

CITY OF CORAL GABLES
LOCAL PLANNING AGENCY (LPA) /
PLANNING & ZONING BOARD MEETING
VERBATIM TRANSCRIPT
WEDNESDAY, MAY 20, 2026, COMMENCING AT 6:01 P.M.

Board Members Present at the City Chamber:

Alex Bucelo, Chairman
Felix Pardo
Robert Behar
Shane McGlashen
Ignacio Alvarez
Gonzalo Sanabria
Alice Bravo

City Staff and Consultants.

Jill Menendez, Administrative Assistant/Board Secretary
Craig Collier, Special Counsel
Craig Southern, Planning Official
Jennifer Garcia, City Planner
Guz Ceballos, Assistant City Attorney

Also Participating:

Barry Golden
Jose Val
Silvia King
William Rivenbark
Sara Cortes
Rose Bauer
Nestor Menendez
Jean Anne Davis
Lino Fernandez
Maria Pluchino

1 THEREUPON:

2 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: All right. Calling the
3 meeting to order. The time is now 6:01 still.

4 Good evening. The Board is comprised of
5 seven members. Four Members of the Board shall
6 constitute a quorum, and the affirmative vote
7 of four members shall be necessary for the
8 adoption of any motion. If only four Members
9 of the Board are present, an applicant may
10 request and be entitled to a continuance to the
11 next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board.

12 I'm on. Do you want me to go closer?

13 In the event that four votes are not
14 obtained, an applicant, except in the case of a
15 Comprehensive Plan Amendment, may request a
16 continuance or allow the application to proceed
17 to the City Commission without a
18 recommendation.

19 Pursuant to Resolution Number 2021-118, the
20 City of Coral Gables has returned to
21 traditional in-person meetings; however, the
22 Planning and Zoning Board has established the
23 ability for the public to provide comments
24 virtually.

25 For those members of the public who are

1 appearing on Zoom and wish to testify, you must
2 be visible to the court reporter to be sworn
3 in. Otherwise, if you speak without being
4 sworn in, your comments may not have
5 evidentiary value.

6 Lobbyist Registration and Disclosure, any
7 person who acts as a lobbyist must register
8 with the City Clerk, as required pursuant to
9 City Code.

10 As Chair, I now officially call the City
11 Coral Gables Planning and Zoning Board Meeting
12 of May 20, 2020 (sic) to order. The time is
13 6:02.

14 Jill, please call the roll.

15 THE SECRETARY: Just a correction, May 20,
16 2026.

17 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: 2026. I apologize.

18 THE SECRETARY: No worries.

19 Ignacio Alvarez?

20 MR. ALVAREZ: Here.

21 THE SECRETARY: Robert Behar?

22 MR. BEHAR: Present.

23 THE SECRETARY: Alice Bravo?

24 MS. BRAVO: Present.

25 THE SECRETARY: Shane McGlashen? Sorry.

1 MR. MCGLASHEN: Present.

2 THE SECRETARY: Thank you.

3 Felix Pardo?

4 MR. PARDO: Here.

5 THE SECRETARY: Gonzalo Sanabria?

6 He's not present.

7 Alex Bucelo?

8 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: Here.

9 THE SECRETARY: Thank you.

10 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: Notice Regarding Ex Parte
11 Communications, please be advised that this
12 Board is a quasi-judicial board, which requires
13 Board Members to disclose all ex parte
14 communications and site visits. An ex parte
15 communication is defined as any contact,
16 communication, conversation, correspondence,
17 memorandum or other written or verbal
18 communication, that takes place outside the
19 public hearing, between a member of the public
20 and a member of a quasi-judicial board
21 regarding matters to be heard by the Board.

22 If anyone made contact with a Board Member
23 regarding an issue before the Board, the Board
24 Member must state on the record the existence
25 of the ex parte communication and the party who

1 originated the communication. Also, if a Board
2 Member conducted a site visit specifically
3 related to the case before the Board, the Board
4 Member must also disclose such visit. In
5 either case, the Board Member must state on the
6 record whether the ex parte communication
7 and/or site visit will affect the Board
8 Member's ability to impartially consider the
9 evidence to be presented regarding the matter.
10 The Board Member should also state that his or
11 her decision will be based on substantial
12 competent evidence and testimony presented on
13 the record today.

14 Does any Board Member have such
15 communication and/or site visit to disclose at
16 this time?

17 MR. BEHAR: No.

18 MR. PARDO: Mr. Chair, I do.

19 Okay. I have visited the site. This is a
20 couple of blocks away -- a block and a half
21 away from my home. I've been to the site.
22 I've looked at the site, but then again I've
23 looked at --

24 MR. ALVAREZ: Which site, which letter?

25 MR. PARDO: Oh, I'm sorry, on the second

1 matter on today's agenda, but I feel that I can
2 be very impartial as far as that particular
3 application, and I am -- I feel that I have
4 absolutely no conflict of interest, but I
5 wanted to disclose that.

6 I also know a number of people that are in
7 the room, simply because they are my neighbors,
8 and I have not been approached in any way,
9 shape or form by any of the people that are
10 present, and even those that may not be
11 present, in discussing this matter, and I've
12 stayed an arm's length away, and I wanted to
13 make sure that this is full disclosure and make
14 sure that it's in as part of the record.

15 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

16 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: Understood. Thank you.

17 Swearing in, everyone who speaks this
18 evening must complete the roster on the podium.
19 We ask that you print clearly so that the
20 official records of your name and address will
21 be correct.

22 Now, with exceptions of attorneys, all
23 persons physically in the City Commission
24 Chambers who will be speak on agenda items
25 before us this evening please rise to be sworn

1 in.

2 (Thereupon, the participants were sworn.)

3 THE SECRETARY: Excuse me. Mr. Chair.

4 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: Yes.

5 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Sanabria just arrived
6 at 6:05.

7 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: Zoom Platform
8 Participants, I will ask any person wishing to
9 speak on tonight's agenda item to please open
10 your chat and send a direct message to Jill
11 Menendez, stating you would like to speak
12 before the Board and including your full name.
13 Jill will call you when it is your turn. I'll
14 ask you to be concise for the interest of time.

15 Phone Platform Participants, after Zoom
16 Platform participants are done, I will ask
17 phone participants to comment on tonight's
18 agenda item. I'll also ask you to be concise
19 for the interest of time.

20 Can I have approval of last Board meeting
21 minutes?

22 MR. BEHAR: I'll make a motion to approve.

23 MR. PARDO: Second.

24 MR. SANABRIA: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to
25 make some comments on the minutes from the last

1 meeting, if you allow me for a second, please.

2 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: Yes.

3 MR. SANABRIA: Mr. Chairman, when the
4 election took place in an impromptu manner, I
5 voted no for the nominees, and I want to tell
6 you that it's not anything to do with the
7 nominees, it's just the way it was processed,
8 which is something I'm not accustomed to. It's
9 being done much different in other Boards that
10 I have attended.

11 So I wanted to tell you that my vote for
12 you as Chair and for Alice Bravo as Vice Chair
13 is a definitely yes. It had nothing to do with
14 the nominees. So congratulations, and welcome.
15 Let's do some good things together.

16 Thank you, sir.

17 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: Thank you, Mr. Sanabria.

18 I think we have a motion and a second.
19 Jill, can you call the roll?

20 THE SECRETARY: Yes.

21 Robert Behar?

22 MR. BEHAR: Yes.

23 THE SECRETARY: Alice Bravo?

24 MS. BRAVO: Yes.

25 THE SECRETARY: Shane McGlashen?

1 MR. MCGLASHEN: Yes.

2 THE SECRETARY: Felix Pardo?

3 MR. PARDO: Yes.

4 THE SECRETARY: Gonzalo Sanabria?

5 MR. SANABRIA: Yes.

6 THE SECRETARY: Ignacio Alvarez?

7 MR. ALVAREZ: Yes.

8 THE SECRETARY: Alex Bucelo?

9 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: Yes.

10 The procedure we will use tonight is, the
11 identification of agenda item by Mr. Collier,
12 presentation by the applicant or agent,
13 presentation by Staff. We'll then open up the
14 public comment, first in Chamber, then Zoom
15 platform, and lastly phone line. We'll then
16 close public comment, open up the Board
17 discussion, and then entertain a motion,
18 discussion, and a second of the motion, and
19 then Board's final comments.

20 Mr. City Attorney, could you read the first
21 item?

22 MR. ALVAREZ: Mr. Chair, I'm sorry --
23 through the Chair --

24 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: Well, actually, thank you
25 for that. Yes.

1 Before we get started, we have a new Board
2 Member, and before we introduce or I have him
3 introduce himself, Mr. Menendez is here. He
4 was with us for, I think, close to a year, so
5 we would like to hear any final comments and
6 thoughts.

7 MR. MENENDEZ: So excuse my appearance.
8 It's been a pretty long day.

9 I just want to thank you all for the
10 privilege of serving on the Planning and Zoning
11 Board. It's been a genuine honor to work
12 alongside such thoughtful and dedicated
13 colleagues, fellow residents who give so
14 generously of their time in service to our
15 community, and they contribute to the future of
16 our City.

17 I'm especially grateful to Vice Mayor
18 Anderson for appointing me and placing her
19 trust in me to serve the residents with
20 integrity and professionalism. That confidence
21 and trust have meant a great deal to me, and I
22 hope I have lived up to them during my time on
23 the Board.

24 I'm also grateful for the trust this Board
25 and the residents we serve placed in me. The

1 conversations around this table, sometimes
2 spirited, but always in good faith, reflect the
3 very best of how local government should
4 operate. Now I'll carry these lessons from
5 this experience with me long after tonight.

6 To the Staff, my fellow Board Members, and
7 everyone who took the time to share their
8 voice, thank you. The work you do matters and
9 I leave knowing this Board remains in capable
10 and principled hands. Thank you.

11 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: Thank you, and good luck.

12 MR. BEHAR: Mr. Menendez, thank you very
13 much. It was a privilege and an honor to be
14 serving with you.

15 MR. MENENDEZ: Much appreciated.

16 MR. BEHAR: You were instrumental to the
17 success of this Board. Thank you very much.

18 MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you.

19 MR. ALVAREZ: Mr. Menendez -- I'm sorry,
20 through the Chair.

21 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: No, please, Absolutely.

22 MR. ALVAREZ: Why are you resigning, again?

23 MR. MENENDEZ: I'm -- can I say, Craig?
24 I'm a candidate for a Commission seat that's up
25 in November. So I thought it would be best to

1 avoid any impropriety or allusions of
2 impropriety, not that I had any plan to do
3 anything, but there's a lot of members of this
4 community that come to this Board, that might
5 support me or not support me or have issues in
6 front of this Board, that I just felt it was
7 something to send a message to be beyond
8 reproach and focus on the candidacy and not
9 have any potential conflicts of interest come
10 before the Board, where I might have an opinion
11 or a voice or a vote on. So that's pretty much
12 the reason why I stepped off.

13 MR. ALVAREZ: Through the Chair, to the
14 City Attorney.

15 Is it automatic that people that run for
16 office should come off to the Committee?

17 MR. COLLIER: I believe it's the -- from
18 what I've been advised, I believe it's up to
19 the Member. If the Member feels that it would
20 be best for them not to serve, that's a
21 personal decision that they make.

22 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: Mr. Alvarez, to that
23 point, two years ago, I ran for office, and I
24 was sitting on this Board. I also resigned,
25 just like he's doing, just for lack of -- you

1 know, conflict of interest, as we would say.
2 So I, too, two years ago, to run for a
3 Commission seat, I also resigned from the
4 Board.

5 MR. ALVAREZ: No, I only ask because I know
6 Gonzalo is also running, so I don't know what
7 the position is for Gonzalo on that, if he's
8 going to stay with or not stay with us. That's
9 why I was asking.

10 MR. COLLIER: Well, it's up to the
11 individual whether they feel that it would be
12 better for them not to serve or to serve.
13 There's no requirement for them. It's not a
14 resign to run thing that is under State law, as
15 far as whether a Board Member chooses to
16 continue to serve or not. It's up to the
17 individual Board Member and how they feel.

18 MR. ALVAREZ: Okay.

19 MR. MENENDEZ: Thank you, again.

20 MR. BEHAR: But Mr. Menendez, I commend you
21 for what you're doing and I think it's the
22 correct.

23 MR. ALVAREZ: Through the Chair, I see all
24 of the time in the Commission Meetings, should
25 we take a picture with Mr. Menendez?

1 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: I think that's a great
2 idea.

3 MR. BEHAR: I think that's a great idea.

4 MR. ALVAREZ: Do we have a camera -- or I
5 can use my camera.

6 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: Use your camera, yeah.
7 It's your idea.

8 MR. ALVAREZ: We'll say goodbye. He's my
9 counterpart here. He replaced me with Robert.

10 MS. BRAVO: Does he receive anything to
11 commemorate his time with the Board, like a
12 little mini gavel?

13 (Thereupon, a picture was taken.)

14 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: Now, before we begin, if
15 we can have you introduce yourself to the
16 Board, as well.

17 MR. MCGLASHEN: Of course.

18 Good evening, everyone. My name is Shane
19 McGlashen. It's a pleasure to be here. I'm a
20 resident and homeowner in Coral Gables. I'm
21 also a practicing attorney. I live with my
22 wife, Natalia, and it's a real honor and
23 privilege to be here and I'm going to do
24 everything I can to serve this community.

25 Thank you.

1 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: Thank you.

2 MR. COLLER: Mr. Chairman, there's sort of
3 a housekeeping measure on the agenda that maybe
4 we could take first, because I noticed that the
5 Assistant City Attorney is here to present the
6 item. It's entirely up to you. It's really
7 just a provision relating to appeals. It's not
8 relating to a piece of property. It's just --
9 it's timing, how much time, what's to be in the
10 notice, and I don't believe there's anybody
11 here to speak on it. It's entirely up to the
12 Board, if you want to take it out of turn,
13 before you hear probably extensive testimony
14 tonight, I would anticipate.

15 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: I would move for that,
16 yes.

17 MR. BEHAR: I'll make a motion to move it
18 forward.

19 MR. ALVAREZ: I'll second.

20 MS. BRAVO: Second.

21 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: There we go.

22 All in favor? I think it's -- aye.

23 (Board Members voted aye.)

24 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: Okay. Perfect.

25 MR. COLLER: Item E-3, an Ordinance of the

1 City Commission amending Article 14 "Process",
2 Section 14-208 "Appeals" of the City Zoning
3 Code, to revise appeal procedures, extensions,
4 deadlines, increase specificity in notices of
5 appeal; limit the scope of stays; establishes
6 provisions regarding consolidation, related
7 approvals, and abandonment of appeals;
8 providing for severability clause, repealer
9 provision, codification, and providing for an
10 effective date.

11 Item E-3, public hearing.

12 MR. CEBALLOS: Good afternoon, Mr. Chair,
13 Vice Chair, and Fellow Board Members. Thank
14 you for taking this item first. For the record,
15 Assistant City Attorney and City prosecutor,
16 Gus Ceballos.

17 So this appeal amendment is before you
18 strictly for a recommendation, if you have any
19 recommendation that we can further along to the
20 Commission. I will give you a quick little
21 highlight of what the actual change is that
22 we're proposing.

23 The first one is in the appeals of Staff
24 decisions, which is not something that the City
25 frankly faces very often, but when we looked at

1 other municipalities in the area, we found that
2 ours was a very, very long time frame. Most of
3 the cities we found, anywhere from ten to
4 twenty days was an appropriate time. We are
5 proffering to reduce that to fifteen, just to
6 bring it in line with similar municipalities in
7 the area.

8 We also had a string of appeals in the
9 recent history that lacked specificity, so it's
10 very difficult for the City Clerk, the City
11 Attorney, and anyone, to schedule appeals, when
12 we don't really have an understanding of what
13 it is that's being appealed. So one of the
14 additional things that we have requested to
15 change is to -- the Notice of Appeal shall
16 provide the particularity of why it's being
17 appealed, the basis, the standing. All of
18 those things need to be included as part of the
19 Notice of Intent to Appeal.

20 Additionally, you'll notice that it states
21 that within fourteen days of filing the written
22 notice of appeal, they must provide a completed
23 appeal package. The reason why that's being
24 included is, prior to the Code change, the way
25 that our Code is currently written, must

1 appeals, you have ten days, and when you get a
2 written Notice of Intent to Appeal, ten days is
3 given to you, and what that means is, you can
4 write a simple e-mail to the City Clerk's
5 Office saying, "I intent to appeal A, B, and
6 C."

7 From that moment, the Clerk's Office gives
8 you the package. That package then gives you
9 an additional fourteen days to complete the
10 package, but that document -- that fourteen
11 days was only include in that package. It was
12 never codified in our Code. So we decided,
13 when we're cleaning it up, we're going to clean
14 up that form, we're going to clean this up.
15 We're also going to include that language in
16 here.

17 We've also included language that final
18 decision shall be appealable -- only final
19 decisions will be appealable. Once again, not
20 an issue that we've had, but we thought it was
21 a good cleanup to make sure that, you know,
22 preliminary decisions, opinions, any sort of
23 non-binding final decisions couldn't be
24 appealed, because, once again, no final
25 decision has been made. You'll see the same

1 language is added on the second page, that
2 mirrors on the first document.

3 Then we do dive a little bit into the
4 remand. So the City Commission, when they
5 remand something back to a lower Board,
6 typically it's one of the options that the
7 Commission has, if they believe there wasn't
8 enough -- some sort of, you know, procedural or
9 some sort of fact finding issue and they want
10 to send it back to the lower board, they can
11 remand. This just specifically states that
12 once -- that any remand shall be limited
13 specifically to the issues identified by the
14 City Commission, and, no, this is not a new
15 opportunity, a new bite at the apple, to
16 present new information or new arguments by
17 either side.

18 And one of the other items we're also going
19 to be doing is consolidation, which is
20 something we found in a lot of other similar
21 cities, where whenever it's practical, we can
22 try to consolidate multiple appeals on multiple
23 issues of a particular project. It's been an
24 issue, where we have a singular project or, you
25 know, over the years, where every aspect of

1 that project, whether it goes to one board or
2 three boards, gets individually appealed or
3 individual items can get appealed, any changes
4 before the Board of Architects then get appeal,
5 so what ends up happening is basically just an
6 unnecessarily significant delay on a project.
7 Somebody just taking advantage of the fact that
8 the process has so many approval steps to take
9 advantage and delay the project at every single
10 step.

11 Additionally, and I believe, lastly, we are
12 addressing the sections of postponements.
13 Before, the first postponement is an automatic
14 one. In discussion with the City Commission
15 and discussing it with Staff, we believe that's
16 not appropriate, so none of them will be
17 automatic, but the first one should be granted,
18 if there is good cause, up to 21 days. The
19 second one would also be granted, not no exceed
20 14 days, if there's extraordinary
21 circumstances, and that one must go to the City
22 Commission for approval. So it takes Staff out
23 of equation, where Staff is put in a very
24 awkward position as to continue, and continue,
25 and continue projects. In this particular way,

1 we take it to the City Commission, the final
2 decision-makers, and if they want to grant
3 additional time, so be it. And, then, in no
4 event, shall there be a third postponement
5 granted, unless there is an emergency
6 declaration or natural disaster.

7 Now, one big caveat that I should highlight
8 for everybody, because this is a question that
9 a lot of people may have, nothing in these
10 sections would prevent additional postponements
11 upon agreement of all parties. Why do I say
12 that? If there's a hurricane, and it's
13 followed by a second hurricane, and there's no
14 way to meet the previous deadlines, and
15 there's, perhaps -- let's say we're waiting for
16 some information that's not readily available,
17 if the City and the appellant, and if the
18 opportunity -- in the particular case where the
19 property owner is not the appellant, if all
20 three parties agree, we have no issue with it
21 being extended further, but it's something that
22 must be agreed upon by all of the parties.

23 I think that takes care of all of the major
24 changes. If any appeals are not heard within
25 the time frames, they'll be deemed abandoned

1 and void.

2 And if you have any other questions, I'm
3 happy to answer them.

4 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: Thank you.

5 MR. PARDO: Mr. Chairman, I've got a
6 question.

7 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: Do you want to wait for
8 -- oh, a question? I apologize.

9 MR. PARDO: Yes, a question --

10 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: Yes, sorry.

11 MR. PARDO: -- for Gus.

12 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: Sorry.

13 MR. PARDO: I understand that you're
14 looking at this from the applicant's
15 standpoint -- in other words, a building, a
16 development or something like that -- but the
17 appeal period seems to be something that the
18 public, and usually an aggrieved party, is
19 directly affected by. By shortening that,
20 you're not providing anything on the other side
21 as far as ease of a speedier method of
22 appealing a decision, where you have an
23 aggrieved party.

24 So it seems to me that it's only weighted
25 on the side of the applicant by shortening and

1 making stricter the ability to appeal, and
2 normally it's not someone that is just hoping
3 to drag the feet of the project, to make the
4 developer pay more money, but it's more like
5 someone has a true objection and has to gather
6 a bunch of information to be able to then
7 rightfully appeal.

8 It seems to me that it's a little
9 one-sided. Maybe I'm wrong, but for me, the
10 ability to appeal a decision is extremely
11 important for the aggrieved party, usually
12 someone that's going to be affected possibly in
13 a negative way. So as far as the speed, you
14 know, in shortening these time periods, it
15 becomes more difficult.

16 Keep in mind that most people that appeal
17 aren't lawyers. Most people are residents.
18 They would have to go out, hire a lawyer, do
19 this, do that, get the information from Staff,
20 you know, all of these searches. All of a
21 sudden, you've reduced that time period where
22 it becomes almost impossible for them to
23 appeal, unless they have a lawyer in hand,
24 unless they know the process, and most
25 residents don't know the process, and they have

1 to rely on people that will return e-mails or
2 phone calls.

3 So that is my great concern, that I think
4 that, you know, the way it is now -- and with
5 all due respect to other municipalities, you
6 know, for a municipality of 50,000 people, and
7 with the amount of development that we have
8 here, and with the people that have concerns, I
9 think it's wrong to try to shorten and limit
10 that, because it puts the normal resident that
11 is affected in a very bad position, I think.

12 MR. BEHAR: But Felix --

13 MR. CEBALLOS: I can address that very
14 easily.

15 So it's not shortening the time period at
16 all for the purposes of intent to appeal, only
17 decisions from the City Staff. Meaning, the
18 time line that you have to appeal the Board of
19 Architects, Historic Preservation, Planning and
20 Zoning Board, Board of Architects, every other
21 board in the City, is not being touched. It's
22 not being touched. You have the exact same
23 amount of time. You have ten days to file a
24 Notice of Intent to Appeal. Subsequent to
25 whatever date you file that Notice of Intent to

1 Appeal, you have fourteen days. That's the way
2 it is currently handled, and it's not being
3 modified in any way.

4 The only thing that was an outlier was
5 14-208(4), which is appeals of decisions of
6 City Staff, which as I stated before, rarely
7 comes up, because it's basically an
8 administrative decision that somebody chooses
9 to appeal, and this still gives you fifty
10 percent more time than you would have if you
11 were appealing the Board of Architects, the
12 Historic Preservation Board, any of the other
13 City Board. So you're actually getting
14 significantly more time than you would with any
15 other board, but just in this section.

16 We're not affecting or changing any other
17 Notice of Intent to Appeal time lines or
18 application portion. That's exactly the same.
19 That is not being touched.

20 MR. PARDO: I have another question. How
21 long did you work on this?

22 MR. CEBALLOS: It's been something that's
23 been discussed over the years. We've probably
24 dabbled over, I'd say, frankly, over two or
25 three years --

1 MR. PARDO: So you had input from Staff
2 and --

3 MR. CEBALLOS: Oh, no, this was work --
4 we've had probably, I'd say, at least half a
5 dozen meetings over the years about addressing
6 not only this package, this particular Code
7 section, but the actual appeal package. The
8 appeal package has a bit of redundant
9 information, that doesn't coincide with the
10 Code. Like I specifically stated before, how
11 the fourteen days was never codified anywhere
12 in our Code, and now we're choosing to codify
13 it.

14 So, basically, when somebody goes to the
15 City Clerk's Office, picks up an appeal
16 package, they're not getting conflicting
17 information from what's on the City Code or the
18 Zoning Code and what's on the appeal package.
19 So this will bring it in line.

20 MR. BEHAR: Felix, I think this is going to
21 simplify it, the way I see it.

22 MR. CEBALLOS: Right.

23 MR. PARDO: I printed it. I read it very
24 carefully. I read it backwards and forwards,
25 and I have questions for the City Attorney's

1 Office.

2 I would like to have simply a deferral
3 before we change something like this, simply to
4 be able to understand it. We receive our
5 package, as you know, Friday afternoon, and I
6 printed it. I read it. I read it again. I
7 went back, I tried to go back and then find out
8 exactly what the differences were, and the
9 whole point is that, I've already stated my
10 point about any concern about the ability to
11 appeal.

12 I think, you know --

13 MR. BEHAR: But this is appealing like the
14 Staff recommendations. It doesn't appeal
15 Planning and Zoning, Board of Architects, none
16 of that, and it's not changing none of that,
17 which, to me, are the ones that would be more
18 concerning for the residents, to have an
19 opportunity to do that.

20 You know, for me, the Staff -- I mean, at
21 the end of the day, Staff is going to say
22 something -- you know, recommend, and they're
23 going to come to the Boards, and this is where
24 you're going to appeal.

25 MR. PARDO: I understand the concern. My

1 concern was, I felt like I really needed to be
2 able to have enough time to discuss it with
3 Staff, so I could understand it.

4 MR. BEHAR: With all due respect to Staff,
5 I mean, I don't care what they put together.
6 You know, they do -- I care what the Board's
7 decision -- whether it's this Board or the
8 Board of Architects or any other Board, that's
9 the decision I want to have the opportunity --
10 to correct the time to appeal, because, you
11 know, we come here and the Board comes -- you
12 know, the Staff Member comes and presents
13 something that, at the end of the day, we
14 change or, you know, make modifications.

15 To me, the concern is, as Mr. Ceballos
16 stated clearly, it's not affecting the time
17 frame for the other Board, the Planning, the
18 Board of Architects, none of that. That's not
19 being comprised.

20 MR. PARDO: Which are all of the Boards
21 that are being affected by this change?

22 MR. CEBALLOS: No Board is being affected
23 by that particular change.

24 MR. BEHAR: No Board.

25 MR. PARDO: So it's only, what, that is

1 being affected?

2 MR. CEBALLOS: So in terms of the
3 shortening of the Notice of Intent to Appeal,
4 no Board is being affected. It is strictly
5 decisions from the City Staff. That's it.

6 MR. PARDO: Decisions from the City Staff?

7 MR. CEBALLOS: Correct. So if you have a
8 decision from the DRO, the City Architect --
9 although typically the City Architect, you can
10 just go to the Board of Architects -- but,
11 let's say, for whatever reason, the City
12 Architect makes a decision and you choose to
13 appeal that decision, you have 15 days to file
14 your Notice of Intent to Appeal the City
15 Architect's decision.

16 MR. PARDO: So an average person that sees
17 that, maybe there's an MOT that has been
18 approved by the Manager's Office, and someone
19 is concerned with the MOT. So all of a sudden
20 you have 15 days to run around and try to find
21 the ability to appeal that decision. Once you
22 find out who made the decision -- the ultimate
23 decision on that MOT, which in this case would
24 be the City Manager, so you might be going to
25 Public Works trying to figure out what's what,

1 and it could take you 15 days easily to get the
2 right answers to be able to point in the right
3 direction.

4 MR. CEBALLOS: You could make the same
5 argument for every other board. I mean, the
6 fact that you only have ten days, you could
7 make the same arguments. I think it's pretty
8 much in line with all municipalities.

9 MR. PARDO: I am making that argument.

10 MR. CEBALLOS: Yeah. I think it's in line
11 with every other municipality. I think it's
12 pretty consistent. I think we're being more
13 than fair, but if you'd like to make that
14 recommendation. At the end of the day, we're
15 here to take some recommendations that we will
16 -- I'll be happy to include them with our
17 presentation to the City Commission.

18 MR. PARDO: But Mr. Chairman, the reason I
19 was asking for more time is because I wanted to
20 be able to learn a little bit more about this,
21 because every decision in changing
22 administratively something, you know, it's --

23 MR. SANABRIA: Mr. Chairman?

24 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: Yes.

25 MR. SANABRIA: If I can ask, Mr. Pardo,

1 please, in simple terms, rephrase your concern,
2 so I can understand it.

3 MR. PARDO: My concern is that --

4 MR. SANABRIA: Speak into the mic, please.

5 MR. PARDO: My concern is that when you
6 look at the different decisions that are made
7 administratively by Staff, there are an
8 enormous amount of decisions that affect
9 people, and those people don't know necessarily
10 who they can or if they can appeal to one of
11 these things. There is a lack of clarity.

12 If you're within Staff, you know, it's
13 clear to you. To compress it -- I don't quite
14 understand the reasoning behind compressing the
15 amount of time for those Staff decisions, and
16 some of those Staff decisions are direct
17 decisions that affect people and their quality
18 of life.

19 So I was just asking for time to truly
20 comprehend, you know, what the ramifications
21 are of this change.

22 MR. SANABRIA: Mr. Chairman, if I may, can
23 I ask Assistant County -- City Attorney, what
24 is the actual time line that this has to be --
25 why is this before our Board at this time?

1 MR. CEBALLOS: The only reason why this is
2 before this Board is because these changes are
3 in the Planning -- in the Zoning Code. So if
4 these changes were in the City Code, it
5 wouldn't come before this Board, but because
6 these changes specifically are in the Zoning
7 Code, the Zoning Code requires that it comes
8 before this Board for recommendations, before
9 we take it to the City Commission.

10 MR. SANABRIA: So there is no urgency from
11 your side for this to be heard today, it could
12 be deferred; is that correct?

13 MR. CEBALLOS: We would prefer that there
14 wasn't a deferral. I was told to request that
15 if there's any recommendations, any concerns,
16 I'll be happy to incorporate them and provide
17 them to the City Commission, who are the final
18 decision-makers, but at the end of the day, I'm
19 in no way -- I can in no way bind in particular
20 Board to vote one way or the other.

21 MR. BEHAR: Felix, if you have some
22 comments or some, you know, to add it -- I
23 mean, I'll be more than happy to support
24 something that goes, but, you know --

25 MR. PARDO: I mean, I think it could have

1 been -- I think it could have been presented by
2 Staff a lot more clearer than just the
3 strike-outs, because there are ramifications to
4 these decisions, from different offices and
5 different Staff Members. The question is, I
6 don't know enough, and like I said, I printed
7 this specifically to understand it, but based
8 on the presentation that I saw tonight, with
9 all due respect to the Assistant City Attorney,
10 you know, it's just, what are the
11 ramifications? I feel very uncomfortable with
12 it. I only ask for this to be deferred to the
13 next meeting, simply to be able to understand
14 it better, not to be side blindness, but simply
15 to understand it better.

16 So if I'm forced to vote, I'll vote, no,
17 but it's up to you. I just ask for time.

18 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: I think -- Jill, is there
19 any public comment?

20 THE SECRETARY: Sorry.

21 Not on this item.

22 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: Okay. So let's close the
23 public comment.

24 I guess, open Board discussion.

25 MR. CEBALLOS: I'm happy to answer any

1 questions.

2 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: Please.

3 MS. BRAVO: Just to try to facilitate the
4 discussion, would you say, in your own words,
5 what this is accomplishing and the benefit of
6 it to the public?

7 MR. CEBALLOS: So, in essence, this is a
8 cleanup for our Zoning Code, specifically our
9 Appeal Section. Currently, our Appeal Section,
10 there's a bit of a miscommunication between our
11 appeal package, which is what's provided by the
12 City Clerk's Office and what's currently in the
13 Zoning Code. This attempts to bring those two
14 items together, so that they both reflect the
15 same type of dates.

16 We did find in our review of this, it was
17 one of those, we're going to review, we're
18 going to try to update this, we're trying to
19 clean this up, and as part of the process, we
20 looked at every section, to see whether there
21 could be improvements. One of those sections
22 we found incredibly excessive is the appeals
23 from City Staff.

24 At the end of the day, the person that
25 typically will appeal the decision of a City

1 Staff member is the applicant themselves.
2 Meaning, you're not going to have an aggrieved
3 party, because, in our Code, to have an
4 aggrieved party, you need to receive notice.
5 The only person that's ever going to receive
6 notice of an administrative decision that was
7 denied is the applicant. The applicant is
8 going to have more than enough time to file
9 their appeal.

10 So if an applicant, let's say, whatever the
11 decision may be, maybe a Zoning reviewer has
12 denied Plan X, and I'd like to appeal that
13 decision, I have 15 days to file a Notice of
14 Intent to Appeal. Once you file your Notice to
15 Intent to Appeal, you get an additional 14 days
16 to get all of your ducks in a row, make your
17 payment for the appeal, get your mailing labels
18 that are required, and then we'll either take
19 it typically to either the Board of Adjustment
20 or the Historic Preservation Board for it to be
21 heard. So the majority of this would not
22 affect general people in the public.

23 In regards to your comment about MOTs and
24 things of that nature, that's something that,
25 at least right now, I can't see it being

1 appealable, because you're not an aggrieved
2 party by the definition of our Zoning Code, and
3 we also found that the current Postponement
4 Section of the Appeal Section had been ripe for
5 abuse, where parties have been abusing it, on
6 both ends, and that doesn't mean that we can't
7 extend it. We have extended it, especially
8 when both parties agree.

9 If I'm building a two-story home on Sunset
10 Drive and I need to go to Historic
11 Preservation, because my property was
12 historically designated, but we disagree. It
13 was denied. I want to go to the Commission to
14 get this resolved. There is nothing that would
15 prevent me from asking for an extension of six
16 months, because at the end of the day, the only
17 injured party is me. It is my property. I'm
18 injuring myself, because I can't continue with
19 my proposed redevelopment or proposed addition
20 or change or whatever it might. The only
21 injured party is me.

22 The issue really stems here from somebody
23 abusing the process and causing a third party,
24 who's typically the applicant, a significant
25 amount of delay. Something that could have

1 been delayed maybe a month, or two, or three
2 months, in order to make sure that everyone's
3 appeal rights are addressed, because that's --
4 this, in no way, attempts to remove anyone's
5 appeal rights, but at this particular way that
6 it's currently written, you can have a property
7 that's been appealed four, five, six, seven
8 times, with postponement of months, that cause
9 unnecessary delays, and I think for the
10 betterment of all parties involved, we'd like
11 to be able to consolidate, minimize
12 postponement, so at the end of the day we can
13 get in front of the City Commission, who's the
14 final decision-maker and that's really what the
15 goal is.

16 MS. BRAVO: So if I may, it sounds like
17 you're (A) codifying what is the practice in
18 the documents that we distribute.

19 MR. CEBALLOS: Yes.

20 MS. BRAVO: And, also, you're making
21 Staff's time more efficient. They don't have
22 to go digging for something months later. They
23 can deal with it on the spot, and then due
24 process, for anybody else that's interested in
25 the topic, the matter will resolve --

1 MR. CEBALLOS: We're not minimizing
2 anybody's due process.

3 MS. BRAVO: All right. I'm satisfied with
4 the information.

5 MR. PARDO: Mr. Chairman? Through the
6 Chair.

7 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: Go ahead.

8 MR. PARDO: And, then, so what I understand
9 is, when you look at your applications for the
10 appeals, they are not according to what's in
11 the Zoning Code right now? In other words, the
12 handouts that you give for the package, they
13 are in direct conflict with what's in the --

14 MR. CEBALLOS: No. So, right now, the
15 Zoning Code, and you read it, the only date,
16 time limitation you will see is ten days to
17 file a Notice of Intent to Appeal. That's it.
18 But once you go to the City Clerk's Office and
19 you pick up your appeal package, you're going
20 to find, on the very second line, you have 14
21 days to complete this package.

22 It simply is not codified in our Code. So
23 this now codifies it. So now you know, if you
24 just look at the City Code or the Zoning Code,
25 you're not limited to just ten days, you know I

1 don't have ten days. I can submit my Notice of
2 Intent to Appeal on the ninth day or the tenth
3 day. I'm going to have an additional 14 days.
4 So I'm going to have in total 23, 24 days to
5 complete the package, get all of my ducks in
6 the row, do my research, get my mailing labels,
7 make my payment, and take care of all of the
8 things.

9 And, then, from then, it obviously -- also,
10 you have additional time, because once you've
11 filed all of that information, there needs to
12 be at least 13 days for notice. So if you
13 file -- let's say you file everything, you
14 complete it, and there's a Commission Meeting
15 or the appropriate Board for your particular
16 appeal is Historic Preservation, there's a
17 Historic Preservation Board meeting in seven
18 days, you're not going to be on next month,
19 because we don't have 13 days to send notice.
20 So you're not going to be on next month's
21 meeting, but this at least codifies everything,
22 so that everyone can look at one document, in
23 this particular, the Zoning Code, and know the
24 entire appeal process.

25 MR. PARDO: Mr. Chairman, I understand now.

1 This was one of the questions which was not
2 part of the package that we received. So I
3 feel more comfortable now, based on exactly
4 what the Assistant City Attorney just
5 explained.

6 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: Great.

7 Mr. Alvarez.

8 MR. COLLIER: At some point we need to check
9 if there's anybody here on this item.

10 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: We did.

11 MR. COLLIER: You did check?

12 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: We did.

13 Mr. Alvarez.

14 MR. ALVAREZ: Is this explained to the
15 person that's doing an appeal? Is there like,
16 in the application process, hey, you have this
17 date, this date, this date, this date? So
18 everything is on there?

19 MR. CEBALLOS: Yeah. It's on there.

20 So the Notice to Intent to Appeal is
21 something that you typically only find in our
22 Zoning Code, but, let's say, if you have a
23 particular application that went to Historic or
24 Board of Architects, whatever it may be, if you
25 ask Staff, "Hey, I don't agree with that

1 decision, I'd like to appeal," they'll simply
2 tell you you have ten days to file that Notice
3 of Intent to Appeal.

4 We are very liberal when it comes to that
5 interpretation, because, at the end of the day,
6 the last thing we want to do is infringe on
7 anyone's due process rights, so that can be a
8 simple e-mail, come in, write it on a piece.
9 If you hand me a Post-It that says, "I intent
10 to appeal," and sign it and you hand it to me,
11 I'll provide it the City Clerk and that starts
12 your clock for you next deadline, which in this
13 case would be an additional 14 days to complete
14 your package.

15 MR. ALVAREZ: Yeah, but my question is, to
16 avoid a regular person having to read the Code,
17 this is set in the package that they get?
18 Okay. Now you have this. Now you have like a
19 time line so the person knows.

20 MR. CEBALLOS: If the person goes directly
21 to the Clerk's Office and picks up the appeal
22 package, all of that information will be
23 provided on there.

24 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: Mr. Behar?

25 MR. BEHAR: I have no comment.

1 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: Shane, any comments?

2 MR. MCGLASHEN: No comment. Thank you.

3 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: Mr. Sanabria?

4 MR. SANABRIA: No. I just wanted -- I
5 overheard that to file an appeal, you need an
6 attorney.

7 MR. CEBALLOS: No.

8 MR. SANABRIA: You don't. I don't think
9 you do.

10 Okay. I don't have any questions.

11 MR. BEHAR: I'll make a motion to approve.

12 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: I have no futher
13 comments, either.

14 Let's close Board discussion.

15 MR. BEHAR: Motion to approve.

16 MS. BRAVO: Second.

17 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: Jill.

18 THE SECRETARY: Sorry.

19 Alice Bravo?

20 MS. BRAVO: Yes.

21 THE SECRETARY: Shane McGlashen?

22 MR. MCGLASHEN: Yes.

23 THE SECRETARY: Felix Pardo?

24 MR. PARDO: Yes.

25 THE SECRETARY: Gonzalo Sanabria?

1 MR. SANABRIA: Yes.

2 THE SECRETARY: Ignacio Alvarez?

3 MR. ALVAREZ: Yes.

4 THE SECRETARY: Robert Behar?

5 MR. BEHAR: Yes.

6 THE SECRETARY: Alex Bucelo?

7 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: Yes.

8 MR. CEBALLOS: Thank you, again.

9 I appreciate your time. Thank you.

10 MR. BEHAR: You should have stayed until
11 the end of the meeting to do this.

12 MR. CEBALLOS: I started off my day with
13 the Code Enforcement Board in this room at 8:30
14 in the morning. I'm very happy to --

15 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: So you started with my
16 father, then.

17 MR. CEBALLOS: Yes. He was sitting right
18 over there.

19 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: If we could have the
20 next --

21 MR. COLLIER: We're going to start with the
22 first item?

23 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: Yes, the first item.

24 MR. COLLIER: Okay.

25 MR. ALVAREZ: Through the Chair. Should we

1 do the second item, because everybody is here
2 for the second item?

3 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: Do we have a motion?

4 MR. COLLIER: It's up to the Board.

5 MR. BEHAR: I think it's a good idea.

6 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: Okay.

7 MS. BRAVO: Motion to start with E-2.

8 MR. ALVAREZ: So my motion is to start with
9 E-2, because everybody is here in the crowd,
10 just to help them out.

11 MS. BRAVO: I second your motion.

12 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: All in favor?

13 (Board Members voted aye.)

14 MR. COLLIER: Okay. Item E-2, an Ordinance
15 of the City Commission amending Ordinance
16 Number 1952, as amended, which changed the
17 zoning on Lots 1, 2, 3, 20, 21, 22, 23, and 24
18 Block 120 and Lots 1 thru 5, Block 131, Country
19 Club Section (430, 440, 450, and 520 University
20 Drive), Coral Gables, Florida, to remove
21 certain conditions of approval that limit the
22 use of the property to overflow parking and
23 that revert the zoning of the property to
24 single-family zoning; all other conditions of
25 approval contained in Ordinance Number 1952

1 shall remain in effect.

2 Item E-2, public hearing.

3 MS. GARCIA: Good evening. Jennifer
4 Garcia, Planning & Zoning Director. If I could
5 have the PowerPoint, please, for item E-2?
6 Thank you.

7 So before 1972, these two properties, one
8 being between -- both on University Drive, one
9 between Sarto and Camilo and one between
10 Riviera and Cadima were zoned single-family.
11 I'm assuming they were vacant at the time.
12 And, then, through Ordinance 1952, again, the
13 year 1972 -- a little confusing, I know -- the
14 Commission then approved to change the zoning
15 to single -- I'm sorry, to -- let me go back,
16 to Special Use, and part of that ordinance, in
17 Ordinance 1952, included four conditions of
18 approval.

19 The first one has to deal with keeping the
20 property as was then, in 1972, to not be paved,
21 for overflow parking, involving both, the
22 library and the Youth Center.

23 The second condition of approval has to
24 deal with using that property, that's now zoned
25 Special Use, to be used as overflow parking,

1 and, again, for the Youth Center and the
2 library.

3 Condition Number 3 involved limiting the
4 ingress and egress to only be on University
5 Drive, and that there should be some kind of
6 means erected to close off those properties, to
7 not be used, unless they're used for additional
8 parking -- needed for overflow parking for the
9 Youth Center and the library.

10 And then Condition Number 4 has to deal
11 with the zoning and that if the City decided
12 that there was no use for either of those
13 properties, that the zoning would have to be
14 reverted back to single-family without
15 involving a public hearing.

16 So today we are looking just at the
17 property which is known as 520 University
18 Drive, which is between Riviera and Cadima.
19 This is not involving the north property, which
20 is between Sarto and Camilo. It's just the 520
21 property, again, between Riviera and Cadima.
22 And there you are looking at the plat. So the
23 current Future Land Use designation is Public
24 Buildings and Grounds, and, again, the zoning
25 is still zoned Special Use zoning.

1 So what's proposed before you today only
2 affects the property at 520 University Drive,
3 and to take away the restriction of only using
4 the property for overflow parking, but to also
5 allow for any kind of park use. So the
6 property still may be kept in a park-like
7 manner with the existing trees.

8 The second condition will be amended to,
9 again, only affect 520 University Drive, to
10 also allow any kind of public park in the
11 future.

12 Condition Number 3 would be amended then to
13 specify that the ingress and egress to deal
14 with the temporary overflow parking, and --
15 would be, again, keeping it from University
16 Drive, unless otherwise determined by the
17 Police Department.

18 And then Condition Number 4 would be
19 removed altogether, so if the City decides to
20 rezone the property to be single-family
21 residential use, that they would involve the
22 public, through a public hearing process.

23 So this is the first meeting dealing with
24 this exact ordinance change. It will move to
25 the City Commission for First and Second

1 Reading, as any ordinance is done.

2 The letters were sent out within a thousand
3 feet of the 520 University Drive property, as
4 that's the property that's being affected by
5 these changes, and the letters were sent out
6 one time, for this meeting for tonight. The
7 property was posted once, as well, website was
8 posted, as well as newspaper advertisement.

9 So Staff has determined this is consistent
10 with the goals, as far as locating parks near
11 single-family neighborhoods, residential
12 neighborhoods, and we recommend approval.

13 Thank you.

14 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: Thank you.

15 Any questions from the Board, before we
16 open it to public comment?

17 Jill.

18 THE SECRETARY: Yes. Excuse me. We have
19 several speakers.

20 Sylvia King.

21 MR. BEHAR: Mr. Chair, we're going to keep
22 the time?

23 MS. GARCIA: If I could have Coral Gables
24 TV pull up that PowerPoint I sent -- sorry.

25 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: How many speakers?

1 THE SECRETARY: About six.

2 MS. KING: Good evening. I'm Silvia Perez
3 King, 3617 Harlano Street. I'm a member of the
4 University Green Neighbors Association.

5 We filed a complaint -- okay. Thank you.

6 We filed a complaint to enjoin the
7 development of a bark park at 520 University.
8 No amendments to Ordinance 1952 should be
9 considered while the litigation is pending. We
10 waive no rights by voicing our objections here.

11 I'm going to make three points. First,
12 this hearing should not take place. There
13 should be a deferment. Residents within a
14 thousand feet of all of the parcels listed in
15 the ordinance were not mailed notice. The
16 ordinance applies to all of the parcels, not
17 just 520. Taking away overflow parking at 520
18 University shifts the burden directly onto the
19 other lot and those property owners. They have
20 a right to be here. This hearing should be
21 deferred for that reason.

22 Next, the intention of the City is to put a
23 bark park at the 520 University spot, but we
24 have a lot of -- we have an overwhelming need
25 for parking in our community, because the

1 library has a lot of events. This first
2 picture, one of our members, just a random day,
3 no events at the library, the library parking
4 lot was full. Here we have cars parking on the
5 swale next to the library. Here we have cars
6 parked in front of 520 University, and all
7 along the swale, heading towards the Youth
8 Center. Here we also have more cars, because
9 it went all of the way up to the Youth Center,
10 and here, in fact, we see the cars parked in
11 front of the Youth Center. Parking is a really
12 big issue here, and we do need overflow parking
13 for special events.

14 Take, for example, The Literacy Festival
15 that happened recently. The City opened an
16 overflow parking lot directly across the Youth
17 Center. They didn't open up 520, just the one
18 in front of the Youth Center. It quickly
19 filled.

20 Actually, I think I skipped a slide. Well,
21 there's a slide before this one and let me see
22 if I can get it. Yeah, here we go.

23 The overflow parking lot quickly filled up,
24 and people started to park on the swales all of
25 the way down Camilo Avenue. This is another

1 angle of the overflow parking opened by the
2 City. Cars parking along the swale, all along
3 University Drive, and they found their way to
4 520, even though it was not marked by the City,
5 and they did not put up barricades or have
6 police officers there, but the public found it
7 and they parked there. And here you can see,
8 they saw the little sign posted there, which,
9 by the way, the City wants to say that the
10 other parcels aren't part of this, but they
11 were signed, as well, for this hearing. They
12 just didn't mail it to the neighbors. But,
13 anyhow, these cars are parked on 520. There is
14 a need, when there are special events, to have
15 parking in the community.

16 Also, we developed our own little plan
17 here, showing what parking at University --
18 what we're talking about. We're talking about
19 83 parking spaces for future special events.
20 The City has no plans for the replacement of
21 the lost parking. When they put a dog park
22 there, those spaces are going to be gone, and
23 parking is going to be chaotic, and where will
24 the burden fall, it will fall on the residents
25 of the community, who do not want a park there.

1 There are plenty of parks in our community
2 for off leash dogs. We have Chewy. We have
3 Salvadore. You can go down to Chapman Park.
4 We don't need any more dog parks. What we need
5 is parking, for the library, to support it.

6 Thank you.

7 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: Thank you.

8 THE SECRETARY: William -- I'm sorry,
9 William.

10 MR. RIVENBARK: Good evening. My name is
11 Bill Rivenbark. I'm a member of the United --
12 University Green Neighbors Association, which
13 is a 501(C)(4). I live at 3616 Harlano Street,
14 approximately 120 feet from 520 University
15 Drive, and I would like to speak about the
16 Coral Gables Public Library and give you some
17 statistics, which you may find interesting, to
18 make clear why Ordinance 1952 should not be
19 amended.

20 To best understand why Coral Gables Public
21 Library needs to be able to have access to
22 overflow parking in the lot, you need only look
23 at their current door counts. Door count is
24 Miami-Dade library speak for head count, how
25 many people come in, on a daily basis, to visit

1 the library. This includes special events and
2 County wide early voting attendance.

3 In February of this year, I e-mailed the
4 Miami-Dade Public Library System a series of
5 questions regarding attendance at the Coral
6 Gables Branch. I received a timely and very
7 thorough response from the Public Records
8 Division of the Miami-Dade Public Library
9 System. Here's what we learned. The Coral
10 Gables Branch library averages thirty to forty
11 programs per months. Programs, in their speak,
12 again, are special events, certain courses,
13 certain topics, what have you, other than just
14 someone going in and out of the library.

15 Their program-related attendance estimates
16 between 1,000 and 1,250 people per month.
17 That's 12,000 to 15,000 people per year
18 visiting the library for special programs.
19 Currently, for fiscal year 2025 to '26, the
20 door count averages are approximately 26,000
21 visits per month. That's 312,000 visitors
22 annually, the third highest among all fifty
23 branches of the Miami-Dade Library System.

24 Last year, fiscal year 24-25, the Coral
25 Gables Branch averaged approximately 31,000

1 visits per month or 372,000 visits per year,
2 the second most visited library, in terms of
3 door count, surpassed only by the Main library
4 in Downtown Miami.

5 From 2018 to 2024, county wide early voting
6 at the Coral Gables Branch Library has ranged
7 from 16,000 to 25,000 participants. That's a
8 large number of voters, in a concentrated
9 two-week period, for the primary and the
10 general election, with Governor, U.S. Senator,
11 U.S. House of Representatives and many other
12 State positions, in addition -- now, in
13 addition to the Coral Gables elections, the
14 numbers will, again, be high for a two-week
15 period, primary and general elections.

16 Throughout the years, the Coral Gables
17 Branch has consistently ranked among the top
18 five of early voting locations in Miami-Dade
19 County, where everyone coming through in or
20 near Coral Gables casts their ballots. A door
21 count of 372,000 annually, 15,000 special event
22 attendees years, and 25,000 voters during early
23 voting, it's easy to see why the ability to
24 have overflow parking in the lot must remain.
25 Taking away the overflow parking at 520

1 University makes no sense. The numbers simply
2 do not add up.

3 Thank you.

4 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: Thank you.

5 THE SECRETARY: Jean Davis.

6 MS. DAVIS: Good evening. My name is Jean
7 Davis, and I am a member of the University
8 Green Neighbors Association. I live at 3710
9 Harlano Street, and I would like to ask, what
10 is the true purpose of these proposed changes?

11 The Planning and Zoning Staff reports
12 acknowledges that the City is interested in
13 having a 40,000 square foot off leash dog park
14 at 520 University Drive, immediately abutting
15 three single-family homes. The report says,
16 the City's request would not allow densities or
17 intensities beyond what is permitted under the
18 applicable Future Land Use Map classifications
19 of Public Buildings and Grounds, but how do you
20 reconcile the current passive green space, open
21 to everyone, with a 40,000 square foot dog
22 park, which is only for the dogs?

23 The report also says that it will provide
24 ample and effective opportunities for public
25 participation at all levels of the City of

1 Coral Gables governance and decision-making.
2 That sounds good, in theory, but we were told
3 we couldn't have input as to whether there
4 would be a dog park, but we would only have
5 input into how it would be designed.

6 The report says that the City will ensure
7 recreation facilities are well managed, well
8 maintained and that quality opportunities are
9 available within a ten-minute walk to our
10 residence. The passive green space that is
11 there now is readily available to everyone.

12 I would also like to speak about the Future
13 Land Use compliance. If this is about a dog
14 park, Planning and Zoning Board Members should
15 know, the report says that it does not permit
16 uses which are prohibited in the Future Land
17 USE category of the parcel, but the only places
18 a dog park is mentioned in that document is
19 under Policies Rec-1.4.2, which references
20 working with the County on Chapman Field County
21 and Dog Park Facility for the City -- residents
22 of the City sponsored programs.

23 I thank you very much.

24 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: Thank you.

25 THE SECRETARY: Lino Fernandez.

1 MR. FERNANDEZ: Good evening, Board
2 Members. My name is Lino Fernandez, and I live
3 at 415 Cadima Avenue. I'm also a member of the
4 University Green Neighbors Association.

5 In general, as you've heard, this dog park
6 is just not a great idea. Traffic, the City is
7 still years behind, trying to catch up with our
8 current traffic issues on Cadima and Riviera
9 and where this dog park is wanted.

10 It's customary for your Board to review
11 traffic studies before making recommendations
12 on development matters, yet none, to your
13 knowledge, has been conducted. University
14 Drive, from Le Jeune Road to Bird Road and
15 Granada Boulevard, it's a large collector
16 street, moving an ever growing number of east
17 and west commuters during morning and evening
18 peak hours. This two-lane road each way is
19 also a major approach for fire rescue services
20 going constantly to Doctors Hospital. Evening
21 rush hours collide with peak activity at the
22 library and the Youth Center. Long lines of
23 cars can stack up at the intersections of
24 University Drive and Riviera, as well as
25 Segovia at University Drive, waiting for

1 traffic lights to change and pedestrians to
2 cross.

3 The idling school buses, student pick up
4 and drop off at Coral Gables High, after school
5 drop off at the Youth Center, church services
6 and the expansion plans to Somerset Academy all
7 contribute to the neighborhood's traffic
8 congestion. Please ask for a traffic study
9 before someone is hurt or someone's pet.

10 The City is rushing into amending Ordinance
11 1952 without any objective basis and without
12 consideration of the reality of the day-to-day
13 need for protecting 520 University Drive for
14 the safety of our citizens.

15 Thank you for your time.

16 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: Thank you.

17 THE SECRETARY: Jose Val.

18 MR. VAL: Hello to everyone. Good evening.

19 The Board is being asked to vote on a
20 matter without having all of the information.

21 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: I'm sorry to interrupt
22 you. Can you please state your name and
23 address, for the record?

24 MR. VAL: Yeah. My name is Jose Val, and I
25 live in 520 Cadima Avenue, right in front of

1 the open space, open green space.

2 So the Board is being asked to vote on a
3 matter without having all of the information,
4 and some of the information you have may not be
5 correct. I live, as I said, in 520 Cadima
6 Avenue, immediately across the street of 520
7 University Drive with my wife and three young
8 children, ranging from six weeks to
9 five-year-old today. Today is her birthday.

10 As the association president, I would like
11 to speak about Ordinance 1952 and why the
12 buffer is important. Before tonight's meeting,
13 you may not have known about Ordinance 1952.
14 Our attorney reminded the City Commission and
15 the City Attorney about it on January 13, 2026
16 City Commission meeting, but they said nothing.

17 In 1971 and 1972, the Planning and Zoning
18 Board, and the City Commission, after the
19 notice of public hearing was duly published and
20 notification of all property owners of record
21 within 300 feet was made, held public hearings
22 seeking to change the zoning of the property to
23 "S" use, with special conditions. Lots 1 thru
24 5, Block 131, a/k/a 520, 430, 440 and 450
25 University Drive, had been zoned single-family,

1 RS-14, for homes at least 2,500 square feet.

2 Until the library and the Youth Center
3 relocated to the current day locations,
4 Ordinance 1952 stipulated that the properties
5 could only be used for overflow parking, that
6 ingress and egress be on University Drive, that
7 the properties be kept in a park like manner,
8 that the trees and foliage are preserved in the
9 current state, and that if the overflow parking
10 was no longer needed, that zoning of the
11 properties would revert back to single-family
12 zoning.

13 The change of zoning and thoughtful
14 conditions were developed through notice,
15 public hearings, to provide a buffer between
16 the library and the Youth Center, with a quiet
17 single-family neighborhood to the south. These
18 protections added assurance that three homes,
19 and mine, immediately abutting what is known as
20 520 University Drive, including the two-story
21 1925 early Mediterranean home, the neighborhood
22 has relied and continues to rely on these
23 conditions, including the revert clause, for
24 more than fifty years. This innovative yet
25 tested overflow parking arrangement provides

1 passive public green space, while protecting
2 the neighborhood from parking and traffic
3 intrusion during planned occasionally special
4 events, just as an example, these events
5 include the Literacy Festival, the Fourth of
6 July, Nightmare at 405, county-wide early
7 voting in all presidential and national, state,
8 and local elections, political campaign events,
9 sporting events at the Youth Center, soccer,
10 baseball, and basketball games and tournaments,
11 hurricane and emergency centers, and other high
12 traffic events all year around, that you will
13 hear about from other speakers.

14 The temporary barricades help guide parkers
15 during large scale special events. The City
16 rarely chooses to use 520 University to provide
17 needed parking relief during special events.
18 Please keep the buffer in place. Our
19 neighborhood is a collection of individuals and
20 families, babies, young children learning to
21 ride or skate, teenagers walking to the Youth
22 Center, young families with strollers, seniors,
23 some in the later years, blessed with a
24 complete network of sidewalks, mature trees,
25 historic homes, and treasured green space that

1 can accommodate library overflow parking so
2 patrons don't park in the neighborhood. Dogs
3 are walked, wheelchairs are rolled, strollers
4 are pushed and people of all ages and
5 backgrounds get their steps in as part of the
6 daily routine.

7 We're not here -- we're not here to debate
8 whether bark parks are good. It's your
9 business whether you take your dog to one. It
10 becomes our business when the City tries to
11 force a dog park in our little neighborhood,
12 when the zoning and dog ordinance clearly
13 forbid it, and we clearly don't want it. We
14 fully support dog friendly amenities in Coral
15 Gables. We simply believe they should be
16 placed where they are compatible with the
17 surrounding uses and do not impose rash impact
18 on a small group of residents. Our goal is not
19 conflict, but a solution that serves the
20 community, without sacrificing the safety,
21 character, and quality and life of our
22 neighborhood.

23 We appreciate your consideration.

24 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: Thank you.

25 THE SECRETARY: Sara Cortes.

1 MS. CORTES: Hello. Good evening,
2 everyone. I'm Sara Cortes. I live at 511
3 Cadima Avenue. I am a member of the University
4 Green Neighbors Association, as well as living
5 in the historic home that Jose just mentioned.

6 The proposed dog park would actually be
7 right next to me, in the backyard, which I have
8 mentioned before in public spaces, I have a
9 dog. I do not want a dog park in my backyard.
10 I'm an emergency medicine physician by
11 training, and I'd like to share some comments
12 about mental health and why passive green space
13 is so important.

14 I do believe that our founders and those
15 who came before you recognized how important
16 green space is and what a blessing it is to our
17 community, and I do believe that we are losing
18 it, slowly but surely. I am worried about that
19 for many issues -- for many reasons, obviously,
20 but green space is green breathing space.
21 Respecting wildlife and preserving habitat and
22 green space, providing for overflow parking
23 when needed, allows everyone, not just dogs and
24 their owners, to escape from the hustle and
25 bustle of the world we live in.

1 You can stroll around the sidewalks of the
2 triangle with your dog, you can walk through
3 the grass or maybe do some gymnastics, as my
4 daughter does. You can listen to the birds and
5 watch the wildlife. Your kids can do that.

6 Today, this is public green space that
7 provides a helpful respite to all. Mental
8 Health America noted that children living in
9 neighborhoods with more green space have a
10 reduced risk of developing depression, mood
11 disorders, schizophrenia, eating disorders and
12 substance abuse disorders, all of which are on
13 the rise.

14 Spending time in nature is good for you,
15 your mental health, and it positively impacts
16 mood, focus, stress levels and emotional
17 regulation, all which I need right now. Let's
18 all remember, green space is breathing space,
19 and it's good for everyone.

20 Thank you so much.

21 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: Thank you.

22 THE SECRETARY: Rose Bauer.

23 MS. BAUER: Hello. Good evening. My name
24 is Rose Bauer, and I'm a member of the
25 University Green Neighbors Association. I live

1 at 3716 Segovia Street. I have lived in the
2 area a lifetime.

3 I would like to speak about dog parks and
4 property values. The Planning and Zoning
5 report, these ordinance changes will not result
6 in a substantial decline in property value or
7 neighborhood character, noting that access to
8 nearby open space can enhance the desirability
9 of residential neighborhoods and support long
10 time stability.

11 I have always loved and cared for animals,
12 including a few cats that live in the green
13 space that I feed daily. I have a ten-year
14 Australian Sheppard and I have been a loyal and
15 active member of the Cat Network for many
16 years, but tonight I want to speak about my
17 profession.

18 I value the historic charm of the City
19 Beautiful. I have been a successful real
20 estate broker in Coral Gables with Rivera Real
21 Estate for 25 years, and much of my success
22 comes with knowing the market. Some might
23 disagree, but I feel compelled to speak about
24 the impact an off leash dog park would have on
25 adjacent homes. The triangle today is a

1 beautiful habitat for animals and people. It
2 is mostly certainly an amenity, while providing
3 overflow parking for the library. There's a
4 big difference between this natural green space
5 and a large all consuming dog park immediately
6 close to multiple homes.

7 If dog parks are not properly maintained,
8 problems surface, not only with the sound of
9 dogs barking throughout the day, but with
10 odors, tart landscaping and trash. These
11 factors influence the price of sale to the
12 seller because of the surroundings. Homeowners
13 lives in Coral Gables, in part, because of the
14 security and beautiful canopies. Let's not
15 negatively impact the neighborhood and the
16 homeowners' financial future by adding another
17 dog park next door.

18 Thank you.

19 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: Thank you.

20 THE SECRETARY: I don't have any more
21 speakers that have signed in.

22 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: Anyone on Zoom?

23 THE SECRETARY: No.

24 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: And anyone of the phone?
25 Let's close the public comment.

1 THE SECRETARY: Did you sign in, sir? I'm
2 sorry. Your name?

3 Sorry. Just come up to the podium.

4 Oh, he didn't mark the item number so -- go
5 ahead. Sorry about that, sir.

6 MR. GOLDEN: My name is Barry Golden. I'm
7 a member of the University Green Neighbors
8 Association. I live at 3628 Harlano Street. I
9 am five houses away from the proposed dog park,
10 520 University.

11 Before the City considers revising the
12 ordinance, removing certain protections and
13 conditions, and considering additional uses, a
14 comprehensive parking study and review should
15 be undertaken. For example, no formal current
16 or future demand studies have been conducted.
17 A member of the University Green Neighbors
18 Association conducted an informal parking count
19 between 5:30 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. at and around
20 the library during the first two weeks of
21 February 2026.

22 This included daily surveying of the 48
23 space library lot, the 11, including two
24 handicap, parallel parking spaces in the
25 circular drive in front of the University Drive

1 entrance, the 20 angle parking spaces on the
2 west side of Riviera, the five angle parking on
3 the east side of Riviera and the 22 spaces in
4 the swale of Segovia, in front of the west
5 entrance of the library.

6 The Youth Center parking lot, parallel to
7 University Drive and the Segovia North parking
8 lot, by the playing fields, were also surveyed.
9 On most days, all parking spaces were exceeding
10 capacity, including those areas under the
11 banyans marked "No Parking on University
12 Drive." Depending on programming at the
13 library or at the Youth Center, parking
14 regularly exceeds capacity and drivers drove
15 frantically around looking for space to park.

16 I have personally witnessed the library and
17 Youth Center overwhelmed with cars and trucks,
18 the available parking is woefully insufficient
19 and cars naturally spill out onto the 520
20 University. It should be noted that there were
21 no announced high volume events during any of
22 the days surveyed. Please don't make any
23 changes until a current or future parking study
24 is performed. High volume events need easy
25 access to overflow parking. It makes no sense

1 to take away the overflow parking there. Cars
2 will have nowhere to go, other than our
3 properties.

4 So I said that I live five houses away from
5 520 University, okay. I've lived in Coral
6 Gables for twenty years. July will be twenty
7 years. I love Coral Gables. It's an honor to
8 live -- I mean, I love where I live. I don't
9 live in Miami. I live in Coral Gables. I'm
10 proud to say and tell people I live in Coral
11 Gables, because you know what, it's the safest
12 and most beautiful place in South Florida.

13 I walk my dog around 520 University almost
14 every day and every night. I will not take him
15 to a dog park, okay. I've had dogs for the
16 entire twenty years that I've lived here. I
17 had two dogs at one time. I walked two dogs
18 around the 520 University, around the library,
19 around the Youth Center. I'm there every day
20 and every night.

21 And now that I think about it, Sara brought
22 up a fantastic point, the mental part of just
23 walking around that quiet green space. I do it
24 every morning. I guess I just take it for
25 granted that I live in a peaceful, beautiful,

1 amazing City, and I walk my dog in quiet. I
2 don't have to listen to a bunch of other dogs
3 barking and yapping and this, that and the
4 other and people walking around, and cars --
5 and dodging cars, walking around the sidewalk.
6 I walk my dog in peace, and it's beautiful.

7 It's my opinion that the City Commission
8 didn't follow proper policy and procedures when
9 they voted in November 2025 to move forward
10 with this dog park. Nobody -- none of these
11 people that are standing here, right here, none
12 of the people that were at the January meeting,
13 knew about it, and they told the City about it.
14 We had -- we're having a Zoning hearing today.
15 You guys posted a sign on May 8th, this little
16 orange sign, that I think Jose is now -- took a
17 picture of. He noticed it the day it popped
18 up. There were no signs in November letting
19 all of these neighbors know that the City
20 Commission is planning on putting a dog park
21 here. Nobody knew about it.

22 They tried to say that they did. We didn't
23 know about it. Nobody knew about it. They
24 came to the January 13th meeting and fifty
25 people from our neighborhood, the people that

1 are great -- most impacted by this dog park,
2 the two blocks around 520 University, they
3 didn't know about it, but when they found out
4 about it, we united and came together and said,
5 we don't want this, and we don't.

6 And they had a chance to rescind the
7 November 2025 vote and go back, start all over
8 again, maybe find another green space somewhere
9 else in Coral Gables. They didn't do that.
10 They didn't listen to all of the neighbors that
11 were at that Commission meeting in January and
12 said, we don't want this. They didn't listen.
13 They just moved ahead with a vote to go forward
14 with the dog park.

15 So I stand here today telling you that the
16 people most affected by this dog park feel like
17 they were bamboozled by the City Commission,
18 because they didn't know about it, and we don't
19 want it. I hope you do the right thing.

20 Thank you.

21 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: Thank you.

22 So let's close the public comment.

23 Before I open it to Board discussion,
24 Mr. City Attorney, can you give us some insight
25 on the pending litigation? I heard one of the

1 participants mention litigation.

2 MR. COLLIER: There has been litigation
3 filed by a group. They're seeking to enjoin
4 the City -- you cannot hear me? Okay. There
5 has been litigation -- filed by an
6 organization. They're seeking to enjoin the
7 City from having -- utilizing this property for
8 a dog park.

9 When the City went back and looked at the
10 -- the regulations that were in this 19 -- the
11 ordinance didn't take place in 1952. It's
12 just, the number of the ordinance is 1952. It
13 has a rather unusual reverter clause. Most
14 reverters are ownership clauses, where the
15 property reverts to an owner at a particular
16 time. What's unusual about this reverter
17 clause is, it says it reverts back to
18 single-family zoning, if it's not used for the
19 overflow parking.

20 Back in 1972, when the ordinance was
21 passed, zoning was looked at, at that time, as
22 being legislative. In 1993, there was a case
23 called Snyder versus Brevard County, where the
24 Florida Supreme Court said that rezonings are
25 not legislative, they're quasi-judicial. So

1 there needs to be had, a hearing, notice, and
2 an opportunity to be heard. So it's somewhat
3 problematic that there's a reverter that
4 reverts back to a different zoning, when there
5 won't be a hearing, an opportunity to be heard.
6 So that's going to have to be addressed at some
7 point.

8 I think the City is trying to address it by
9 eliminating the reverter clause, because -- but
10 it is a little unusual to revert a zoning, to a
11 different zoning, separate and apart from
12 whether this should be green space or not green
13 space. There's a legal issue about whether
14 property can revert back automatically, without
15 a public hearing, to go from one zoning to a
16 different zoning. So that was the issue on the
17 reverter.

18 Because it's not an ownership reverter.
19 It's a zoning reverter, which really -- you
20 don't really see very often. I've never seen
21 it before.

22 MR. BEHAR: So if it reverts back to
23 single-family, what happens? I mean, if it's
24 not used for overflow parking and it reverts
25 back to single-family, what happens?

1 MR. COLLER: Well, the property is owned by
2 the City at this point, but you could build
3 houses on it.

4 MR. BEHAR: The City could sell it and you
5 could build houses?

6 MR. COLLER: The City could sell houses on
7 it. I would recommend that, before it reverts,
8 there should be a public hearing, and notice
9 and opportunity to be heard, because ordinarily
10 when you rezone, that's a quasi-judicial
11 hearing.

12 MR. ALVAREZ: Isn't that what we're doing
13 here?

14 MR. PARDO: No.

15 MR. COLLER: No.

16 MR. BEHAR: No.

17 MR. COLLER: What we're doing here is
18 whether the ordinance should be amended to --

19 MR. BEHAR: -- to go from an overflow
20 parking --

21 MR. COLLER: Not limit it just to overflow
22 parking, and, Two, to -- and it's a
23 recommendation. We're not actually doing the
24 activity. But recommendation as to whether the
25 reverter clause should be deleted, and whether

1 the property -- this area, that's a park, is
2 just limited to overflow parking.

3 MR. ALVAREZ: Through the Chair.

4 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: Yes, sir.

5 MR. ALVAREZ: I'm going to put my lawyer
6 hat on.

7 So the litigation is seeking to void the
8 reverter? What's the litigation seeking?

9 MR. COLLER: No. The litigation is seeking
10 to prevent the City from utilizing the property
11 for a dog park.

12 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: But the City is not a
13 party to the lawsuit just yet, correct?

14 MR. COLLER: No, the City is a party.

15 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: It is already a party.

16 MR. ALVAREZ: Sounds like what's going to
17 happen is, the Court is going to throw out the
18 deed, if the deed is not correct.

19 MR. COLLER: Well, it's not a deed. And
20 you know what, you're right to think of it
21 referring to a deed, because ordinarily
22 reverters are deeds.

23 MR. ALVAREZ: Right.

24 MR. COLLER: But this is not an ownership
25 reverter. This is a zoning reverter, which is

1 a little bit unheard of.

2 MR. ALVAREZ: Where are we with the
3 litigation? Should we be deferring this?

4 MR. COLLIER: There is a complaint and I
5 think there's a motion to dismiss and the City
6 is attempting to rectify what it sees as a
7 problem with that Number 1952, 1972, ordinance.

8 MR. ALVAREZ: Okay.

9 MR. PARDO: Through the Chair.

10 I think there are several components here.
11 Let's try to break them down.

12 The original intent, back in 1972, my
13 friend Mayor D. Philips, Jr., who was a great
14 mayor, that's when it was signed in, 1972, and
15 obviously there was a problem in neighborhood,
16 and the problem in the neighborhood was being
17 caused by the popularity of the Youth Center
18 and its activities, and the library and its
19 activities.

20 Those uses there are under the "S" zoning,
21 which is Special; Special meaning for Special
22 Use, et cetera. It's very, very specific, but
23 it seems to me that if you look at the
24 restrictions that were placed with tremendous
25 thought, and posting and publications to those

1 neighbors at that time, is that specifically
2 they looked at those areas not as paved parking
3 lots, but park-like manner. That is what's in
4 that resolution that was presented.

5 Furthermore, because they were trying to
6 protect that single-family neighborhood
7 adjacent to those two uses, they said that the
8 only access to those two areas for parking
9 would be through University Drive, not through
10 the side streets, which include Riviera, and
11 there's a traffic light on Riviera and
12 University. So, therefore, what they were
13 doing is keeping it in a park-like manner, and
14 if that necessity would ever dwindle, then it
15 would revert back to the original zoning. The
16 only zoning that was changed from the original
17 zoning, which was single-family, was to Special
18 Use, to be able to park. Not to make it into a
19 park, but to park on that area that was
20 park-like. So when it wasn't being used
21 intensely, the neighbors in the area had a
22 green buffer zone, to University, to the Youth
23 Center, and to the library.

24 There has been so much time that has gone
25 back, over fifty years, that the library has

1 been completely redone, and the Youth Center
2 was completely redone about 35 years ago. The
3 Youth Center is the crown jewel of the City of
4 Coral Gables, and the library is part of the
5 quality of life that we have here in the City
6 of Coral Gables. It is our only library,
7 public library, in the City of Coral Gables,
8 which is used by residents, by University of
9 Miami students, and by students throughout, the
10 elderly, and everyone else.

11 The foresight that Mayor Phillips had, and
12 that Commission at that time, was to make sure
13 that there was a buffer and that the parking
14 issue was not forgotten about, and, in fact, 35
15 years ago, when the Youth Center was redone,
16 the amount of parking on-site was increased,
17 and it's still not enough.

18 Listening to the speakers is an eye opener.
19 With all due respect to Staff, I look at what
20 they have said, the statistics of the intensity
21 of special events there -- and by the way, I
22 ran into Mr. Sanabria on Saturday, because as a
23 41-year member of the Coral Gables Rotary Club,
24 we gave out almost 600 -- more than 600 books
25 free of charge to children that were there at

1 that special event, and that special event was
2 packed, and the games, the intensity, the
3 buffer, all of these things. I want to make
4 sure that there's no doubt in my mind of what
5 the intent was of the original Commission in
6 1972 with Mayor Phillips. It was to protect
7 the single-family homes from the impact of
8 those uses.

9 The second thing is, the reverter clause,
10 and I'm not as smart as a lawyer, but I will
11 tell you that the intent was obvious. It
12 becomes a normal rezone back to the zoning that
13 it was, which was single-family, not
14 commercial, not a swimming pool, none of those
15 uses.

16 I also noticed that the speakers tonight
17 did not say one word about the intensity of the
18 differences of green spaces compared to active
19 spaces. I designed an award winning park,
20 nationally award winning park, and that park is
21 a 50-acre park, with all sorts of sports,
22 baseball fields, football fields, soccer
23 fields, tennis courts, beautiful. That is not
24 a passive park. That is an active park. And
25 the Youth Center is an active park, but the

1 buffer is a passive park-like area, which is
2 green. Mayor Phillips was very smart, and that
3 Commission was very smart, in making sure that
4 happened.

5 When you look at the reverter clause, in my
6 opinion, it is clear. It goes back to what the
7 rest of the neighborhood is. But after the
8 additional popularity of those two
9 institutions, the library and the park, were
10 redone again already, within the 50-year
11 period, it is obvious that there's still a
12 demand and a requirement and a need for that
13 additional parking for those uses, not for the
14 single-family homes.

15 MR. COLLIER: Which is why having a hearing
16 on whether the property should be rezoned to
17 single-family makes perfect sense, because you
18 don't rezone property without a quasi-judicial
19 hearing, because people might very well object
20 to a single-family zoning. It might not be
21 appropriate for that property today.

22 MR. ALVAREZ: I totally disagree with that
23 point, for the simple reason, this is in
24 litigation and there's a very good chance that
25 this reverter may get thrown out, period. So

1 that's just my personal opinion, but I'll let
2 Felix finish, before I ask my questions.

3 MR. COLLIER: I think that the -- I think
4 the issue for you all is whether you feel that
5 this -- the restrictions that are on this
6 property currently are appropriate given the
7 circumstances. That's what you're being asked.
8 Your recommendation could very well be, we need
9 to keep things the way they are.

10 MR. PARDO: Mr. Collier, one thing, and --
11 we've known each other for many years, and one
12 of the things that I have done on
13 quasi-judicial boards, on dozens of boards that
14 I've sat on for this City over the years, is
15 that I listen to the people that are affected.
16 We just had this conversation with the
17 Assistant City Attorney that was here earlier.

18 MR. COLLIER: Which is exactly what you're
19 charged to do.

20 MR. PARDO: Exactly. And the whole point
21 is, the difference of a passive area, compared
22 to a bark park, because that's what they're
23 referred to normally, and the ones that we
24 have, I have no problem with the Chewy Park,
25 which is under the Underline. Perfect location

1 for it. Salvadore Park, I know they have
2 issues over there, but to go into this area,
3 take away the intent that was there, to buffer
4 this neighborhood, is altering the neighborhood
5 in a very negative fashion.

6 MR. COLLIER: Well, that is what your
7 decision needs to be --

8 MR. PARDO: And the point I'm making is
9 that, listening to statistics, listening to the
10 way that they were prepared, listening to the
11 evidence that they provided, as the people that
12 are affected, this Board cannot ignore that, I
13 don't think.

14 MR. SANABRIA: Mr. Chairman --

15 MR. BEHAR: I think, before you give your
16 opinion about me, let's hear the whole Board.

17 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: Yeah. Let me start it
18 this way and we'll work it --

19 MR. BEHAR: Don't speak on my behalf.

20 MR. SANABRIA: Mr. Chairman.

21 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: Go for it.

22 MR. SANABRIA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

23 This gentleman in the green T-shirt that
24 came up with all of those numbers, that's
25 fantastic, and also, I want to tell you, I did

1 have the privilege and honor to run by a booth
2 of the Rotary Club, and there he was, Felix
3 Pardo, running it. He's been doing this for 41
4 years. Kudos and congratulations. What a
5 beautiful event, very well attended, for our
6 children.

7 And I parked in that overflow parking, and
8 I want to tell you all, that you tolerate that.
9 If I was a neighbor of that overflow parking,
10 I'd be sitting where you have moaning and
11 groaning about it. So I commend you for being
12 tolerant for that, and it really is a bona fide
13 benevolent gesture that you do as neighbors to
14 allow that to occur.

15 So thank you very much, from that end,
16 Mr. Chairman.

17 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: Thank you.

18 Any comments?

19 MR. MCGLASHEN: My comment would be, I
20 appreciate all of the statements I've heard
21 from everyone on the Board and everyone that
22 came up here. I've heard a lot about dog
23 parks.

24 From my standpoint, this is a
25 straight-forward zoning issue, relating to only

1 a change in zoning. I don't think we're
2 sitting here today making a decision on whether
3 or not to institute a dog park.

4 And as far as Mr. Collier's statement on the
5 reverter clause, I think that would also make
6 sense. So I see this as a zoning issue only.
7 I don't see this as a dog park issue today. I
8 don't consider myself making a decision on a
9 dog park today. Those would be my statements.

10 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: Alice.

11 MS. BRAVO: I appreciate all of you coming
12 out tonight to give your opinion, and I want to
13 echo the comments. I'm surprised that you
14 prefer the parking to a park use, but that
15 being said, I also agree with the comment that
16 the matter before us is the zoning change and
17 not the specific end product.

18 But I think, when I moved to the Gables, I
19 shopped many homes, and there are a lot of
20 homes that have no backyard whatsoever, so it's
21 probably a good idea to have some dog parks
22 where they can run free. I know we have dog
23 friendly parks, but those parks are required to
24 be leashed, so this probably is an amenity
25 that's needed somewhere in the City.

1 That's it.

2 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: Mr. Behar.

3 MR. BEHAR: Look, I'm a bit concerned and
4 confused, because if the reverter clause goes
5 into effect, this becomes single-family zoning,
6 and the City could have the option, and I'm
7 sure it will be challanged, to sell those lots
8 as single-family lots. Correct me, the
9 attorneys -- and I'm going to use Mr. Pardo's
10 phrase. I'm not an attorney. I'm not the
11 smartest, you know, attorney. I'll leave that
12 to my son, but he's not here, so I'll have to
13 defer to the attorneys.

14 If that goes to single-family, the City
15 will have the right to sell those lots and
16 somebody could come in and build single-family
17 there? And you'd prefer that -- you know, you
18 would prefer to have, I don't know how many
19 lots, six lots of single-family, than a dog
20 park or the overflow parking that I agree -- I
21 may not agree totally with Mr. Sanabria, but I
22 would have to agree with him today, that I
23 would be very upset to see that.

24 This is a resolution, or whatever legal
25 terminology, that was done 54 years ago and

1 things changes. I -- my office is immediately
2 or 150 feet from the park -- the dog park
3 you're referring to.

4 MR. PARDO: Chewy.

5 MR. BEHAR: -- Chewy Park. Let me tell
6 you, at first I was hesitant and I had my
7 doubts, it is very nice to see how those dogs,
8 that -- like, you know, Ms. Bravo mentioned,
9 don't have to be on a leash. There's no noise
10 there, and it's clean, you know, and I walk --
11 because when I cross the street to go to
12 Graziano's, I walk by it, I don't see the dog
13 park being dirty or being, you know, more --
14 furthermore -- or the last point I think I will
15 make is, I was in Brooklyn a couple of weeks
16 ago visiting my son, and I hadn't been to
17 Prospect Park, and I went to Prospect Park, and
18 I saw families that are all over the park --
19 much bigger park, and I'm not going to compare
20 the green space here to that, but I did saw
21 (sic) family enjoying themselves, with their
22 dogs, in that area that was newly created
23 for -- to have the dogs running loose, not
24 being leashed and not walking them through the
25 park on a leash.

1 I feel that this is something that could be
2 beneficial, yes. Does it have to be done
3 correctly, no question about it. Would it
4 be -- and I don't know the depth of this
5 property that we're questioning here -- that
6 we're talking about. Could there be a buffer
7 between the residents -- the residential houses
8 to the south, I guess, and the park? But I do
9 see this as a positive. I don't see it as
10 negative.

11 And this is not -- you know, this is a
12 great location to put it, because you do have
13 an active park across the street, that you
14 cannot let your dog, you know, loose on that
15 Youth Center. And by the way, I've been a
16 resident of Coral Gables for -- not as long as
17 you, Felix, but for 36 years, and I used to
18 coach my kids, you know, in the Youth Center,
19 and those lots rarely, rarely, get utilized,
20 you know, for the overflow. Maybe the event
21 that took place this past weekend. I will
22 grant it. I wasn't there. I didn't see it.
23 But for the most part, on the weekends, those
24 lots are completely empty.

25 So I think the use of a dog park here, I

1 think it will be a good -- good for the whole
2 community, for the whole City and that's my
3 opinion. Thank you.

4 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: Mr. Alvarez.

5 MR. ALVAREZ: I'm going to go in order in
6 my notes.

7 First of all, this is for the City
8 Attorney, one of the speakers spoke about
9 improper notice. Is that an issue that will
10 affect this meeting?

11 MR. COLLIER: I don't believe it does,
12 because the item was revised to reduce the
13 parcels that were impacted by this, and when
14 you measure the thousand feet -- and the
15 Planning and Zoning can confirm this, but when
16 you measure the thousand feet from the parcel
17 that's now been limited, it meets the thousand
18 foot radius.

19 The other parcels do not -- are beyond the
20 thousand foot radius for this parcel. So by
21 limiting it, you've essentially -- if there was
22 an issue, it's been cured, because they reduced
23 the impact of the proposed ordinance.

24 MR. PARDO: Through the Chair.

25 I think that -- were you mentioning the

1 November Commission meeting, which was not --

2 MR. ALVAREZ: No. One of the speakers said
3 that there was improper notice for this
4 meeting.

5 MR. BEHAR: For this meeting.

6 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: For this meetings, yeah,
7 yeah, the lots.

8 MR. PARDO: I could have sworn I heard --

9 MR. ALVAREZ: First speaker or the second
10 speaker.

11 MR. PARDO: -- when the November meeting --

12 MR. COLLIER: Well, there's two different
13 notices that were mentioned. In November, you
14 heard from people, that they were not aware of
15 what was going on. What was talked about
16 tonight, which I was aware of, was the thousand
17 foot radius was met with the parcel that this
18 item has been reduced to, and that was what her
19 comments were, the other people should have
20 gotten the notice, but the item was reduced in
21 its scope, so they were not impacted in the
22 notice.

23 MR. PARDO: And I just wanted to mention
24 one last thing, which is the example by
25 Ms. Bravo that, you know, people that don't

1 have yards. People that have single-family
2 homes have yards. The problem is all of these
3 buildings that have been built, that they don't
4 have yards. Really, that's where the dog parks
5 should go, where they don't have yards, and
6 then that way they can have access to bigger
7 areas. You see it in urban areas, whether it's
8 Chicago, Boston, and New York, but the point is
9 that, these areas, their dogs are in their
10 backyards. Then the owners choose to walk
11 their dogs through the neighborhood, which is
12 very different.

13 And the other thing is the intensity. When
14 you get -- you may have no dogs, but you also
15 may have ten dogs, and the barking, et cetera.
16 There was a dog park that are existed on
17 Anderson Road, and it was made into a dog park,
18 and then it was removed as a dog park, because
19 of the negative impact on the single-family
20 homes nearby. So the park is there, but it's
21 no longer a dog park. In fact, it has a sign
22 that says, no dogs.

23 MR. ALVAREZ: Okay. I think my colleague
24 made a great comment. This is a zoning change,
25 versus the end product, but if we go to end

1 product, I could be any end product. It could
2 be a dog park, it could be anything. So we are
3 talking about the end product here. And I
4 don't see an issue with trying to change it,
5 but this is where my problem is.

6 I still do believe that we should be
7 deferring this and waiting for the litigation
8 to be done, because you don't know what's going
9 to happens in that litigation, And what
10 happens if they throw out the reversion clause
11 and we're right back here? You don't know what
12 the Judge is going to do. So my personal
13 opinion is, we should let the litigation play
14 out.

15 Nevertheless, I have a problem with buying
16 a house knowing that there's going to be
17 parking there for special events, and then
18 switching that to a 40,000 square foot dog
19 park. If I was the owner of the house, I would
20 have a major issue with that. I do have a dog.
21 I love dogs. I take -- the people that know
22 me --

23 MR. PARDO: No. No. You have a cute dog.

24 MR. ALVAREZ: And people that know me, I
25 take my dog everywhere, restaurants, my office,

1 it goes everywhere. But there was a couple of
2 residents here that mentioned, if they put this
3 on my backyard, I don't want it on my backyard,
4 and I don't know what has been done. I read
5 this in the news, I see it in the Gables blogs,
6 I see it in the Commission meeting, what's been
7 done to addressed members, the residents, that
8 will be directly affected to have this dog
9 park?

10 I don't see it. I don't see the traffic
11 study. I don't see the parking study. I don't
12 have any information telling you that the
13 gentleman in the green shirt is correct. He
14 may be totally wrong. He may be totally right.
15 I don't see anything that the Gables has done
16 to address that.

17 Being a former Police Chief, obviously, if
18 there is a dog park, and people have to park in
19 different areas, law enforcement could take
20 action for that and stop it, but I think that
21 this is too early. I think that Staff should
22 go back and conduct more information. I am for
23 a deferral. If not, I'm going to be a, no, on
24 this item, for the simple reason that I think
25 we should be doing studies. I think we should

1 be doing -- I think the City should be working
2 with all of the concerned residents in
3 addressing their concerns, because if I buy a
4 house in Coral Gables, which ain't cheap, and
5 then put a 40,000 square foot dog park directly
6 on my backyard, my dog is going to be pissed,
7 and I'm going to be pissed.

8 For that reason, and I don't know if I'm
9 going to have support from anybody here, I move
10 for this to be deferred until the City comes
11 back with more information for us to consider,
12 including parking studies, traffic studies, and
13 their attempts to work with the residents to
14 try to come up with something that everybody's
15 happy with.

16 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: Thank you.

17 I'll keep it brief. I'm going to -- I
18 heard all of you. I think I'm going to echo
19 mostly Behar's comments. I do think -- I
20 myself grew up in -- I was born and raised in
21 Coral Gables. I grew up in the Youth Center.
22 I've rarely, even when we ran for office, twice
23 at this point, I never saw that park be used as
24 an overflow. I'm not saying that these events,
25 they're not, but I think they are far and few

1 in between. Ultimately, I do think it's a
2 beautification of the City.

3 I, myself, live next to a dog park. I was
4 one of those residents that was against it.
5 I've always been against a dog park, but now I
6 see myself using it. Ultimately, I -- you
7 know, I'll keep it brief, like I said. I'm
8 with the Staff's recommendation of approval.

9 MR. SANABRIA: Mr. Chairman?

10 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: Yes.

11 MR. SANABRIA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

12 I'm with the neighbors in this case, and
13 I'll tell you why -- and I'm also with the
14 Youth Center, and I'll tell you why. As an
15 overflow parking that the neighbors have
16 tolerated for a very long time, if we put a dog
17 park there, we may be satisfying a few, but we
18 are harming many, and I tell you why.

19 During this Literacy Art Festival just this
20 past weekend, which I attended, and I have
21 attended a few of those, there were hundreds of
22 people. There was no place to park. And the
23 good people that live across the way, at 520,
24 allow the overflow to fill that lot completely,
25 where you could hardly even move a car out of

1 there. So I don't see the point of even
2 approving this, from the sense -- not just for
3 the neighbors' sake, but also the Youth
4 Center's sake, and the events that take place
5 there. If we have a dog park there, we're
6 going to negate many other events that are
7 beneficial to the City through the Youth
8 Center.

9 So, therefore, my vote is, no, on this item.

10 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: Any more Board
11 discussion?

12 MR. PARDO: Motion.

13 MR. ALVAREZ: I want to put up this motion
14 to defer this item until my concerns are
15 addressed. I don't know if I'm going to get a
16 second.

17 MR. PARDO: I'll second the motion.

18 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: Jill.

19 THE SECRETARY: Sorry. Motion to defer by
20 Member Ignacio, second by Pardo.

21 MR. BEHAR: Before we go there, what
22 exactly is the deferment going to do, have
23 Staff come back with what?

24 MR. ALVAREZ: Number One, all I see is, the
25 whole neighborhood is upset. Is there anything

1 that Staff can do to work with the neighborhood
2 to come up with a better plan that everybody is
3 going to be happy, Number One. Number Two, I
4 want to see a traffic study and a parking
5 study. I want to see if that guy, with the
6 green shirt, I'm sorry, I don't know your name,
7 so I apologize --

8 MR. PARDO: Bill.

9 MR. ALVAREZ: -- if he's right, because if
10 I bought my house there knowing that that area
11 is going to be used for parking, I accepted
12 that when I bought it. I didn't accept them to
13 build a 40,000 square foot dog park or park of
14 whatever thing it is. Now I have people
15 parking all over my house, and people parking
16 in my front yard and messing up my County
17 swale, and causing all different types of
18 damage. So I want to get more information, to
19 see if Bill is correct.

20 So I think that the City should be doing
21 much more work on this, and that's what I'm
22 asking for them to prepare and come back to us.

23 MR. PARDO: And the third --

24 MS. BRAVO: I would like --

25 MR. ALVAREZ: I'm sorry, the third item?

1 MR. PARDO: I was going to say, the third
2 item that you mentioned, as a lawyer, is that
3 it's in litigation right now.

4 MR. ALVAREZ: Correct. And my third item
5 is, we should wait for litigation to be over.

6 My MR. COLLIER: Well, with regard to the
7 litigation, I think the City is looking to
8 resolve this issue prior to the litigation,
9 Number One.

10 Number Two, I understand there's a certain
11 urgency of the item getting to the Commission.
12 If you all feel that there should be a parking
13 study and a traffic study, I think that could
14 be included in any motion, either a motion to
15 approve or a motion to deny, that if you're
16 denying it based on the fact that there's --

17 MR. ALVAREZ: I'm for deferment, because
18 otherwise I'm going to say no.

19 MR. PARDO: Yeah, but I think you're
20 missing the point. It's not to have one done.
21 It's to have the results, to be able to use it,
22 to be able to vote. It's not the other way
23 around.

24 MR. COLLIER: Well, it can be a motion to
25 deny based upon not having a sufficient parking

1 study.

2 I'm sorry.

3 MR. PARDO: I just hesitate, because every
4 time I hear, "Well, we're going to get a
5 traffic engineer;" no, I want to make a
6 decision based on the information that Staff
7 should have brought before us, not the other
8 way around.

9 MR. BEHAR: Listen, right now we have a
10 motion and a second to defer. So call the
11 roll.

12 MR. ALVAREZ: I was about to say that,
13 Robert.

14 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: Call the roll.

15 MR. BEHAR: Call the roll.

16 THE SECRETARY: Shane McGlashen?

17 MR. MCGLASHEN: Respectfully, I do not vote
18 to defer.

19 THE SECRETARY: Felix Pardo?

20 MR. PARDO: Yes.

21 THE SECRETARY: Gonzalo Sanabria?

22 MR. SANABRIA: I vote, no, because this
23 should be turned down right here and right now.

24 THE SECRETARY: Ignacio Alvarez?

25 MR. ALVAREZ: Yes.

1 THE SECRETARY: Robert Behar?

2 MR. BEHAR: No.

3 THE SECRETARY: Alice Bravo?

4 MS. BRAVO: No.

5 THE SECRETARY: Alex Bucelo?

6 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: No.

7 MR. COLLER: At this point, any motion is
8 in order.

9 MR. PARDO: I'd like to make a motion to
10 deny the application.

11 MR. SANABRIA: I second it.

12 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: Jill.

13 THE SECRETARY: One second, please. It was
14 second by Mr. Sanabria?

15 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: Yes.

16 THE SECRETARY: Felix Pardo?

17 MR. PARDO: Yes.

18 THE SECRETARY: Gonzalo Sanabria?

19 MR. SANABRIA: Yes.

20 THE SECRETARY: Ignacio Alvarez?

21 MR. ALVAREZ: Yes.

22 THE SECRETARY: Robert Behar?

23 MR. BEHAR: No.

24 THE SECRETARY: Alice Bravo?

25 MS. BRAVO: No.

1 THE SECRETARY: Shane McGlashen?

2 MR. MCGLASHEN: No.

3 THE SECRETARY: Alex Bucelo?

4 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: No.

5 MR. COLLIER: Another motion would be in
6 order.

7 MR. BEHAR: I'm going to make a motion to
8 approve with conditions, and the condition is
9 to have a traffic study and a parking study
10 done prior to Commission, because it's not
11 going to come back to us, correct?

12 MR. COLLIER: That's correct.

13 Your recommendation is that -- you're
14 approving with the recommendation that there be
15 a parking study and a traffic study.

16 MR. ALVAREZ: That's recommendation.

17 MR. BEHAR: Everything that we do here,
18 everything is a recommendation.

19 MR. ALVAREZ: I get that, but --

20 MR. COLLIER: That's the nature of this
21 Board. This Board -- with the exception, I
22 think, of something to do with preliminary
23 plats, which I just learned about, that you
24 don't make decisions, you make recommendations.

25 MR. ALVAREZ: I'll second Robert --

1 Mr. Behar.

2 MR. BEHAR: You can call me Robert.

3 We have a motion and a second. And I'm
4 going to add that the green area incorporates a
5 buffer separating from the single-family. That
6 could be determined by the Parks Department or
7 whatever.

8 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: Do you still second?

9 MR. ALVAREZ: I still second.

10 THE SECRETARY: Gonzalo Sanabria?

11 MR. SANABRIA: No.

12 THE SECRETARY: Ignacio Alvarez?

13 MR. ALVAREZ: Yes.

14 THE SECRETARY: Robert Behar?

15 MR. BEHAR: Yes.

16 THE SECRETARY: Alice Bravo?

17 MS. BRAVO: Yes.

18 THE SECRETARY: Shane McGlashen?

19 MR. MCGLASHEN: Yes.

20 THE SECRETARY: Felix Pardo?

21 MR. PARDO: No.

22 THE SECRETARY: Alex Bucelo?

23 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: Yes.

24 THE SECRETARY: It passed.

25 MR. COLLIER: We have one more item. I

1 would recommend you might want to take a five
2 minute break for the reporter who has been
3 going --

4 MR. BEHAR: I'd rather --

5 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: I rather go.

6 MR. COLLIER: Ready to go? Okay. Let's go.

7 Okay. Item 1, a Resolution of the City
8 Commission of Coral Gables, Florida granting an
9 amendment to a previously approved Conditional
10 use (Resolution Number 2016-140), with all
11 remaining conditions of approval to remain in
12 effect, pursuant to Zoning Code Article 14,
13 "Process," Section 14-203, "Conditional Uses,"
14 to allow a private school use with educational
15 instruction from kindergarten through fifth
16 (5th) grade within an existing day care
17 facility, with no increase in square footage or
18 student capacity, on the property legally
19 described as the East 12.64 feet of Lot 3, all
20 of Lots 7-45 and alley lying between, Block 35,
21 Coral Gables Section K (320 Giralda Avenue),
22 Coral Gables, Florida; including required
23 conditions; providing for a repealer provision,
24 providing for a severability clause, and
25 providing for an effective date.

1 Item E-1, public hearing.

2 MS. PLUCHINO: Thank you.

3 Hello, my name is Maria Pluchino, and I'm
4 here representing Giralda Preschool of Coral
5 Gables.

6 Can we have the PowerPoint, the applicant's
7 PowerPoint? Okay. Thank you.

8 So today I will explain our request for
9 proposed kindergarten program and how it fits
10 within our current operation.

11 So Giralda Preschool is requesting
12 conditional use approval to modify the current
13 child care preschool use to a private school,
14 initially offering kindergarten for fall this
15 year, with the potential to expand through
16 fifth grade in the future.

17 This addition doesn't increase the
18 facility's approved capacity of 174 students,
19 as it will serve only ten students and will be
20 accommodated within our existing art room. So
21 we don't need any physical modification in our
22 facility. This is not an expansion of the
23 facility, but an expansion of the services we
24 provide for our families.

25 So our facility has a program that is

1 allowed, because we are in a urban area, and as
2 I said before, the kindergarten would be
3 located in our art room, that has an area of
4 436 square feet.

5 About parking, we have six designated
6 parking spaces only for drop-off and pickup,
7 and also the garage building has 305 spaces
8 available, not only for the school, but also
9 for the restaurants and the retail.

10 This is our indoor plan. So the
11 kindergarten would be on the right -- on the
12 right side. This is the site plan. As you can
13 see, there are six reserve parking spaces, with
14 guided access to a sidewalk, leading to the
15 school.

16 So Giralda Preschool is an Apple accredited
17 school, and it also holds the Gold Seal Quality
18 Care Program that is offered through DCF, that
19 is the Department of Children and Family. So
20 we have to maintain high standards, and it
21 includes low teacher to student ratios.

22 I'm not going to bother you with all of the
23 ratios in each class, but I would like you to
24 know that we have 96 students in total, with 16
25 teachers and three administrative staff. So

1 there is a significant gap between our current
2 enrollment, that is 96 students, and the
3 school's approved capacity of 174 students.

4 Traffic and arrival flow, we have -- we are
5 open from 7:30 to 6:30 p.m., and we have two
6 schedules in the preschool, from 7:30 to 2:30
7 p.m. is part-time and full-time from 7:30 to
8 6:30 p.m., and most school arrivals are from
9 8:30 to 9:00 a.m.

10 Okay. The proposed kindergarten program
11 will be open from 7:30 to 3:30 p.m., and the
12 kindergarten students have to arrive at 7:30
13 sharp. So, as you can see, we have different
14 schedules and we have more than thirty minutes
15 between one schedule and the other, that it
16 will minimize the congestion when dropping off
17 or picking up the students.

18 So, as a community center school in the
19 heart of Coral Gables, many of our families
20 arrive by walking or biking or with strollers.
21 I can tell you that like 70 percent of my
22 families in the preschool live within the
23 thousand radius from the school.

24 So thank you very much for having me, and
25 if you have any questions.

1 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: Thank you.

2 MR. SANABRIA: Mr. Chairman? I favor this
3 item. Let's just hear all of the comments. I
4 think it's basically an internal improvement
5 within the boundaries of the school. There is
6 no expansion. There's no zoning changes. So
7 it's internal modifications.

8 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: Let's hear from Staff and
9 then we'll have Board discussion.

10 MR. SOUTHERN: All right. Good evening,
11 Mr. Chair, Planning and Zoning Board. Craig
12 Southern, Planning Official, with the Planning
13 and Zoning Division.

14 May we please have the Staff PowerPoint,
15 please? Thank you.

16 So the item before you tonight, as
17 Mrs. Pluchino has just indicated, is a request
18 by the existing Giralda Preschool of Coral
19 Gables for an amendment to a previously
20 approved conditional use, from 2016, Resolution
21 2016-140, for the subject property located at
22 320 Giralda Avenue.

23 So if you take a look at the aerial map in
24 front of you, even though it's a little blurred
25 out, you will see that the subject property is

1 encapsulated from the north side, Giralda
2 Avenue, south side, Aragon Avenue, Le Jeune on
3 the west and Salzedo on the east, just
4 southwest of where we're currently located,
5 here in the Central Business District.

6 Currently, it is a preschool and day care.
7 As Ms. Pluchino just indicated, it's got 96
8 students that attend it. It's currently within
9 the Future Land Use Map designation of
10 Commercial Medium Rise intensity, and within
11 the Zoning District of Mixed-Use 2.

12 So the request is -- to refer back to the
13 Staff report briefly, basically has submitted
14 an application requesting an amendment to a
15 previously approved conditional use. As
16 previously mentioned, Resolution 2016-140,
17 pursuant to Zoning Code Article 14, Section
18 14-2-3, to allow a private school use, with an
19 educational instruction from kindergarten
20 through fifth grade, with an existing day care
21 facility, with no increase in square footage or
22 existing student capacity.

23 As you can see, there's a neighborhood
24 participation meeting that was held by the
25 applicant on April 23rd there at the preschool,

1 and then we've also held a Development Review
2 Committee, a DRC meeting, April 24th.

3 So the proposed amendment authorizes a
4 private school use with an educational
5 instruction from kindergarten through fifth
6 grade, with an existing day care facility,
7 while maintaining all existing approved
8 operational limits of the site.

9 The property currently operates as a
10 licensed early childhood education facility,
11 serving children from infancy through VPK, and
12 the requested amendment would formally
13 recognize the private school entitlement within
14 the existing day care framework, subject to
15 conditions of approval.

16 The proposed private school use would
17 initially consist of a kindergarten program,
18 serving approximately ten students, located
19 entirely within the existing 436 square foot
20 art room.

21 Ms. Pluchino did bring up an interior floor
22 plan. We're going to take a look at that
23 again, but all that's really changing of the
24 existing 9,087 square foot tenant space is just
25 this 436 square foot art room that's going to

1 be converted into a kindergarten for ten
2 students. So there will be no expansion of any
3 additional square footage to the tenant space,
4 no structural modifications.

5 The request maintains the existing approved
6 intensity of development, and will also
7 continue, as previously indicated, to remain
8 the cap of a maximum of 174 students. Once
9 again, there's only currently 96 students
10 attending the day care, and the proposal is to
11 add 10 students for this Fall. That's when the
12 proposal is to open up for the kindergarten, is
13 this fall. So that would be a total of 106
14 students.

15 So operations and circulation, with the
16 original conditional use, it was something that
17 was brought up, that was also brought up at the
18 Development Review Committee. So the facility
19 currently utilizes six designated off-street
20 spaces within the garage for student loading
21 and unloading, and as a part of the conditions
22 of approval from staff, which we'll get into
23 later, all vehicular drop-off and pickup
24 activities must occur within the parking
25 garage. Curbside or street drop-off along

1 Giralda Avenue is strictly prohibited.

2 Drop-off and pickup times between the day care
3 and the kindergarten programs must be at least
4 staggered by thirty minutes, and school staff
5 will monitor and enforce operational procedures
6 to minimize congestion and ensure safe
7 circulation.

8 So in respect to public notification to all
9 property owners within the thousand square
10 feet, we've already sent out two mailers, one
11 for the Neighborhood Participation Meeting,
12 April 23rd, and, then, also for this meeting,
13 this Planning and Zoning Board meeting. Both
14 times, 583 notices were sent out.

15 Once again, two times letters have been
16 sent out, two times the property has been
17 posted, for the DRC and the Planning and Zoning
18 Board, two times website posting for the DRC
19 and Planning and Zoning Board, and for this
20 meeting, there's been a newspaper
21 advertisement.

22 So the findings of fact by Staff, pursuant
23 to Section 14-203.8 of the Zoning code,
24 Standards for Review of Conditional Uses, based
25 on the analysis contained within the Staff

1 report, Staff finds that the proposed
2 conditional use amendment is consistent with
3 everything that is required within that Section
4 14. Pursuant to the Comprehensive Plan, it is
5 compatible with the surrounding mixed-use
6 development patterns. It does not increase the
7 intensity of use. It will not adversely impact
8 the surrounding properties, and it satisfies
9 concurrency and circulation requirements.

10 Staff also finds, the request supports the
11 continued provision of educational services
12 within the Central Business District, while
13 maintaining the existing approved operational
14 framework. Additionally, as Ms. Pluchino
15 indicated, seventy percent of the students
16 currently live within a thousand foot radius.
17 So this is beneficial to the neighborhood.

18 So the Planning and Zoning Division, based
19 on the complete findings of fact contained
20 within the Staff report in front of you,
21 recommends approval with conditions. The
22 conditions are detailed within the Staff report
23 that everyone has, but I'll briefly summarize
24 them for you; maintaining the maximum
25 enrollment cap of 174 students, limiting

1 operational hours between 7:30 a.m. and 6:30
2 p.m., requiring all vehicular drop-off and
3 pickup activity to occur within the parking
4 garage only, requiring staggered scheduling and
5 operational enforcement measures, requiring any
6 future expansion beyond kindergarten to undergo
7 separate Development Review Committee review,
8 and additional regulatory evaluation prior to
9 implementation, and that would include
10 Miami-Dade County, Miami-Dade County Traffic,
11 and et cetera.

12 So all other conditions, which were three
13 conditions that were originally contained in
14 Resolution 2016-140, shall remain in effect of
15 the application.

16 So you if you have any questions for the
17 applicant or Staff, we're --

18 MR. SANABRIA: I have a question,
19 Mr. Chairman.

20 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: Yes.

21 MR. SANABRIA: Does the applicant agree to
22 those conditions?

23 MS. PLUCHINO: Yes, I do agree.

24 MR. SANABRIA: Done.

25 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: Is there any public

1 comment?

2 THE SECRETARY: No comments.

3 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: Board discussion?

4 MR. SANABRIA: I would like to make a
5 motion to approve.

6 MR. BEHAR: No comments. All good.

7 MR. SANABRIA: Motion to approve, please.

8 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: You have a motion to
9 approve?

10 MR. SANABRIA: Yes, sir.

11 MR. BEHAR: I'm going to second it.

12 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: Okay. Jill.

13 THE SECRETARY: Ignacio Alvarez?

14 MR. ALVAREZ: Yes.

15 THE SECRETARY: Robert Behar?

16 MR. BEHAR: Yes.

17 THE SECRETARY: Alice Bravo?

18 MS. BRAVO: Yes.

19 THE SECRETARY: Shane McGlashen?

20 MR. MCGLASHEN: Yes.

21 THE SECRETARY: Felix Pardo?

22 MR. PARDO: Yes.

23 THE SECRETARY: Gonzalo Sanabria?

24 MR. SANABRIA: Yes.

25 THE SECRETARY: Alex Bucelo?

1 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: Yes.

2 MR. BEHAR: Thank you.

3 Before we adjourn, I want to piggy back on
4 something that Ignacio mentioned, and I, again,
5 commend our former -- not with you guys. This
6 is something else.

7 For him, it's like, off the record, yeah,
8 you've got a great voice, but don't talk so
9 much.

10 No, but my point I want to make is that, I
11 agree with you, anybody -- you know, whatever
12 happened in the past is the past. Anybody
13 running for office in the City of Coral Gables,
14 that sits on this Board, should come off,
15 because this is a quasi-judicial board, and I
16 think that it doesn't look good for having, you
17 know, candidates sitting here while they're
18 running for office, and I wanted to put that on
19 the record before we go.

20 With that, Mr. Chair, I'm done.

21 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: All right. Any other
22 comments?

23 MR. SANABRIA: Mr. Chair?

24 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: Yes.

25 MR. SANABRIA: Anybody's whose term has

1 overexpired since you are overexpired, your
2 nine years, should be -- should not be on the
3 Board. So that's something that I will have to
4 take up with some other people and it should be
5 clarified.

6 MR. ALVAREZ: We don't need to be doing
7 what happens in the Commission. There's no
8 reason to go back and forth. If you have an
9 issue with Robert, tell the City Manager, who
10 just resigned by the way.

11 MR. SANABRIA: Will do.

12 MR. ALVAREZ: He just resigned, but I
13 concur with him. Nobody running for Commission
14 should be on this Board --

15 MR. SANABRIA: Fine.

16 MR. ALVAREZ: -- because it doesn't look
17 good, Gonzalo.

18 MR. SANABRIA: We've got two other people
19 that have done it right here.

20 MR. ALVAREZ: Gonzalo, it doesn't matter --
21 wait. Alex, just because somebody did it
22 before, doesn't mean it's right. I'm just
23 telling you, Gonzalo, it doesn't look good for
24 you.

25 MR. SANABRIA: I hear you.

1 MR. COLLIER: I think there was a motion to
2 adjourn, I heard.

3 MR. BEHAR: Not yet. Now I'll make a
4 motion to adjourn.

5 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: Yeah, but just for the
6 record, I did resign when I ran for office.

7 There's a motion to adjourn.

8 MS. BRAVO: Second.

9 CHAIRMAN BUCELO: All in favor?

10 (Board Members voted aye.)

11 (Thereupon, the meeting was adjourned at 8:15
12 p.m.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

STATE OF FLORIDA:

SS.

COUNTY OF MIAMI-DADE:

I, NIEVES SANCHEZ, Court Reporter, and A
Notary Public for the State of Florida at Large, do
hereby certify that I was authorized to and did
stenographically report the foregoing proceedings and
that the transcript is a true and complete record of my
stenographic notes.

DATED this 22nd day of May, 2026.



NIEVES SANCHEZ