

**City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item H-5
June 16, 2015
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL**

City Commission

**Mayor Jim Cason
Commissioner Pat Keon
Commissioner Vince Lago
Vice Mayor Frank Quesada
Commissioner Jeannett Slesnick**

City Staff

**City Manager, Cathy Swanson-Rivenbark
City Attorney, Craig E. Leen
City Clerk, Walter J. Foeman
Deputy City Clerk, Billy Urquia
Planning and Zoning Director, Ramon Trias
Assistant City Manager Carmen Olazabal**

Public Speaker(s)

**George Hernandez, Architect
Brent Reynolds, Representing NP International (Developer of Project)
Thomas Levinson, Coral Gables Resident and Riviera Homeowner Asso. Board Member
Amado Acosta, Coral Gables Resident
Stuart Rich, Coral Gables Resident
Jeffrey Bass, Attorney Representing the Applicant
Chuck Bohl, Consultant on Peer Review Panel
Janet Gavarette, University of Miami**

Agenda Item H-5 [10:14:12 a.m.]

Time Certain

Discussion Item – Paseo de la Riviera Peer Review (US-1 Corridor Area)

Mayor Cason: OK. We are going to move now to Agenda Item H-5. That's a time certain discussion of a Paseo de la Riviera Peer Review.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: And sir, I'd like to call Ramon Trias to introduce the item.

Mr. Trias: Mayor, Vice Mayor, Commissioners, this item is here for information only and it's meant to be a conceptual discussion about an area of the City that you have expressed some interest in trying to come up with a plan. If I could have the PowerPoint – thank you very much. The specific item before you is the Peer Review that took place about a month ago on a project that may be coming before you in the future called Paseo de la Riviera. My discussion today is a little bit wider and it deals with the fact that you have expressed a desire to have a master plan, a plan that leads the development efforts in the area of U.S.-1. Can I have the next slide?- thank you very much? The area that we are talking about of course is very well known, it has U.S.-1 right down the middle, Metrorail. There are some fantastic projects going on right now, such as the Underline that are related to the future of the area. On one side of course is the University of Miami campus, on the other side of U.S.-1 is a commercial area, but as you can see in the area, immediately behind it there is single-family development. Generally speaking, the area of U.S.-1 is automobile oriented and one of the things that I learned doing some research some time ago, was that if you look, for example, at the strip center that is located right there. I used to think that maybe dated from the 70's...well it actually dates from the 1940's, and the basic footprint that was set up back then has no change, and it's a vision of the future that I think may have been very effective at the time, in the mid-century perhaps, but I believe that there is an opportunity to come up with a better more urban idea for the area. So, from my point of view I thought it was a very interesting idea that a developer was expressing some interest on the site of the existing Holiday Inn for some significant redevelopment, and also the fact that the University of Miami as you well know is building U-Health. I believe it has a different name right now, Miller...what's the name?- Miller Foundation, yes Miller Foundation Facility, which is right across from the site of the Holiday Inn. So all of those ideas all that really make some sense in terms of a challenge at hand. If you look at the map, the area that is kind of in the pink color is the area that we are talking about, and what I would propose to you is that there hasn't been any kind of Charrette or any kind of significant public planning effort that I know of in that area, none, and in fact the last major planning Charrette that took place in the City was in 2002 for the downtown – downtown and North Ponce and last weekend we tried to follow up on that with the North Ponce effort. So, I think that there really is an opportunity to think about the future for that area, given the fact that the neighborhood right next to it is very aware of the issues and very concerned historically about how U.S.-1 develops. Now, if you look at the land use and the zoning map, you will see that there is a variety of colors...there is some darker, some lighter colors, and so on, and what that means really is that there is no clear vision in terms of what is expected in some of those parcels. Some of them are residential, such as in the brown, and some is commercial with the red, some is limited-commercial, and all of it is in close proximity to each other and all of it creates some confusion. Now, in addition that they are site specific, so as you

know our Code in the City has certain requirements in areas that are unique, and the site specifics further complicate the issue. For example, along the U.S.-1 parcel, you can see that the maximum height is four-stories; the FAR is 1.5, which is less than it actually would be allowed under the typical zoning, land use regulations. But most interesting is the setback; the front setback is 125 feet. Now what does that mean?- that means that you will have a parking lot right on U.S.-1 on the front, that's what the Code requires, and that's the vision, and that vision I would propose to you, is a vision of mid-century and a vision that we may want to rethink. There are further site specifics in the neighborhoods around the area. Generally speaking, the major significance is that development is capped at four stories, generally that's what the site specifics mean. For example, along the waterfront you can see, again the same theme in terms of the site specifics is carried out. Now, the concept that has been proposed and was submitted for the Development Review Committee some time ago for the Paseo de la Riviera is a radical departure from those site specifics. And I will propose to you that some of the ideas are very good and should be considered and some of the ideas need to be reviewed more closely and perhaps there is a need to have some additional input from the neighborhoods. But if you look at this, this is the frontage on U.S.-1, and as you can see it's a more urban frontage, the buildings are closer to the sidewalk, there is a great emphasis on the ground level development. There is a paseo, so there is an interest in creating a smaller increment in terms of the footprint of the buildings and more connections into the neighborhoods, and so on, and so on, and so on. All those ideas are very good. All those ideas are ideas that should be explored. However again, there is no vision for the area and no significant master planning that has been done. So, a developer in this case, took the lead to propose ideas. Now, also they used some examples and references and so on, which are well known and in keeping with the aesthetics of the City. And in fact are also looking into some of the opportunities that the Underline, which I think is one of the great projects that are going on right now in the Miami area, it includes South Miami, Coral Gables and Miami. The fact that the Underline is in close proximity to this proposed mixed use and hotel project. Now the peer review took place, is not meant to take the place of any Charrette or any larger plan. That's simply one of the many things, one of the many things that I think can be done, and it's a very useful thing, because it allows for independent professionals hopefully at the highest level, in this case that was the case. We had Chuck Bohl who is here and...speak afterwards, Liz Plazer-Zybert, Meg Daley also came in and Janet Gavarette was there too giving input and making comments, and the minutes of that meeting were provided for you as background, to give you context in terms of some of the ideas that may be applicable to this project. In general, the bigger picture is that this area is one of the transit oriented potential, the development potential areas in Miami. Very important in terms of the organization of the City as the City grows, and in Coral Gables it is the only opportunity that is within the City to do development that is oriented toward the transit stop which is Metrorail. Interestingly, one of the things that Liz Plazer-Zybert mentioned over the weekend was that the Code that Coral Gables originally regulated height based on the width of the street. Now that's an old, the proportion of the height of the building

versus the width of the street, it's an idea that you can find in some of the...of the Renaissance...all of those individuals we are talking about. So it's very interesting that in the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century. In fact, if you look at the actual Code from Coral Gables, the Zoning Code from 1930, that idea was there. The idea was to regulate height based on the proportion of relationship of the width of the street. Why is that...?

Mayor Cason: Is it the width of the street or the length of the frontage?

Mr. Trias: It's the width. What happens is that, what's important is the proportion of the building, the height of the building and the width of the street, because that's what encloses the space and provides this sense of place that one can design one way or another, depending on what they want to create. It's interesting that that was the way it was and in fact, if one were to apply this to the existing area the width would be 100 feet from U.S.-1 and the height would be 150 feet, but that's what basically what that would mean.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Is that something that's historical we've done with the Code in the past?

Mr. Trias: Yes, it was, and it was a way of regulating the aesthetics and the general development of a City.

Mayor Cason: Isn't it on the map from 1926, the zoning map for that area, doesn't it say on there?

Mr. Trias: In the 70's there were some drawings, I haven't seen the original map, but there is text that talks about the different areas, the different areas of the City, I think there were four.

Mayor Cason: Maybe the applicant can mention that when he comes up.

Mr. Trias: And what happens is – I'm just giving you that as background just to give you some sense of some of the ways that this idea of height versus public space has been addressed, and if you for example, look at the way this was applied in the most famous case in the 19th century which would be in Paris, they would have...had a one-to-one ratio. Now one-to-one is fairly tall, but that gives you the...appearance, and that's the way that was done then. Now clearly that's a very simple way of doing things and it requires much more thought and calibration were you to use some similar idea. Now if one looks at what's being proposed, the width of the street and the building, and again, it's a concept at this point, it may change, it may be a little bit different, a building of 145, 141 feet and then the building, the Miller Foundation, 98 feet. If one looks at the whole public space, which would be U.S.-1 and Ponce de Leon and the Underline in between, which I think is the right approach to look at the enclosure of that public space, it's

twice as wide as the height of the building more or less. So that gives you some sense of what we are talking about in terms of proportion. Now having said all of that, that makes a lot of sense from the front that makes a lot of sense from the front along U.S.-1. However, as we saw before, behind the project there is a single-family neighborhood. So, clearly those ideas of transforming the corridor of U.S.-1 into a more pedestrian boulevard would require some significant calibration as the project transitions toward the neighborhood. Also, the fact that the study area, as you pointed out sometime ago, probably goes from at least 57th Avenue to maybe Ponce de Leon Junior High, or perhaps even Granada.

Mayor Cason: Has anything been built in the last ten years along that side?

Mr. Trias: Well the bank, Chase Bank and a few remodeling, nothing major in terms of...

Mayor Cason: Is there anything on the horizon other than this potential project in the next ten years that we know of?

Mr. Trias: There has been a couple of other ones that are thinking in terms of redevelopment, but again they are looking at the site specifics and saying, well there is only so much one can go and so on. The other project that is important of course is the bridge, the pedestrian bridge that is connecting the Metrorail to this side of the area.

Commissioner Slesnick: Ramon is there anything; I heard that something on the other side of the waterway there, west of the waterway.

Mr. Trias: Yes, you are right. There is a residential project by-right that is on the waterway, but that one is by-right. I was thinking in terms of requests that are different than by-right.

Commissioner Keon: But that whole Gables, waterway property sold...

Mr. Trias: Yes.

Commissioner Keon:...the parcel that is north of the waterway is being developed as residential and as-of-right, they haven't proposed any – have they proposed any development south of the waterway on the Alhambra side of the waterway?- it's my understanding that that is regarded as more commercial and begins that stepping up...no, it's next to the waterway condominiums are there and then that strip that's just between Alhambra and the waterway. That's more commercial but I don't think anything has been proposed for that yet, has it?

Mr. Trias: All I've seen is some small scale condominium projects by-right on MF-2 (multi-family). That's all I've seen. I had some discussions in the past with people who are trying to look at some office space or some commercial projects, but nothing was submitted.

Commissioner Keon: Then we had the waterway – are they condos or apartments next to...?

Commissioner Slesnick: Those are condos.

Commissioner Keon: Condos, the condos going down, and then we know that Riviera where the Riviera Theater was that, that was sold recently, that center sold?

Mr. Trias: I've talked to a couple of people in the past year....

Commissioner Keon: It's my understanding that the one at Mariposa is sold, is pending?

Vice Mayor Quesada: You know it did sell, it did sell. I've spoken to that individual and he said for the time being they are going to continue the same way, operate the same way.

Commissioner Keon: But we know that all of that, those parcels are turning over and they are changing hands and so, the likelihood is that over the next five to ten years as the leases that are there expire. The likelihood is that there will be development along that corridor, and so, I think that's why when we asked them to look at what was happening is because we should be out in front of development and we should make the decisions as to how in conjunction with the residents and the neighborhood and even some of the people that own those properties, as to how we are going to see that development, it's all the way from probably the waterway to Red Road is likely to turn over.

Mr. Trias: Can I have the PowerPoint back? So over the weekend we have a very significant public process to refine the vision for North Ponce. That was the very first process in a very long time and I think it was very effective, very successful, and we had a lot of people that came in and worked really hard at brainstorming ideas; and I think that a similar process could be an IBF for an area and I just did a red line along all of the area I have heard that you have expressed some interest in, which was Sunset and U.S.-1, but thinking of – it maybe just one project. It maybe just easier to just do it at once being the fact that it's all related and it tends to affect the same neighbors from behind. That's one idea that I'm proposing to you, but in the meantime, like I said, the developer was kind enough to hold this peer review, which I believe is a very good start to have this discussion and some very good ideas were proposed and if you have any questions I'll be happy to follow up, or if you want to talk to anybody else, the developer is here and some of the peer reviewers are here. Thank you.

Mayor Cason: Why don't we ask the developer to come up and continue with the peer review?

Mr. Hernandez: Good morning, George Hernandez, 337 Palermo Avenue. Nice to see all of you this morning. I think the question you asked, Mr. Mayor, was whether that 1.5 of vertical height to the one of width was part of the Merrick vision or the Merrick plan? We are celebrating the 90th year anniversary of the City of Coral Gables. Fifteen years ago when we celebrated the 75th anniversary of the City of Coral Gables, the City made a gift and the gift was a beautiful framed copy of high resolution of the 1926 plan, which is while Merrick of course was here at the City, and that plan shows that ratio for commercial areas. Ramon was correct, it was one standard for all commercial areas, and it was based on that vendible tradition of planning, which is to make public rooms out of the public space. So, it pleases me greatly this morning that in this hall we talk about Renaissance figures like El Virti and nineteenth century planners like Hossman, because we are, this City is designed at the very tail end of that tradition, which was a 400 year-long tradition. We are heirs to that tradition of how to make beautiful public space. As we all know, the Depression and then the war put a rupture in that thinking in the American psyche and in the psyche of the globe, and we have spent the last 25 years in academe and in practice and in City planning reconnecting to that way of traditional town-making. But yes, the Merrick plan shows that for a street of 100 feet of width which is U.S.-1, the height would be one and-a-half times that, which would be 150, but the Planning Director did, which I thought was even more precise and more correct, is that he didn't go to the legal boundary of U.S.-1. He realizes that what the eye sees is not the legal boundary of U.S.-1. It is U.S.-1 plus the green space which is like a great median, which will be a linear park under the metro line, plus Ponce Boulevard. It's at this point that the system swells to its widest dimension and this is what the eye will see. When it's correctly planted and beautifully designed, we will have a 400 foot wide boulevard in front of the university, with a linear park, the Underline, and with the buildings that UM is building lining that street for that boulevard and then the buildings on the, let's say the non-university side, because we don't have a true north on this site, but the buildings on the non-university side being the echo of that. But yes, it's 100 feet of width produces 150 feet of height. It just so happens that visually the street experience is nearly 400 feet here. And we do have Chuck Bohls here, who was one of the reviewers who I do think has some summary comments, but we are also here to answer any other questions.

Commissioner Slesnick: Mr. Hernandez...?

Mr. Hernandez: Yes.

Commissioner Slesnick: Was U.S.-1 in Merrick's plan that wide as it is now?

Mr. Hernandez: Yes, the right-of-way – and what’s really interesting Commissioner is that, if you think about it, I know you know the plans for the university, the original plans for the university, right there approximately, it was a little further east, but approximately where the Metro Station ended up being was the rail station, because that was the train line and eventually Flagler took the train line to Key West. So in a sense it was always a rapid rail line and there was always a stop there, and if you look at the historic water color of the university that’s where the lake was, and that’s where the Merrick Building was built. We know we have a version of the Merrick Building, because construction was stopped and then resumed for 50 years, so there was always a metro line there or rail line there, a stop there, and that was a gateway to the university. U.S.-1 was always 100-foot wide corridor, yes. Any other questions?

Vice Mayor Quesada: You know it’s funny – I went through the minutes of the Peer Review session and I saw everything, I will call them a circle point, a center point...?

Mr. Hernandez: Round point.

Vice Mayor Quesada: A round point rather than traffic circle from now on, I hadn’t heard that one before, so round point.

Mr. Hernandez:...the edge of triumph, which we all know is in a round point.

Vice Mayor Quesada: It’s a round point, OK. So we have a round point in the City, no more traffic circles, so thank you for that. You know when I think about this corridor, when I think of the entire U.S.-1 corridor, I think of an opportunity for us, at least from a legislative perspective is a way to reduce vehicle traffic, that’s what comes to mind. In other municipalities they have something called transit oriented development. You know, where they really try to promote people jump on the Metrorail. This point here, we’ve had a lot of success. I think the last number we heard is we were just about a million or 1.1 million vehicles a year for downtown by using the trolley system, was that the number that we....

Mayor Cason: 1.3 million, I think.

Vice Mayor Quesada: 1.3 million – and that’s just 5,000 passengers a day. If we can promote the University of Miami students to really use the Metrorail, if we can use the residents that are in those neighborhoods, I think the pedestrian overpass is going to be a boom for the area. I think it’s going to be tremendous for everyone. How great would it be if – I’m an attorney so I go to downtown quite a bit, I go to the courthouse, I would love to jump on the Metrorail and not have to deal with the parking and the traffic and read the newspaper, or handle e-mails while I’m riding over, and I think when you look at a lot of the great cities in the U.S. they have that aspect.

I think Washington, D.C. is probably the best example of that, you know Philadelphia to a certain extent, obviously New York as well, but I think Washington, D.C. you know you have some great neighborhoods, some great affluent, beautiful neighborhoods that are very near those access points to their version of the Metrorail, their version of the train, because of that, that comfort, that convenience of being nearby, so when I think about this area and I know we are not speaking directly about this project, but generally about U.S.-1, it's an opportunity to get cars off the street, and I don't know how we do that, and I guess Ramon that question goes back to you. From a legislative perspective, how can we enforce that?- because I think about traffic impact and we've discussed it quite a bit here with parking – buildings that don't have enough parking, fail; buildings that have too much parking, fail. It's sort of finding the sweet spot. When I think about certain projects and obviously next to residential neighborhoods the last thing we want are people accessing that specific project coming through a residential neighborhood or parking in a residential neighborhood. That's the first alarm that goes off in my head and I'm sure for everyone else up here as well. How do we design or how do we legislate and promote projects that are going to put people walking or biking to the Metrorail? Projects along this corridor whether it's this project or another project, what you're looking for are individuals, residents who want to live there or work there or visit that supermarket or visit that store there, that are going to come via the Metrorail or come via an uber. I know it's not as common, but it's growing every day. I guess I'm not giving an opinion. I think I'm just sort of giving you what my idea is for this corridor and really what are the advantages. Look at the Underline, as you guys mentioned.

Commissioner Lago: I'm seeing that every day.

Vice Mayor Quesada: I know it's growing every day.

Commissioner Lago: If you look at the media currently, you'll see that there are already discussions in reference to projects that are forthcoming that are going to be at these transportation hubs, on 27th Avenue, the Grove Stop. You already see developers already try to do deals with the County. You see the County, Commissioner Vogel had mentioned that he is going to work extending the Metrorail, the People Mover, it has to happen there is no other choice.

Vice Mayor Quesada: At least for us, forget the extension; I guess we have the benefit of having those stops within our City.

Mayor Cason: There is another option too, which is, I think we may have tried it at one time and it didn't work, but extending the trolley down Ponce because you've got the opportunity now with bike lanes on the Underline and connecting, you've got the – walk across, the overpass gets

them downtown, you don't need a car and if there was sufficient volume, I could see not only UM students using that or either UM trolley connecting with ours. I never understood why it went to Coconut Grove and didn't come to Coral Gables, but there is an opportunity there with the trolley station being in that area to go down and pick up people and bring them right downtown, you don't need to park. You don't need the cars downtown, anything that would encourage people to not use their cars.

Mr. Trias: If you look at the site specifics right now, as I mentioned before, the front setback on U.S.-1 is 125 feet. That is exactly the opposite vision of creating that pedestrian environment. It's completely opposite and it's a vision of the mid-century that wanted to create great parking lots, very good perhaps, but today, unless we are able to create those buildings next to the sidewalk with arcades and create that pedestrian area, you talk about removing cars is really not very helpful because what happens if nothing when you get there. Right now what's in the Code doesn't allow a pedestrian area.

Mayor Cason: Are there any perpendicular buildings anywhere along Dixie Highway?- would this be breaking – doesn't mean a new concept, I hope not, not just Coral Gables, but all the way down, is there anything?

Commissioner Lago: There isn't anything quite as similar to this project in the sense of connectivity. First, people are not going to ride the Metrorail, the People Mover, public transportation unless they live near. What's the point of getting in a car and driving to...I'll give you an example, Gables Residential. Gables Residential, that project, I drive by that project every single day. You have the Metrorail station maybe a block away; it's full of students that use that. How do they access University of Miami? Does the university offer some sort of transportation back and forth?- no, people get on their cars, so it's counterproductive, it doesn't achieve. What you need here is a circulator which gets you to the overpass and says it hits you from the overpass to the Metrorail, it's got to be accessible, it's got to be simple. We are creatures of habit. Everything is extremely difficult. If you have a building which is adjacent to one of these public transportation people will move in there, because people hate to drive. U.S.-1 is a bottleneck; it's an hour to get anywhere. So imagine, if you don't have to make ten stops, if you just have to go to the courthouse and file some documents or go to a court hearing, you'll take it. You'll take it, as long as it's simple and it's accessible, and I think that's why when you see projects like Gables Residential, what was the exact name of the project...

Commissioner Keon: Gables Ponce.

Commissioner Lago: Gables Ponce – when you see projects like that and then you throw in the Underline and you throw in projects that make sense, which makes sense, which we make as

many of the residents happy in reference to the design and the placement of the project, you'll see that it will start becoming more active and people will start living in these types of developments.

Commissioner Slesnick: Looking into the future, this is where most of our population should be moving closer to the mass transportation lines, and I think it's really up the value of properties along Ponce just having a trolley system in the last ten years along Ponce and it's just going to be so convenient for everybody. And instead of having the parking lots and there is more than one, the IRE or the Gables Plaza, whatever the name of the building is, parking lot right in front of the building next to the bank over there another parking lot and across the street from Alhambra on that corner another parking lot, and cars should be garaged or parked in the back or make it less intrusive for the neighbors by not having – by having the parking not on U.S.-1, but underneath the building or behind it.

Commissioner Keon: Ramon, can you talk about just briefly our Comprehensive Plan and our land map. I think that when the Metrorail came in when we were speaking with the Metrorail first came through here, we committed to that transit oriented development and what implications that has because that's what reflected in our – that's what's reflected in our Comprehensive Plan, is that policy is what dictates that and so can you just....

Mr. Trias: The policies are there in the Comprehensive Plan, but the map and particularly the zoning categories and specifically the site specific regulations....

Commissioner Keon: Don't support one another, so we really need to look at the Comprehensive Plan is approved by the state and we need to look at moving our Comprehensive Plan and our Code a lot closer so that they reflect the same types of use and development and whatever else, because currently they don't.

Mayor Cason: Do you know the last time that that was updated in that area?

Mr. Trias: What I would point out is the way I understand it, in the 1970's those site specifics were put in place very deliberately to keep development from getting taller. That was a deliberate choice.

Commissioner Slesnick: That was when the building went in, the IRE Building went in.

Mr. Trias: The IRE Building, I think precipitated that decision, and I don't believe there has been any planning ever since, in the sense that I don't think we have revisited the future of that area, and certainly no public planning in any kind of sense.

Commissioner Slesnick: Ramon where does that restriction go?- does it go all the way to Red Road?- because you have Whole Foods.

Mr. Trias: There are different restrictions.

Commissioner Slesnick: Is it like just the lots along where the shopping center is and the Holiday Inn?

Mr. Trias: The easiest way to answer that is that the general restrictions are the same in different places, the specifics are slightly different, but there are multiple, multiple restrictions, they are all generally the same, which are four stories max and...

Mayor Cason: So, they were deliberately put in place to encourage cars versus what you are proposing.

Commissioner Keon:...and that's really what....

Mr. Hernandez: It's the building of the strip mall. If you were to look at a strip mall project and extract principals from it, you'd get that. Sadly, the Gables One Tower not only do we see cars because it's elevated, we see cars on a silver platter from U.S.-1, it's the mid-century of the last century, it's the post war way of planning.

Mr. Trias: And there was a vision, there was great year vision that was implemented deliberately and we are just in disagreement with that.

Commissioner Keon: And why I think we have come to believe that it is not the best vision.

Mr. Hernandez: If I can add to your question Commissioner Keon just briefly. So in the 70's when the voters of the County voted for the Metrorail, it was at that point the most expensive public bond project in the country. It was called the "Decade of Progress." When the system was dedicated in the early 80's, it was dedicated at the University of Miami Station. That was the point of dedication for the entire system. At that time, the State asked the County to have each of the municipalities which include that line, draft that into their Comprehensive Plan the vision that the State had for the rail system and its ridership and for development. So in the Gables Comp Plan there is something called the G.R.I.D., which stands for Gables Redevelopment Infill District, and this line and this parcel and this area is on the G.R.I.D. So it's part of your Comp Plan. We just have other legislation that's in conflict with it.

Mayor Cason: What else came out of your peer review in terms of principals for that area?

Mr. Hernandez: It would be wonderful. I think Mr. Bohl is here, he was one of the reviewers.

Mayor Cason: Yes, have him come up.

Mr. Hernandez: ...that he could give a summary.

Mr. Chuck Bohl: Mayor Cason, Commissioners, I was on the peer review panel. I've been doing my homework looking over the transcripts and I'll offer a few comments, I'll try to summarize some of the points, some of the major points, but Janet Gavarette is also here from the University of Miami and she can certainly speak for herself and the university. The starting point in any of these conversations is, can we do any better than what's there currently as is consistent with the City's vision and idea of what we would like to see in Coral Gables?- and certainly we can say there is nothing along that portion of the corridor that represents George Merrick's original vision and concept for the City. So, this discussion about the current conditions, it's a very low density, low connectivity was an issue that kept coming up on the panel area. Very single use, kind of a gray field character, there is a lack of any landscaping; it's very automobile dominated, very hostile, and dangerous to pedestrians and cyclists. The streets behind that run parallel to U.S.-1. Madguga Avenue has really been treated like an alleyway at this point, and the residents who were in the meeting kept saying no, that's a street, that's an actual road, that's not an alleyway, that's not a service alleyway; and a lot of the comments were coming from the nearby residents saying it's hostile. There is no comfort, there is no – they would like to be able to walk to places to go to eat, they'd like to go to walk to the ticket to the university safely, but there is no connection from the neighborhoods through these commercial areas to get to places they want to go and frankly the places that are there are so hostile to walk into anyway, they are not really attractive.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Where is the Holiday Inn now, where do they keep their dumpster?- in that back area there?

Mr. Trias: There is a parking lot, right?

Vice Mayor Quesada: So, right next to the homes basically?

Commissioner Keon: The backyards of the duplexes...

Vice Mayor Quesada: I wasn't sure; it's been a while since I drive back there.

Mr. Bohl: It's a very long continuous commercial strip that's all connected, so if you even wanted to walk around it to get anywhere, it would take you forever, right, because it's not just the Holiday Inn, it's the Holiday Inn, it's Gables One. There is a continuous strip of commercial uses that you'd have to traverse around on foot or on bike.

Mr. Trias: Let me make a comment. The original blab that Merrick did modified in the 1940's and that's why it's so awkward right now because it changed, that's why Madgruga appears to be an alley because that was changed in order to create those structures.

Vice Mayor Quesada: And Merrick didn't see it that way?

Mr. Trias: No, Merrick had smaller blabs and it was more logical, but if you look at the history you can see that the changes were done in such a way that is not very effective.

Mr. Bohl: Opportunities that the panel recognized transit or development of course, is one of the major ones are the amenities of the university. The residents see the university as a place they'd like to be able to get too easily. Certainly, the university doesn't keep residents out. It should be a resource and an amenity for all citizens, but currently it's not easily accessible unless you hop in your car and you drive over to campus and then try to park.

Commissioner Keon: There is no parking.

Mr. Bohl: It's hard enough for people who work there to park. The pedestrian bridge is coming. That's another big opportunity. The JC Park adjacent to this area that we saw as a real resource and opportunity to get even better; and another factor currently is their strong market support, which is good and bad. There is development pressure coming, the current regulations would not necessarily guide development in a positive direction, which is why we are having this conversation, but there is also development pressure up and down the corridor outside of Coral Gables. So, there is an opportunity here for Coral Gables to set the standard, set the tone for the developments that's to come and maybe a conversation with your neighbors about what the vision for the corridor could be. Transit oriented development planning and design is something the new urbanism and planners and designers have been working on for the past three decades. Exemplary transit oriented development principles always start with the stationary itself, but the principles include a mix of uses, they fine grain mix of uses, highly walkable, highly bikable. You want people to be able to get to the transit station comfortably and enjoy the experience, and there was discussion about that. Obviously, going beyond one project that is continuity to get you to the station and back from all of these properties. High connectivity of the street network, currently totally disconnected at this point. Integrated multi-mobile transport, so here we're getting there, right. We've got the Metrorail connecting to where the trolley goes. Metrorail can

take you to the airport, but then at the local level it breaks down, so getting from anywhere from the station its breaking down. The bridge will start to bring people across, but then you are in a parking lot across the street, so all the connectivity at the local level is something that needs to be worked on, especially when you get into pedestrians and cyclists; and then a high quality of public realm of streets, streetscapes, parks and plazas. These areas are typically achieved from a planning perspective through transit station area, zones or overlays or through planned area development, which you have here in the Gables. Couple of comments I'll highlight from the people who took part. Meg Daley, who you all know from the Underline, noted a lack of services accessible for pedestrians and cyclists from Gables Residential neighborhoods. One of the quotes from the document you have, "I'd love to be able to walk to decent place to get a meal. If this particular project were developed I'd like the idea of a hotel, I could see coming into the airport, taking the Metrorail down. I can stay at the hotel across from the university and maybe not have to rent a car." And then her other comments and residents were addressing the fact that the pedestrian bridge is good, but to get to it is the issue. So, her emphasis was on the need to have more movement through the commercial area through it.

Mayor Cason: And the commercial area rather than being linear on line would be more or less like a paseo, I would gather. You wouldn't even have to go to the store, you wouldn't even have to go see route 1. You could probably come in and have some shops along the way, right?

Mr. Bohl: Right – and currently it's a barrier, it's like that's a continuous wall that you'd have to work around and so you don't. It's too far to walk or to bike. She said more walkable, bikeable, likeable and sustainable with an orientation to transit, that was her feeling about what she would like to see and felt that the proposal itself was consistent with. Liz Plata-Zybert had built on this discussion. She felt that the distribution of the program was quite good and I'll talk a little bit more about that, but she emphasized the need for this continuity of pedestrian design. So if you were moving from this particular site, it's not enough to just get from that point maybe to the bridge. When you go by Gables One, in particular, she said the sidewalks on U.S. are a horrible experience. You've got to really make this a beautiful walk, trees and pots to entice people to go there, so this continuity of a pleasant safe experience to be able to walk to and from the station, to and from the pedestrian bridge, when you get to the other side to be able to have a pleasant walk to the station itself and then the university. It has to be a continuous high quality pedestrian realm. For my part, I thought the timing for your initiative to revision and plan this corridor is very good. It's excellent. The initiatives that we've heard are going on, the Underline Initiative, obviously is a big one, UM's own initiatives on our side of the corridor, and Janet can speak to these. The panel actually got into talking about, what about the other side?- what about the UM side and plans going on there?- and the university is looking at that very actively. You'll see the clinic going up. There is an interest in that becoming a more, I would say probably a more active side for students to bring the university out and Janet can speak to that more. There is market

support for redevelopment, so that's good. You can actually influence things getting built before they happen, and the flexibility of the planned area development gives you some power to realize this. So, the parking solution that was worked out for this particular proposal we thought was great, because you ended up with a slender hotel building that actually comes down and touches the ground. It didn't have to blow up and be a much more bloated building that contains the parking. The parking is all contained in a separate building, and by having that flexibility in a planned area development with the parking in the larger building, it allows for the public space to be created. So, you have the paseo which is pure public space, which provides that great connection to the neighborhood, and you have a much better building for the hotel which you wouldn't normally be able to achieve if you had to pack all the parking into each and every individual. So that kind of flexibility we thought would be excellent as you revision the corridor. All acquisition and redevelopment on this corridor is not envisioning keeping surface parking lots. It's the cost of...this too much, so each move you see along this corridor, whether it's in the Gables or not, the surface lots are probably going to be infilled and redeveloped. So figuring out how to handle the parking solution is paramount. The proposed project itself is very consistent with the transit development principles that I highlighted before, its mixed use with hotel/retail, dining and apartments. It delivers public space on this corridor which really doesn't exist anywhere, so the paseo, the streetscape, treating Madgruga like a street not an alleyway, connectivity from the neighborhood through the commercial to the destinations, arcades for shade and comfort, architectural for people, shared parking breakthrough, all of that is good, all would need to be obviously discussed further and massaged through your process. The last thing I would add is that I fully support the process for visioning and replanning the corridor, but I would encourage you to move more quickly to get an example built. We think this is an excellent example, Merrick's method was to build exemplary buildings and places and that can really set the tone and establish a new pattern and paradigm for the corridor while you go through probably a longer and more involved process. So, we would encourage you to take up the discussion on this particular project, see if you can get something built that will influence everything that will come after it. You are going to get lots of bad proposals all along the way, so when you get a good one we encourage you to take it up, try to refine it, get it built to your satisfaction, that will do more to influence development along the corridor than the plans themselves, I think. Thank you.

Mayor Cason: University wants to make any comments?

Ms. Gavarette: Good morning, my name is Janet Gavarette; I'm with the University of Miami. Thank you for the opportunity to speak briefly about this. I think that the vision for the corridor characteristics are very clear, we've all talked about them. They were part of Merrick's, they were part of people who were here before us, and this is a continuation and further development of those. I think the projects specifically meets the key criteria of the vision in terms of use,

character, density, its appropriateness on a transit corridor and I believe that also the way it which it responds and meets with the residential character in the back with Madrugá is an important component, which I think is very important so it's not just facing U.S.-1 and engaging that, but it's also addressing the street-like character in an urban fashion as it meets the residential area. We support the project because we've had a long standing relationship with the Holiday Inn there that has served the university well, so the redevelopment continues a use that's been very apropos for the neighborhood and I believe that the residential piece of it is a good component for a transit area development that uses transit and the pedestrian bridge is going to come will certainly bring that fluidity between the campus and that side of the highway, which we believe is important because our students and our faculty and our staff uses it.

Vice Mayor Quesada: How far does the Hurricane Shuttle go?- where does it go to?

Ms. Gavarette: It goes from Stanford which is...

Vice Mayor Quesada: The main street.

Ms. Gavarette:...the main street and it goes out to Ponce, it goes to the University Station.

Vice Mayor Quesada: OK.

Ms. Gavarette: So, it picks up folks there and then it goes up to San Amaro and goes all the way up to Miller and goes into the memorial area. So, it kind of goes like this, you know, all the time. So this is Stanford – Stanford goes down, Stanford across Ponce, across the transit station, goes to our Ponce garage and then it goes up San Amaro, picks people up all along Hecht Athletic University Village area.

Vice Mayor Quesada: And obviously it's only for students.

Ms. Gavarette: Pardon me?

Vice Mayor Quesada: Only for students?

Ms. Gavarette: It is a university shuttle so it is for riders of the area. We don't card people for accessing the shuttle.

Mayor Cason: I'm going to expect this project, a lot of people, if it's mixed use you'll find a lot of people that are maybe parents coming to look at the university. You may have professors living there, probably should help reduce your traffic on the campus.

Ms. Gavarette: Our campus traffic has been consistently reduced throughout the years from like 1992 all the way to present, through a series of initiatives that we've taken. Like for example, some of the street calming that we've done in conjunction with the City. We have also not allowed freshmen to drive to campus, so that automatically reduces trips. We've also put in more residents on campus. So when you have people living on the campus you have less commuters, right, so they're living there, they don't roll out of bed and drive to school, they roll out of bed and walk on the campus that's reduced the traffic.

Commissioner Slesnick: Janet, I'm just noticing though that on the UM side of this corridor it's really not very user-friendly for the students, because you go from massive parking lots all the way in front of the Bank United Center to the new medical facility to a large parking garage to the baseball stadium, which is not used by the students on a regular basis. So, you have like eight or nine blocks there that the students really would not be walking anywhere along on that side of the street, and maybe the university itself should have built some more, like where Bank United is it's very convenient for people on Metrorail, but it's really not very user-friendly that whole area for students and for the people on the campus. Now, I know there are some old World War II housing that's going to be rebuilt in the back there, but again, if you are looking at this map that was presented there is a wide, wide area there that is really not conducive for the students walking that whole neighborhood.

Commissioner Keon: But I think the university has done a really good job of the connectivity within the campus, so you are not forced to only walk on U.S.-1, you can cut through the university and cut through the gardens, and cut through buildings and cut through places all throughout the university to come back out to U.S.-1, so that you are not forced only to have that route and that's the problem on the other side.

Commissioner Slesnick: But you do have fences all along the Bank United Center.

Commissioner Keon: Right – but on the other side of the street where there are all those strip malls one after another, you can't get through them to get out to the street, I mean to get to U.S.-1, so if – you only can travel on U.S.-1 if you are going from any place along from the neighborhood if you decide you want to walk into South Miami or whatever where there is sidewalks and whatever else. I mean, I see people on U.S.-1 often in wheelchairs. There are a couple of people that have motorized wheelchairs that I often see on U.S.-1.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Yes, I see them.

Commissioner Keon: There is somebody else that has a guide dog they are also in a wheelchair, the dog is whatever, that sort of person has no other – no way to get to any of those places unless they are on U.S.-1 which is really...

Vice Mayor Quesada: You know it's funny. Have you ever walked on the sidewalk on U.S.-1?

Commissioner Keon: Yes. You feel like...it is intimidating, it's very narrow.

Vice Mayor Quesada: The peer review though there was a resident, Peter Turner, that talked about putting in some sort of bollards or some protection. I definitely agree with, because I've walked on it a few times and you don't want to be beyond that sidewalk. So it's not very pedestrian-friendly at all.

Commissioner Slesnick: I was at Esslinger Wooten Maxwell for 22 years, right next to the Holiday Inn and we would go over to the IRE Building for closings and so forth, and it's like two feet wide in some places and the cars are zooming past. That whole area needs to be redeveloped, the whole area, from like Maynada on down, you are taken into South Miami, across from South Miami. We really need to study that whole area and make it easier for people to build different projects on there that would be more user-friendly and more attractive, pedestrian-friendly.

Commissioner Keon: That was the purpose of the Charrette and it's to begin the discussion as to what, how we adopt our Code to allow for that type of, a more positive type of development, and also ensure that protect the single family residential community that is directly behind there. So we need to do both of them and I think we have the ability to do that.

Mayor Cason: Commissioner Lago.

Commissioner Lago: Just a quick question in reference to the Charrette, because it's funny we have Janet Gavarette up here because I live on San Amaro, so I deal with University of Miami traffic students and it's been incredibly reduced due to the efforts of the university in reference to having more students living on campus and reducing the amount of cars. I think freshmen are not allowed to have cars, correct?

Ms. Gavarette: No.

Commissioner Lago: So that's been significant. I think the last number you told us was around 25 or 30 percent of reduction in traffic.

Ms. Gavarette: It's nearly 30 percent reduction of traffic. We really have a great mobility plan and those are the kinds of things that you can encourage other developments when they are large to adopt these kinds of measures as a whole, and I think you know, it's not the big gesture, it's a lot of little gestures that put together make a big difference.

Commissioner Lago: And the internal road hasn't been completed yet, I mean there is a second phase to it, but I think that's....

Vice Mayor Quesada: We need to find the legislative equivalent for the other side of the street you were referring to, to ensure that we know, because here's the thing – I would love to reduce the parking requirements to force everyone to use the Metrorail. So if you are living in those kinds of areas you have the Metrorail, you have foot traffic, but the reality of the situation you live in South Florida, you are conditioned to drive everywhere. So, my concern is if we lower the parking requirements, I know it really hasn't come up, but it's consistent with this conversation, we lower the parking requirements then the people that, you know something they only give me one parking space in the building, I have another car, my spouse's car or my roommate's car, or my daughter's or son's car, well we'll just park in the neighborhood, we don't want that. So how do we do it the right way to achieve everything, which is my question to Ramon?

Commissioner Lago: I was mentioning to Ramon because I wasn't at the Charrette. I wanted to find out, did we get into discussions about how do we connect all the puzzles together?- How do we connect the overpass, the Metrorail in reference to these projects? Are we entertaining potentially increasing or adding another loop for our trolley system? What is the next step to get there?- because once the structure is built, like the Vice Mayor said, people in this community are conditioned to not using public transportation because it's inadequate across all of Dade County. So how do we make it as simple as possible? You mentioned before you brought up the Hurricane Shuttle, correct?

Vice Mayor Quesada: Yes.

Commissioner Lago: That's only for UM students unless you do like what the Mayor does and he brings a book bag on...

(Laughter)

Commissioner Lago: No one is going to question you continuing education. But on a serious note, it's not only the developer, it's not only the University of Miami. The City has to take true ownership here, because if you are going to put your money where your mouth is you've got to say, what's the next step?- how we are going to make it as safe as possible for people to cross or

to actually live in this facility? Do you offer new trolley routes?- that's the next real discussion, was that brought up at all or no?

Commissioner Slesnick: Does the trolley come out on U.S.-1?

Commissioner Keon: Ours?

Commissioner Slesnick: Yes. It used to when you housed students at the Holiday Inn, I guess.

Ms. Gavarette: Well what we do is we offer like what we call a recreational shuttle and shopping shuttle, so the students that live on campus we have a shuttle that goes across the street and provides them the ability to go shopping in that area and then they get brought back. It's in the evenings and so that helps. We believe though that in time, so let's roll over like 5,10, 15 years, as things redevelop across the way and there are these connectivity pieces and you have pedestrian overpass, it's easier to walk when you can get through these because it is very difficult and it is very challenging. What we do is as any City, as we build the individual project we build a piece of the equation, so it takes often so many years to actually see it come together, but the plan is what you are trying to legislate that as development occurs it puts in each of those pieces and then low and behold one day it works.

Commissioner Lago: Ramon what do you believe to be the piece that the City needs to proffer to make this work?

Mr. Trias: There are two things that are required for implementing the vision you want – transit which the City has and also a high quality pedestrian environment. If you do those two things then there will be more walking and less driving. Right now the transit doesn't quite go there and there is absolutely no regulation that encourages high quality pedestrian environment in the books because of the site specifics. In fact, if everybody agrees that this concept is good, which generally most people said that, I would propose to you that every regulation in place does not allow it, in fact the developer is asking to change the land use, or will ask to change the land use, the site specific, the zoning, everything, you know to implement a project that is generally good, something that fits the vision.

Commissioner Lago: Another note that you – I know you forgot to mention it, but for sure it's on everyone's main topic is usually the Underline. The Underline right now is not the safest place to walk in the middle of the night, there is no lighting, it's not appealing, when that comes in line hopefully in the next few years, maybe say two years from now, you'll have another piece of that puzzle and hopefully will bring...you know what instead of taking my car I walk three blocks, instead of taking my car to go three blocks, let's walk, it's so nice to walk and enjoyable.

Mr. Trias: And the way that those areas become safe is by having people and by having what's called eyes on the street, buildings that look into...

Commissioner Lago: If you go on a Saturday morning or a Sunday morning, let's say you take U.S.-1 Saturdays probably 7 o'clock in the morning on the way to the gym, if you go on Saturday mornings at 7 down U.S.-1 near South Miami Hospital, you will see probably at least a few hundred people running in the morning underneath the metro, so the interest is there, I've just got to say, you have to entice even more people with just giving them the opportunity to make that decision.

Mr. Trias: And I just want to....

Commissioner Lago: But the City needs to take its step in reference to either pushing the developer to say listen, we'll take ownership like kind of what the Agave Project did was, we'll take ownership and we'll proffer some monies in reference to a trolley route to make it even more appealing, there has to be something in reference to transportation from the City.

Commissioner Keon: But I think what we have to do first is have the land use and the zoning and all of those pieces that actually support the Comprehensive Plan and that will encourage that sort of development as opposed to the development that is currently would be encouraged by our Code there, so we really need to look at and this is an example, but I also have concerns and we can apply these principles also to the university side because as you go down further in the City of Coral Gables where Gil Ford has all those lots along there, and now currently there is a Starbucks and then there is Taco Rico, there is commercial development all along there, and we have approval for a project that was a big box of Gables Station that seem to be being built or whatever....

Vice Mayor Quesada: Well something will come back...

Commissioner Keon: Something will come back so you know, wouldn't it be better for us to have the zoning and the regulations and everything in place?

Vice Mayor Quesada: What you brought up a few meetings ago and we were all agreeing with.

Commissioner Keon: Yes.

Commissioner Lago: Those properties are different though because they don't have the width or the depth that this piece does...

Vice Mayor Quesada: The point is to make sure that we have the right Zoning Code in place to promote this pedestrian connectivity.

Commissioner Keon: The Zoning Code in place to encourage the kind of development that we want and that connectivity also to the Underline, so people can so you don't have like a huge big lot that doesn't allow you to come through, so this assist this opportunity, so now....

Mayor Cason: So what do you envision is the next stage? We are not discussing this particular project right now, but the concept this project will go through the normal process and hopefully will conform with what we've been discussing.

Mr. Trias: I think the follow-up on Commissioner Lago's point, there was no Charrette, there has never been a Charrette for this area. There was a peer review, there was a brief evening and it created some good ideas, but as far as I know never has there been a major planning effort that involves the community in a meaningful way, in a way that achieves...

Commissioner Lago: That peer review, in my opinion, means a step in the right direction.

Mr. Trias: Absolutely.

Commissioner Lago: Huge step, huge step.

Commissioner Keon: So now you'll move now to do a Charrette?

Mr. Trias: I think we'll prefer that, yes.

Commissioner Keon: So do you need direction, do you need direction from the Commission to do that?

Mr. Trias: Let me propose something, perhaps something similar to what was done this week at North Ponce, not necessarily a very long process, but just enough to make sure that there is interest and buy-in from the neighbors because the reality is that some single family neighborhoods right there, right immediately adjacent to many of these projects and they are very vocal.

Vice Mayor Quesada: We need their input.

Mr. Trias: I highly recommend.

Mayor Cason: Let me ask the developer. You've had how many meetings up to now?- we are going to have more, but just for the record.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Excuse me; you are going to need to come up to the microphone.

Mr. Reynolds: Good morning, Brent Reynolds, I represent NP International, the developer of the project. To answer your question, we've had 47 meetings; we've had two larger public style meetings at the Holiday Inn, and independent with select neighbors and small groups for a total of 47 meetings.

Commissioner Slesnick: Ramon, are you suggesting, as Commissioner Keon maybe to have a similar study group as the North Ponce development area that we say over the weekend and have it from the business section that's across from Sunset Place all of that area, along up to Maynada or all the way up to Douglas Road along U.S.-1, Douglas Road?

Vice Mayor Quesada: Let's take a look at the U.S.-1 corridor, I mean I think that's the best...

Commissioner Keon: So I think it's primarily the Riviera Neighborhood Association is that area, and I don't know, does the Riviera Neighborhood Association take in the area around Ponce Middle School?

Unknown Speaker: Yes.

Commissioner Keon: Yes. OK. So it's really pretty much the Riviera Neighborhood Association.

Commissioner Slesnick: But I'd like to see Douglas area too and where Carver is all of that.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Anywhere on U.S.-1 that's Coral Gables.

Commissioner Keon: But that – is all that area along there Coral Gables or is that some of City of Miami along U.S.-1?

Mr. Trias: Some of it is in Miami but generally it's Coral Gables.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Commissioner it's real easy, anywhere in Coral Gables areas.

Mayor Cason: At this stage we've got three people that would like to speak. Please limit it to three minutes and on the concepts and then we'll decide what we want to do in terms of... First of all Thomas Levinson.

Mr. Levinson: Thank you. I'm a resident, I live at 918 Alfonso Avenue, and I'm on the Board of Riviera Neighborhood Association. I think that we are missing a very, very important key issue here about this particular development. It is less than 1,000 feet from very expensive homes; many homes that are on the waterway, how would you like to have 140 foot building constructed less than 1,000 feet from your home? The issue is that the high-rise building that they are talking about is a rental building, not a condo. At first we were told that this rental building was going to have built-in furniture then they amended that. We believe that this building will be nothing more than a dorm. Many of the units in this building are three bedroom units that means probably six people per unit, that's sounds like UM students to us. It was very interesting to us when we were here last week and how flexible the Agave people were with us, the City. They reduced a great deal of their FAR that immediately overlooked the residents. We heard a quote from Tim Plummer, the very people who are doing the traffic study for this particular property that has a very, very limited access from U.S.-1, no traffic light and there is no traffic light possible to access this property southbound. Tim said in an answer to one of your questions, he stated the more access to this property, the Agave property the better. They state that they've had many meetings with us, very negative meetings many of them, and the statement was that the limited access to this property leads many of us to believe that there is going to be a lot of infill traffic into our neighborhood because there is very limited access to it from U.S.-1. Many of you have made statements that they live near the university. How would you like the university to erect 140 foot building near your home? The project itself is a very nice project; it's just in the wrong location. I also wonder about a peer reviewing the project who is the architect of this particular project. The neighbors are against it.

Mayor Cason: Can I ask you. How many people are on the Board of Riviera?

Mr. Levinson: Seven.

Mayor Cason: Are you unanimous?- are you representing all of them?- or...

Mr. Levinson: Several of them here.

Mayor Cason: My question is, are you speaking for the association.

Mr. Levinson: Yes.

Mayor Cason: Was a vote taken by the association?

Mr. Levinson: Yes.

Mayor Cason: OK.

Mr. Levinson: The fact of the matter is that it's a nice project; it's just in a bad location. It is not so much the fact that we are objecting to the setback being changed, it's the height. We understand that the archaic design of this area needs to be changed, it's more the height. Thank you.

Mayor Cason: Thank you.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Mr. Mayor, can I just ask a question of Mr. Levinson. It was my understanding and I may have misunderstood that the Riviera Neighborhood Association was taking a neutral position.

Mr. Levinson: That's incorrect.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: OK – and so if we can have that information on the formal minutes and the vote that will help us and we'll put that in the record.

Mr. Levinson: That is incorrect.

Commissioner Lago: Sir if there is any way you could provide us, the Commission, maybe the City Manager and maybe the Clerk, a document from your Neighborhood Association stating your position.

Mr. Levinson: I don't know where you got the neutral position from.

Commissioner Lago: I was under the same impression, just so you are aware.

Mr. Levinson: That's not correct.

Mayor Cason: Amado Acosta also representing Riviera.

Mr. Acosta: Good morning Honorable Mayor, Vice Mayor, Commissioners. I live at 1225 South Alhambra Circle, and I've been a resident in the home for 20 years. First of all, the Riviera Neighborhood Association so it's better understood, covers the area between Riviera and Red

Road and between Sunset and U.S.-1. We have over 400 members and at that time when votes come up for election 400 members can mean a lot, particularly in Coral Gables. We have in the past had a Charrette with our vision writing in 1998, and at that time the City participated very much with us, as did the university, and we had a vision, and we formalized that vision with the items that we numerate as the guiding items for our organization. During that time there have been projects that have threatened very much the stability of our area. We have been very active, we remember the meetings with the Planning and Zoning Board when Commissioner Keon was in there and we were able to defeat that project because of the impact on traffic, because of the impact on density. There have been other projects that have been positive. For instance, the retirement home near the Riviera Park and we were able to obtain the vote, developer to contribute toward improving the Riviera Park by providing a gazebo, a play park for the kids and all of that. We are against the privatization of public property and when the project was expanded Publix came up, we were against the privatization of that alley, as we were against the major size of that Publix. Again, we defeated that project. Every time there is a project that comes up we do not hesitate and we are capable of and we have, raised the necessary money to hire the experts, be it be traffic, or architectural, or urban density or what, and we participated in the discussions that we welcome the opportunity such as the Charrette that has been offered here this morning. I think that's the way to go, and I really encourage you to go in that direction. Thank you.

Commissioner Slesnick: Mr. Acosta what do you think should be going in that property?

Mr. Acosta: I think a project of this nature is nice, but I think there needs to be a consideration for the matter that Mr. Levinson brought up that they are proposing rental units, obviously they are going to become dorms. I think they should be apartments and the height needs to be considered very much as to what it is with the vision of the Charrette. Then also the matter of the access to it, ingress and egress never should be from the rear of the building, that's only going to encourage tremendous traffic in the neighborhood.

Commissioner Slesnick: So you're thinking everybody should come and go from U.S.-1 on that project?

Mr. Acosta: That is my personal belief. I will know what others are thinking.

Vice Mayor Quesada: That's probably the 1998 Charrette?

Mr. Acosta: We do have...

Vice Mayor Quesada: Can you forward it to one of us?

Mr. Acosta: I don't have it personally with me.

Vice Mayor Quesada: No, that's fine, that's fine.

Mr. Acosta: But we can get it. Our previous President, Joyce Newman, is on vacation in North Carolina, she has all those.

Mayor Cason: Whenever you can get it to us.

Commissioner Slesnick: And your Homeowners Associations runs from Sunset to U.S.-1, and Red Road to...

Mr. Acosta: To Riviera.

Commissioner Slesnick: Riviera.

Commissioner Lago: Sir, can I ask you another quick question?

Mr. Acosta: Yes.

Commissioner Lago: In reference to the height. I think it was mentioned before that around 1970, the building that the University of Miami owns which was recently acquired, I think probably a few years ago, maybe five years ago?- less than five years ago?

Ms. Gavarette: Gables One.

Commissioner Lago: Yes, Gables One. What is your opinion of the Riviera Neighborhood Association in reference to that building, the height of that building?

Mr. Acosta: We think it's a monster and it's very visible from the homes and we hope that never again that's repeated.

Commissioner Slesnick: How many stories is that?

Mr. Acosta: Fourteen.

City Attorney Leen: Just wanted to make one clarification. The City has an ordinance that restricts more than three unrelated people living together outside of the university district, so just be aware of that, we do enforce that.

Commissioner Slesnick: I'm sorry Craig, I didn't hear you.

City Attorney Leen: We have an ordinance that prohibits more than three unrelated people living together in a place; someone had mentioned six, outside the university district. So when it's brought to our attention we do enforce that, we have enforced it in the past...

Mr. Acosta: Excuse me, three per building?

City Attorney Leen: More than three per residence, for apartment.

Commissioner Slesnick: But that's single family.

City Attorney Leen: Per house.

Commissioner Slesnick: Single family or...?

City Attorney Leen: No. My understanding is it applies, except for in the university district. I'll double-check. We should probably broaden that, but my recollection is that it applies because I think we have applied it in one other situation.

Commissioner Slesnick: I know it's for single family; it's sometimes difficult to enforce.

City Attorney Leen: I'll double-check and if it doesn't we should extend it to that, but it's up to you, but based on what you are saying, I would think that we would.

Mayor Cason: Stuart Rich. Thank you. Stuart Rich.

Mr. Rich: If I can approach the City Manager I'll give her this...I don't get paid by the hour so I'll be short.

Commissioner Slesnick: Your address.

Mr. Rich: 1222 Aduana. My name is Stuart Rich, R-I-C-H. A couple of thoughts, one is a real irony because yesterday we were celebrating the X number...of the Magna Carta, 12-15, and one of the principal thoughts was about peerage, peers, and I certainly as a neighbor feel like I'm

a peer and interested party in this, I have no idea there was any kind of a peer meeting. The folks in Minnesota certainly their peers, but we need to include everybody, I think. Second about the height; the height is really probably the number one issue for the neighborhood. I was on a federal jury a few years ago, and we had a lot of spare time and I remember looking out the window toward the south and the west, and there were two buildings that stood out, one was the Marlin Stadium and two was the UM, what used to be the IRE Building, and you could see how out of place this was compared to the relative close neighbors. Now the pictures I passed around, you don't have to be an expert photographer to choose the time of day, I just walked around the block everyday basically and I took these photographs and put them together. The traffic and parking is not going to get better in my lifetime, regardless of what these folks tell you, and you can just see the illustration there of how congested this area is right now. As far as aesthetics, it's true they talked about in Session D over there that the building should be Mediterranean and so forth. The Lincoln Memorial is perfect in aesthetics, but it doesn't belong in a residential neighborhood, so it's more than just a building, it's where it is and that's the aesthetic problem that I have. The Underline – people are talking about the Underline as if it's to me – it's a wonderful idea, it's a great idea, but it's a “Trojan Horse” relative to this gigantic development. It's just like saying, well we've got the Underline, this is a perfect compliment. I don't agree. I hope you folks don't either. That's all I have to say. Thank you very much.

Mayor Cason: Thank you.

Commissioner Lago: Thank you.

Mayor Cason: OK. Next steps – Ramon what do you propose in terms of the Charrette idea?

Mr. Trias: My recommendation is to do a planning process similar to the one we just did for North Ponce and to do it quickly. I think we can probably get organized maybe in the next 30 days or so.

Vice Mayor Quesada: So you're saying to research the entire corridor.

Mr. Trias: Well yes. What you've proposed as a scope is very good. I'm not sure we'll be able to solve all the problems from let's say, 37th Avenue to Sunset, but certainly we can get some direction and maybe we can focus specifically on the issue at hand, which is the transit oriented area.

Vice Mayor Quesada: So I think, I guess my thought on this is, I agree we should have a Charrette for the entire corridor. One of the biggest concerns I have with the Agave Project moving forward is it shouldn't take three years for anyone doing any type of project, whether we

love it or hate it, to find out whether they can do it or not, which is a huge problem that I have with that. If we hate it we should vote on it and knock it down and it dies.

Commissioner Lago: It needs to be tweaked.

Vice Mayor Quesada: But what I'm saying is there is always going to be two readings in this kind of scenario, same with the Agave scenario, but I think it's fundamentally unfair for someone to have to wait so long. You have carrying costs, things are expensive, if we want to be a place that we attract good projects, the right type of developers that fit into our format, we need to be seen as sort of we are going to be...communities, we are going to make sure that the neighbors are happy, make sure people are happy, but it's going to be an equitable process the whole way through. So my concern about, I guess my position obviously is not clear yet, is that I think this project should move forward in the normal course, if it hasn't gone to Planning and Zoning, for it to go to Planning and Zoning, do the standard procedure that we have with every other project. Has it gone to Planning and Zoning yet?

Mr. Trias: Not yet.

Vice Mayor Quesada: I guess my recommendation and if the rest of the Commission agrees, let it move forward in the process, if Planning and Zoning strikes it down or makes corrections, so be it. If it comes to us and we strike it down and make changes, so be it, we'll do it in that normal course. Again, what really bothered me about the Agave Project is that they got held up so many different ways, it took three years, a little more than three years, three and-a-half to find out whether they could do it or not.

Mayor Cason: And meanwhile do the Charrette.

Vice Mayor Quesada: For the rest of the corridor.

Commissioner Lago: Say if they can do it or not, they could have done it as-a-right after we discussed it a multitude of times, they could have come out and just done a million square feet and they did a great project, which reflected in what we voted on last week, so I'm with agreement with Vice...

Commissioner Slesnick: There were certain circumstances that the Agave Project was...

Commissioner Lago: But I think three and-a-half years, almost four years is absolutely ridiculous. It just paints the City as being "red taped" to another level.

Mr. Bass: Mr. Mayor, Mr. Vice Mayor, members of the Commission, Jeffrey Bass, 46 S.W. First Street is my address, here on behalf of the applicant. Thank you for this brief opportunity on behalf of the applicant. We are supportive of the Charrette process; we believe however, it would be palpably unfair to hold us up for that process to complete itself, based on where we are in your process, the time that we've committed to it. The interesting and wonderful thing about property is everyone is different and to have a "one-size fits all" approach to invoking a Charrette, putting a halt on all projects within that Charrette, overlooks the fact that everybody is differently situated with respect to their project, with respect to their outreach, with respect to their development plans, and again, we support the visioning and leadership for developing these concepts. We believe that our project is consistent with them and we would respectfully, but very directly ask that we not be held up while a Charrette process goes forward.

Commissioner Slesnick: Mr. Bass, how many stories is your building?- its 190 feet?

Vice Mayor Quesada: 141.

Commissioner Slesnick: 141, which is approximately how many stories?

Mr. Bass: If I may confer with my architect – 12.

Commissioner Slesnick: 12 stories. And as-of-right, you could build four stories there now?

Mr. Bass: I'm advised 72 feet.

Commissioner Slesnick: OK – which is 35 is...OK.

Mr. Trias: The issue is this is not by-right, OK. The request is a change of land use, multiple changes, every possible change.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Which the typical procedure when it's not as-of-right when they are asking for any kind of variance or Code amendment, is go before P&Z twice and got to come before the City Commission twice. I'm sorry once.

Mr. Trias: Vice Mayor, the applicant has requested, and in fact they have been working with staff for a long time fine tuning the process and they would like to have, at least that what they told me, staff support. So all I'm saying is that in order to have the staff support and be able to coordinate the review with everybody, there is a need to be aware of the neighbors and what they are thinking and the impact. Particularly for example, traffic – right now the project is designed to exit along Madruga that appears to be an issue of concern by some neighbors. All those issues

are before us. Now as I tell applicants, we can certainly schedule anyone with a recommendation of denial at any point, but I don't think that's the goal here. The goal here is to come up with a project that is supported by the community and adds to the beauty of Coral Gables. Having said all of that, I think the scenario, the 30 days that I'm proposing fits right within the staff review that needs to happen anyway through the Planning and Zoning process, so I don't see a delay.

Commissioner Lago: That's what I was going to mention before. I think that it will go hand-in-hand.

Commissioner Keon: Another thing we have to remember is that we so often have done Charrettes and we've done planning studies and we've never done anything with them. We need to stop doing that. We need to have the Charrettes, we need to have the planning studies, and we need to move through these things in a timely manner. Not hurry through them so people don't have the opportunity to be heard, whatever, but you can't draw them out over months and months and years and years and say, Oh wait, I remember the 1982 study, I remember the 1987 study, I remember the 2001 study...

Mayor Cason: And nothing came of it.

Commissioner Keon:...I think we did, we did the 2001 study. Its 2015 let's do it again, and you know what?- we never did anything with it.

Commissioner Lago: I think that's in the past and I'll give you a clear example. You brought up the issue of the four symposiums that we had about permitting and zoning that we put together in the City. Charles stood up there – right now we are working on an action plan. We are going to present it to the Commission. The Commission at that point has to make a decision and say, OK, Madam City Manager let's implement the following action plan unless we can't afford to do this, this year we'll do the following when we are able to fit it into the budget. So I'm with you. When you start going back and you start listening to all these studies that were done and weren't implemented, it's kind of embarrassing.

Commissioner Keon: Right. So I think we should have the Charrette and I think it can happen during the time that staff is reviewing this project so that they are not held up by it, but it's an opportunity to have input from the neighbors and in some instances when people come in, I know over this weekend when we did the Charrette on the North Ponce area, it was a great learning opportunity for everyone that participated as to why certain things are done in a certain way, why things are planned in a certain way, why you should have paseos through blocks, so it's a good thing for everybody. The Planning Department believes that they can put this together

and have it within the next 30 days, and get the input, meet with the community, and be able to come back with some recommendations from that, we can all move forward together.

Commissioner Lago: Ramon when is the next P&Z meeting?

Mr. Trias: July 8th.

Commissioner Lago: July 8th, so we are talking close to a month from now. And the following Commission meeting would be?- August and the following Commission meeting would obviously be September, so we are talking there is a three month window here, where if anything would even come before the Commission for approval for Second Reading, I think there is sufficient time to go ahead, to really do both initiatives.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Yes, for it to run concurrently.

Commissioner Lago: Yes. We have a lot of time.

Mayor Cason: And the public will have the opportunity as it moves through Planning and Zoning to have done all these issues.

Commissioner Lago: And this time we are not delaying it. This is just a standard schedule that's put forth, and I imagine the applicant would not have an issue if we move forward today, if we need a week or we need two weeks to really listen to what staff has to say.

Mr. Trias: I don't believe there is any delay in any meaningful way and I do believe that if we do not provide an informal opportunity for neighbor input, there will be delays, that's the consequence of not having...

Commissioner Lago: Informal on the record because as the two individuals that came before us from the Riviera Homeowners Association, I was under a different impression.

Mr. Trias: Right.

Commissioner Lago: So I need to make sure that when these Charrettes happen, I'm...and I want to make sure that we have everything on the record from all neighbors because, again, we've heard from two neighbors that oppose the project, but I've heard from several neighbors that are in favor of the project. We want to hear everyone; we want to have everybody have an opportunity to really get their voice on the record.

Mr. Trias: We need to have a City-run, professionally run effort so that everybody has the same information and all of you are able to make the right decision.

Commissioner Keon: Yes. Thank you.

Vice Mayor Quesada: I think Commissioner Slesnick was...

Commissioner Slesnick: Ramon just a point of information. I worked at Esslinger Wooten Maxwell right next door to the Holiday Inn for 22 years, and I remember when we moved there we had so many neighbors in the neighborhood from the Riviera Homeowners Association, it took us two years to get into there because we had to do several Commission meetings and so forth. We had to do no right-hand turns and so forth to intrude into the neighborhood, we always had to go back to U.S.-1 and it took a long, long time, and we were very – I think we were good neighbors for the 22 years that we were there, 24. I see on here that it looks like it's all zoned commercial too, so that property where EWM was could be high-rise also, I mean the whole area could be redeveloped right there on either side of the waterway.

Mr. Trias: Depending on the Commission's decision, right now it can't.

Commissioner Slesnick: Because we have this in place just like...

Mr. Trias: Right.

Commissioner Slesnick: OK. I'm really in favor again of studying all of this at least for 30 days, I feel we are rushing into this and coming back and having them come to the August Commission, our August Planning and Zoning Board meeting, but...

Vice Mayor Quesada: Let me ask you a question. Let's say we say, look it should run its normal course right now, how quickly, because I know it all really depends on staff, does that mean that they would be on the Planning and Zoning Board meeting of July?

Mr. Trias: No.

Vice Mayor Quesada: No matter what we do, it wouldn't be in July.

Mr. Trias: Right.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Because obviously it needs staff work to be put in for it, so that means the first P&Z meeting it could potentially be available for is August, is that what you are saying?

Mr. Trias: Yes.

Commissioner Slesnick: And staff would have to recommend that it would come on at that point.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Because of that...

Commissioner Lago: So First Reading would be in September and Second Reading would be in October.

Vice Mayor Quesada: So my motion...

Mayor Cason: Let me ask you if you have something else to say, looks like you are nervous or something.

Mr. Bass: And again, I know that all of this is coming from a place of good intentions, but the realities of trying to control a piece of property on a schedule where you are not alone in control can become punitive when the developer is subjected to eleventh hour requests for non-codified process to occur. That's really difficult to swallow at times given the economic realities. The P&Z meeting perhaps could be moved, the July meeting moved which would give staff more time and I think it's important to know, we've been working with staff for approximately a year on this.

Mayor Cason: Can you move it later into July?

Commissioner Keon: Well it's the availability of staff during the summer.

Commissioner Slesnick: We could also have a Special Commission Meeting like we did for Agave for Second Reading.

Mr. Trias: My recommendation is to follow the dates and allow staff to do their job. Right now I have to coordinate many departments; everybody has to be able to provide valuable input. If we cut corners in that, we are going to have problems later on, it's not very complicated. Every developer and I understand it very well and frankly I clearly see what they propose, wants to do things very fast. Doing things fast in a City like Coral Gables that has very high standards and a very, very involved community is not the best approach to do it well.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Do you consider for them being a year into the process to be at this point to be fast?- or is that the normal course?

Mr. Trias: I think it's the normal course for a request that is asking for everything basically, yes.

Commissioner Keon: It's because it's not as-of-right....

Vice Mayor Quesada: This is an education for me. If a developer comes in and wants to do something not-as-of-right, it takes more than a year to get a full staff work-up?

Mr. Trias: Vice Mayor....

Vice Mayor Quesada: That sounds like a lot of time to me.

Mr. Trias: Let me explain something, OK. Every requirement of the Zoning Code, even the mixed-use requirements were not followed at the beginning, and some of those requirements deal with the protection of neighborhoods. For example, it took months; it took months of redesign just to follow what the Code says, for whatever reason. Now sometimes applicants appears that he date that they showed up the project was fully compliant with every Code, and that's not the case, that's normal, that happens every time. It's a process.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Yes, that happens in the DRC, the Development Review Committee...

Mr. Trias: Absolutely.

Vice Mayor Quesada:...And that's the first day they submit.

Mr. Trias: And they are told of the comments and sometimes they change....

Vice Mayor Quesada: So for staff to comply with our Code requirements and work-up when someone is seeking a variance it takes at least a year and now you are saying that's normal course. Do you think we should be faster than that or do you think that's about right?

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Vice Mayor Quesada, I understand the desire of the Commission to move this project through the process with Planning and Zoning. My suggestion is, I work with staff on a Special Meeting or the July meeting being postponed two weeks that just means it's two weeks less than the August meeting review and we'll use our best efforts to make that happen. Then when the August meeting for Commission comes forward and I believe that's August 25th, if the project is ready and the Planning and Zoning Board does not – they have always had the right to postpone their final recommendation, but if they are ready to make a recommendation, you would have that August 25 on First Reading and you'll have your Second

Reading if it passes in September. So what you are asking for is, is there a way to get this on the agenda and move it forward so you can vote up or down, and I believe that working with staff we'll be able to have a meeting in July, later in July in order to do that with Planning and Zoning Board, particularly given you have new appointments that will be coming onto the Board.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Partially yes. Thank you for...

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: I'll take the partially yes and I'll...

Vice Mayor Quesada: Thank you for bringing me back to the narrow issue of this project. I'm going to make a motion now, but after that I want to discuss the general topic, which I think is important for all of us to have. So my motion is that this project continues in the standard course that we have within the City for projects that are seeking a variance or Code amendment, and that the Planning and Zoning meeting occurs later in the month of July, and I think that's beneficial pursuant to a vote that we had earlier today on July 8th we'll be finalizing our appointments so it will give those appointments additional time to be prepared for that first Planning and Zoning meeting, whether this is the only item on the agenda or whether there are other items on the agenda, so I think that there is two-fold benefit. In addition to that, concurrently start the Charrette process for the entire corridor as Commissioner Slesnick had pointed out, all the way up to 37th Avenue and any areas there that fall within the purview of the City of Coral Gables.

Commissioner Keon: Can I ask you on the Charrette process. You can go back and include other areas later; right now the area that is really under pressure for development is from the Coral Gables Waterway to Red Road that is where most of the properties are...

Commissioner Slesnick: No, that doesn't include this project.

Commissioner Keon: Yes.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Yes it does.

Commissioner Slesnick: Waterway?

Vice Mayor Quesada: Waterway south of 57 Avenue.

Commissioner Slesnick: Yes.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Which is the baseball stadium.

Commissioner Slesnick: No, it's on the other side. You are talking about where EWM was, this is the Holiday Inn to the north.

Vice Mayor Quesada: I think she is talking about the Riviera Waterway, right.

Commissioner Slesnick: You are talking about the Riviera Waterway.

Commissioner Keon: The Riviera Waterway....because the other area north of that they are four-story, they do come out to the street, they have a different...what I'm looking at is where they are currently are a whole series of strip malls, that's the area. We can come back and ask...

Vice Mayor Quesada: To address your point, if we are going to convene professionals, if we are going to spend the money to look at this corridor, I guess what the question really comes back to Ramon and the City Manager, is it a terrible waste of time to add in the rest of those pieces or does it delay the conversation at all to add in those pieces? We have to assume that the Berkowitz site, the Gables Station site that his project did not go through. Something is going to come back here, might as well have that conversation now which would extend the Ponce area.

City Attorney Leen: There is a motion; you need to know if it has a second before you...

Commissioner Keon: I'll second your motion. Ramon what's your opinion on this?

Mr. Trias: I will stop at the Junior High, Ponce de Leon Junior High, because anything beyond that is going to be a distraction from this process at this point with the scope and the timelines that you propose.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Are we going to incur additional cost to convene the same group to look at essentially the same area a few blocks off?

Mr. Trias: I think I wouldn't underestimate the differences between the two areas. To me it's like really different projects, but I'm willing to look at it. All I'm saying is...

Vice Mayor Quesada: How about we do this, how about so my motion is to assemble that team to do a Charrette along that corridor primarily the area that Commissioner Keon is looking at, but at that very first meeting the first item on the agenda is, should we also include the discussion all the way to 37th?

Commissioner Keon: Absolutely.

Vice Mayor Quesada: And let them make the decision because they are the experts.

Commissioner Keon: Absolutely.

Vice Mayor Quesada: That's my complicated motion.

Mayor Cason: Alright. So....

City Attorney Leen: Mr. Mayor so if the first motion, which has been seconded do you agree with this too Commissioner Keon?

Commissioner Keon: Yes. Yes.

City Attorney Leen: So that's been amended, so we have the motion.

Mayor Cason: City Clerk.

Commissioner Keon: Or you can do it in stages, it's just that you can do that stage....

Mayor Cason: City Clerk

Vice Mayor Quesada: Yes

Commissioner Slesnick: Yes

Commissioner Keon: Yes

Commissioner Lago: Yes

Mayor Cason: Yes

(Vote: 5-0)

Vice Mayor Quesada: Now for my general broad issue is, I would like staff, I would like you to go back and if we can get an idea, and I think this is consistent with what Commissioner Lago has been trying to do with the permitting and inspections, what is the normal process for a project that's going as-of-right?- how long does it take someone to get through the entire process, all the different stages, on average?- and someone who is seeking a proposal or an applicant seeking Code amendment, or variances. I want to get an idea, I want to know the anomalies, I want to know the out-liars and I want to know what the averages are, so we have an idea.

Commissioner Keon: Bit it's not just a variance...

Commissioner Lago: It also has to do with a lot of, and I'm sorry to interrupt you Commissioner...

Commissioner Keon: No, I'm sorry.

Commissioner Lago:...I know that Mr. Hernandez can probably shed light on this being an architect, but a lot of it has to do with the quality of the design that's brought forth, and I know that Ramon can explain to you in more detail, but if you bring a project which is well designed and falls in line with the characters of the City of Coral Gables....

Vice Mayor Quesada: It will move much quicker.

Commissioner Lago: There is a lot less work that needs to be done...has to review documents, establish and review documents, and they have to sit there and they go back and forth, and back and forth. If you are asking for a certain bonus, which may be a Mediterranean bonus and you are not actually meeting the requirements of the Mediterranean bonus, that's where developers and staff kind of lock horns and there is a significant amount of time that's wasted.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Well let's get a general response now because right now what you said – I don't know how long it takes for a project to work its way through that's the perfect ideal project that every staff member loves and we love. Does that take three months?- does it take two years?- I don't know that. I don't think any of us really know that, so that we have a better idea of really how long it takes.

Mayor Cason: How many of those do we get? It seems to me that we know that we have 18-20 people that are thinking of doing something in the Gables, but very few of them ever come through to us.

Mr. Trias: Mayor, I think that the easiest way to answer the question is that anything that is by-right and is done perfectly by the applicant moves very fast; anything different than that takes time.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Moves very fast....

Mr. Trias: I know. Look at the information but the main issue here is that I think if you want to have the quality that the City wants, I think we need to allow for the process to work itself through.

Ms. Carmen Olazabal: And what we could try to get a timeline of previous projects and how they worked through the process, the issue sometimes is they come and they ask for something that is not as-of-right, that is something different, it's out of the box and we give feedback and then they'll come a second time and sometimes they don't come and meet all the criteria they come with a different solution. So then we look at that and sometimes coming back is three months, we don't control all of that timeline.

Vice Mayor Quesada: We understand that.

Ms. Olazabal: Some of it we do, some of it is them coming with solutions that have solved the problems we've identified. So it's...

Vice Mayor Quesada: This is going to help us better understand.

Ms. Olazabal: It's difficult, that's why it's difficult.

Vice Mayor Quesada: But this will help us better understand where we're being efficient, where we are inefficient, and where are items that are outside of our control, and really it's going to help you and staff better understand where you need to allocate resources.

Ms. Olazabal: No, no, I think it would be helpful to kind of run through four-five projects that we've gone through the past and identify kind of what has been the timeline.

Vice Mayor Quesada: I think that's a good start, a good start.

Ms. Olazabal: But it is difficult because each project is its own animal and they may come three or four times with different solutions, and it depends on how many solutions they propose, how many solutions we have to analyze, that's part of the issue.

Mayor Cason: OK. So you'll come back to us. So the next item is H-4.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: I'm sorry sir. I know we are going onto that but...

Commissioner Slesnick: I wanted to ask a question too.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: I'm sorry. I just wanted to clarify. We are going to schedule a Planning and Zoning Board meeting, it will either be the 22nd or the 29th, it will still be in July. We are meeting as a Commission is August 25th and this way we allow some flexibility because we don't know what the Charrette what our schedules will be during the month of July. So yes,

there will be a meeting in July to hear this project. It will either be the 22nd or 29th of July and we'll go from there. I think that's the best we can do.

Commissioner Lago: And I want to make sure that in August, you said August 25th, correct?

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: You have a Commission meeting on August 25th.

Commissioner Lago: I want to make sure that August 25th you have on the agenda the response and the opinions in reference to the Charrette that will be held over the next month.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Understand. We need to remind ourselves that Planning and Zoning Board is not obligated to, I mean they can vote up and down, but they could also defer and this gives us a little bit of time for an additional follow-up before it comes to you all.

Commissioner Slesnick: Mr. Bass, do you own this property now? How long have you owned it?

Mr. Bass: My client...

Mr. Reynolds: We take title to the property in September. We have had it under contract for over a year.

Commissioner Slesnick: So you are not losing money at least until September...

Mr. Reynolds: That's not correct, that's not correct at all. There are significant payments; it's basically a progress payment plan.

Commissioner Slesnick: OK. And Ramon, I know your department is very, very busy now because of the Agave development just being passed. Do you have staff and so forth that can expedite all of this?

Mr. Trias: No, but we can work with the staff we have, we'll certainly do the best we can.

Mayor Cason: You always do your best. Alright, thank you very much.

Commissioner Lago: Thank you Ramon.

Commissioner Keon: May I ask one question of Ramon with regard to the other Charrette? When will you come back with the synopsis of the North Gables Charrette and some

recommendations so we have another project that is waiting out there, so they can also come forward and we can move these along?

Mr. Trias: There was a contract with Chuck so I expect that within the next four weeks or so we'll have it.

Commissioner Keon: OK. So like by our July meeting, we have a meeting...

Mr. Trias: Yes.

Commissioner Keon: But probably by July.

Mr. Trias: Yes, we'll make that happen.

Commissioner Keon: OK. Thank you.

[End: 12:02:22 p.m.]