on-street parking spaces which are adjacent to our property, and twenty-one of them being on Granello Avenue and then a space and a half on Ponce. There is one space that sort of straddles the property line there; and our proposed plan, the plan that was before you at the last meeting was essentially doing the decrease of sixteen and-a-half parking spaces to six on-street parking spaces. Six of those approximately were being lost as a result of entrances to, to our project entrance and exit spaces; the one on the *paseo*, the pass through at the South, and then also on the North you are losing probably about four spaces there you know, and then on the other parking to the east probably another two spaces there. As a result of the comments at the last meeting, we got together with the Director of Public Service, as well as the Parking Director, had a very animated discussion. Both of those directors, you should be happy to know, very vigorously represented their point of view, a fight over what's better a tree or a parking space, and we ultimately came to a compromise, I think that is acceptable to both all departments involved including the Planning Department also, which increases the number of on-site... on-street parking spaces from six to nine, which is what we have before you. We did not sacrifice any trees as part of this compromise, and it was acceptable to both departments. So, I think, the purpose for City staff right now would probably be to go with the... with the nine proposed parking spaces, but of course...

Commissioner Cabrera: And it's a reduction of what then?

Mr. Garcia-Serra: So then we are going from twenty-two and-a-half to nine, so now we are losing eleven and-a-half spaces.

Commissioner Cabrera: Okay.

Mayor Slesnick: Thirteen, isn't it?

Mr. Garcia-Serra: Wait, wait, wait, my numbers are wrong?

Mayor Slesnick: Twenty-two to nine is thirteen, unless I missed something.

Mr. Garcia-Serra: Twenty-two and-a-half to nine, yes, you are right.

Mayor Slesnick: Right.

Mr. Garcia-Serra: It's a good thing I became a lawyer.

Unidentified Speaker: (Inaudible – spoken off the microphone).

Mr. Garcia-Serra: Sure. Of course, as we discussed at the last meeting, many of the off-street parking spaces are lost because of the landscaping requirements required along the right-of-way. The bulb box that you see there where the trees are planted that is... about six are probably lost because of our access requirements and then the balance, the rest will be lost as a result of our landscaping.

Commissioner Cabrera: I just appreciate the fact that the developing, development team worked with both Parking and Public Service to come up with a compromise, so I very much appreciate those efforts.

Mr. Plummer: Thank you.

Mr. Garcia-Serra: And we thank you, we are happy with the compromise also.

Commissioner Cabrera: I am not happy, but I am very grateful. I am not going to vote down the project because of this, it's too good of a project to do that.

Mr. Garcia-Serra: I appreciate that. (comments made off microphone)

Mr. Garcia-Serra: Understood. (comments made off microphone)

Mayor Slesnick: Any other questions?

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: Yes, I have another question. How did you resolve the issue as far as expediting the permits in lieu of the housing that you, the affordable housing that you are providing?

Mr. Garcia-Serra: Basically, we are asking for some sort of incentive to be provided since we were providing the thirty-five units, which are going to be at attainable rental rates. And, the condition that we have agreed to, basically, is that once plans have been submitted, they can be submitted and reviewed concurrently by all the different departments. So, that the plans

would be split up and then mechanical failures, mechanical reviewers and electrical and so forth, and so that could save some time. And then once we get all those initial rounds of comments from the first round, we basically have certain deadlines which apply; which means that within thirty days we have to submit a revised... We are obligated to submit our revised plans within thirty days. Then as soon as it is submitted to the City again, we would have another thirty days to submit the second rounds of comments. Then after that, each successive round, each of us is obligated to a twenty-day turn around, meaning that they have to provide their comments in twenty days and we have to give them revised plans within twenty days. If anyone ... If we fail, if we miss any of those deadlines, then the other side is no longer obligated to another...

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: Very good, very good. Alright, that's good.

Mayor Slesnick: Do you have any questions?

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: Just a comment to the City Manager. Again, I mentioned this at the last hearing, but when and if we do anything with that little lot down the street there is going to be a lot of on-street parking issues that may need to be resolved. So, that's taking thirty-five parking spaces out of play should that development ever moves forward; so keep that in mind.

City Manager Brown: Yes, sir.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: Alright.

Commissioner Withers: One, just one... I think it was at the last Commission meeting we had a development, it would be on your northeast corner, we saw last week...

Mr. Garcia-Serra: (inaudible...?)

Commissioner Withers: Yeah.

Mr. Garcia-Serra: And that project, actually... Robert, weren't you also? Is that in the office building that you were proposing at some point?

Commissioner Withers: It had a, It has a plaza, I think that faced east.

Unidentified Speaker: (Inaudible – off microphone).

Commissioner Withers: Yeah, it's... I am more concerned about the intersection at the east end, and there was some discussion about the City getting involved, of maybe giving up some of its street in order to expand... Am I on the wrong block?

Mr. Robert Behar: Commissioner Withers, I think you are referring to this project...

Mayor Slesnick: Excuse me, excuse me. I have just been reminded that if we are going to have presentations other than yours, we need to swear you in.

Mr. Behar: Robert Behar of Behar and Font Partners.

City Clerk Foeman: Do you solemnly swear...

Mayor Slesnick: ... the only person who will be presenting?

Mr. City Clerk: Okay.

Mr. Behar: Yes, the only person giving testimony today. (phonetic)

Mayor Slesnick: Okay.

Mr. City Clerk: Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the statements you are about to make here this afternoon will be the truth and nothing, but the truth?

Mr. Behar: I do.

Mr. City Clerk: Thank you.

Commissioner Withers: Okay, so it more... it's more to the east than you are, keep going, keep going...

Mr. Behar: Right. This is out project site.

Commissioner Withers: Right, well, right where your hand... keep going, up, keep going, right, no, no, to the left. Right there is where ...

Mr. Behar: This is the plaza to the right.

Commissioner Withers: Right.

Mr. Behar: Okay.

Commissioner Withers: So, you are not there yet, you are not?

Mr. Behar: We are not, no.

Commissioner Withers: Okay.

Mr. Behar: This is... problem is, I will not involve ... our project is on here, and we have got a project here...

Commissioner Withers: No, I understand.

Mr. Behar: This is not...

Commissioner Withers: Well, I was thinking if there is some kind of landscape theme that, that it would be great if the two of you could discuss, I mean, I am just thinking...

Mr. Behar: Actually, we have been coordinating with these folks in order to coordinate the sales and all that separation. So, we are in communication with them...

Commissioner Withers: Okay.

Mr. Behar: The last venture would be the...

Commissioner Withers: Okay, Okay, that's fine.

Commissioner Anderson: Okay.

Mayor Slesnick: Any other questions, any other comments? Mr. Clerk.

Mr. City Clerk: Commissioner Cabrera?

Commissioner Cabrera: Yeah.

Mr. City Clerk: Commissioner Withers?

Commissioner Withers: Yes.

Mr. City Clerk: Commissioner Anderson?

Commissioner Anderson: Yes.

Mr. City Clerk: Vice Mayor Kerdyk?

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: Yes.

Mr. City Clerk: Mayor Slesnick?

Mayor Slesnick: Yes.

Mayor Slesnick: Item E-3, a resolution of the City Commission of Coral Gables approving an amendment to a mixed-use site plan, for the proposed mixed-use project referred to as "Gables Gateway", located on property legally described as Lots 1-23 and Lots 76-88, Block 17, Industrial Section (intersection of LeJeune Road, Granello Avenue and Ponce de Leon Boulevard), Coral Gables, Florida; and including required conditions; and providing for an effective date. Scot, what are we voting on?

Commissioner Anderson: That's the same project, right?

Mayor Slesnick: It's the same project.

Commissioner Cabrera: It's the same property. [phonetic]

Mayor Slesnick: I understand.

Commissioner Anderson: ... site plan.

Mayor Slesnick: So, will somebody tell us what the resolution is, why we are voting twice?

Scot Boylard (City Planner, Planning Department): This is a resolution where we are amending the previous site plan resolution.

Mayor Slesnick: Okay.

Mr. Boylard: The other one was the lot, the lot.

Mayor Slesnick: Okay, okay.

Mr. Boylard: The other one was the one with the ordinance for the alley for the...

Commissioner Anderson: I'll move that.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: I'll second it.

Mayor Slesnick: It's been moved by Ms. Anderson, and seconded by Mr. Kerdyk. Any other questions of the applicant? Mr. Clerk?

City Clerk Foeman: Vice Mayor Kerdyk?

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: Yes.

City Clerk Foeman: Commissioner Withers?

Commissioner Withers: Yes.

City Clerk Foeman: Commissioner Anderson?

Commissioner Anderson: Yes.

City Clerk Foeman: Commissioner Cabrera?

Commissioner Cabrera: Yes.

City Clerk Foeman: Mayor Slesnick?

Mayor Slesnick: Yes.