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1 requested feet, with the recommendation of
 2 consideration of the focus on the public realm
 3 in the general PAD Ordinance.
 4 MR. TRIAS: Yeah.
 5 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Is there a motion?
 6 MS. MIRO: I'll make a motion.
 7 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: We have a motion. Is
 8 there a second?
 9 MR. TORRE: I'll second it.
 10 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Venny second it. Any
 11 discussion?
 12 Call the roll, please.
 13 THE SECRETARY: Chip Withers?
 14 MR. WITHERS: Yes.
 15 THE SECRETARY: Robert Behar?
 16 MR. BEHAR: Yes.
 17 THE SECRETARY: Claudia Miro?
 18 MS. MIRO: Yes.
 19 THE SECRETARY: Luis Revuelta?
 20 MR. REVUELTA: Yes.
 21 THE SECRETARY: Venny Torre?
 22 MR. TORRE: Yes.
 23 THE SECRETARY: Eibi Aizenstat?
 24 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Yes.
 25 The next item, which is the New Business,

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1 get the project approved or denied.
 2 Those are the two changes. After
 3 significant discussion, I think the conclusion
 4 was that these were appropriate and that they
 5 enhance the Ordinance. Staff recommends
 6 approval.
 7 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Do we have any --
 8 before we proceed, do we have any speakers for
 9 this item, Jill?
 10 THE SECRETARY: Not on Zoom.
 11 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Not on Zoom.
 12 Anybody here that would like to speak on
 13 this item? No?
 14 At this time, I'll go ahead and close the
 15 floor, and open it up for discussion.
 16 MR. TORRE: I do have a few questions,
 17 first for Staff, just to clarify.
 18 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Sure.
 19 MR. TORRE: My understanding is that
 20 Section 5-100 and beyond has two level of
 21 bonus, which basically this is what it's
 22 getting to, the meat of the bonuses. One is
 23 the Level I bonus and one is the Level II
 24 bonus.
 25 MR. TRIAS: Yes.

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1 is E-3.
 2 MR. COLLER: Okay. Item E-3, an Ordinance
 3 of the City of Commission of Coral Gables,
 4 Florida, providing for text amendments to the
 5 City of Coral Gables Official Zoning Code,
 6 Article 5, "Architecture," Section 5-200,
 7 "Mediterranean Standards," to limit the
 8 Mediterranean Bonus program to Coral Gables
 9 Mediterranean Architectural Style and expand
 10 the Board of Architects review process to
 11 include an optional conceptual review;
 12 providing for severability, repealer,
 13 codification, and for an effective date.
 14 Item E-3, public hearing.
 15 MR. TRIAS: So, Mr. Chairman, there are two
 16 changes. One deals with the word, Coral Gables
 17 Mediterranean Style, which remains, and "Other
 18 Styles," is eliminated in certain areas. So
 19 it's a more targeted Ordinance towards Coral
 20 Gables Mediterranean style.
 21 The second important aspect of this is the
 22 creation of an optional conceptual review
 23 process, meaning somebody could go to the Board
 24 and have a more informal discussion and
 25 hopefully benefit from that, without having to

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1 MR. TORRE: This is applying to a Level I
 2 bonus. The Level II bonus already has
 3 Mediterranean requirements. Is that factual?
 4 I think the biggest change will be a Level I,
 5 which before didn't have such a strict
 6 Mediterranean requirement.
 7 Right. So we're getting to -- the FAR
 8 increases to 3.2 with this level, and it gets
 9 to 3.5 when you get to Level II; is that
 10 correct?
 11 MR. TRIAS: That's correct, yes.
 12 MR. TORRE: Okay. And the big buildings,
 13 which have caused the majority of the issues
 14 that I think are causing this to come forth,
 15 are the ones that hit Level V -- I'm sorry,
 16 Level II, not Level V -- am I going to the
 17 right place?
 18 MR. TRIAS: Yes. Yes. And I think there
 19 was only one Level I in recent memory.
 20 MR. TORRE: Right. So when was the last
 21 time a Level I was proposed?
 22 MR. TRIAS: I think, when Robert Behar
 23 worked on that -- when was that, five years ago
 24 or something -- I mean, some time ago.
 25 MR. TORRE: Right.

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1 MR. BEHAR: And we didn't go to the
2 whole --

3 MR. TORRE: Right. You know, again, we're
4 trying to fix it through a method that deals
5 with something that barely ever happens, and I
6 just don't quite understand where we're headed.

7 MR. BEHAR: Sure. Well, I'm going to tell
8 you where, and I participated in the Blue
9 Ribbon Commission, and, to me, the more that
10 we -- the more meetings that took place, the
11 more discussion, the more I think this is a bad
12 thing, okay?

13 MR. WITHERS: It's a, what?

14 MR. BEHAR: It's not a good thing to do, to
15 limit this. This, to me, is not --
16 professionally, I don't think this is going
17 to -- talking about prescribed, you know,
18 architecture, this is going to lead to
19 specifically that every building should be --
20 and I'm sure that Mr. Trias and I will
21 disagree, and that's okay, that's a good -- you
22 know, as long as we're respectful of each
23 other, it's a good thing -- I don't think this
24 is good.

25 I'm going to give you an example. You've

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1 the other part of the item is going for a
2 preliminary voluntary review.

3 MR. BEHAR: That's an option. You know,
4 you know what, that's okay, because it's not a
5 mandatory, it's optional.

6 MR. TRIAS: It's optional, yes.

7 MR. BEHAR: You know, is it a good thing
8 that you go to the Board, to say, look, I'm
9 going to bring this forward, give me your
10 feedback unofficially, so I don't have to do
11 the whole long presentation, come back and have
12 problems. I don't have a problem with that. I
13 think that could be a positive, you know, tool
14 to do.

15 I'm just opposed to the Med -- strictly
16 Mediterranean looking style buildings.

17 MR. REVUELTA: You're opposing to taking
18 out, "Other styles" from Level I.

19 MR. TRIAS: Correct.

20 MR. REVUELTA: If I can understand --

21 MR. BEHAR: I'm opposed to changing what we
22 have. I think it's worked, okay. You have a
23 Board of Architects that's going to give you --
24 and, again, the example I'm using, I'm sure
25 that that building, that old Regions Bank

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1 got two buildings, The Plaza, which
2 incorporates all of the Med bonuses, and
3 it's -- in recent years, that's one of the most
4 talked about buildings, and across the street,
5 you have a building that was done -- the old
6 Regions Bank building. Today, that building,
7 which I personally -- as an architect, I'm sure
8 my colleague will agree, is a good building.
9 It gives a lot of good public benefits along
10 Ponce de Leon, but yet it is not in the spirit
11 of what this is intended to be.

12 So I think that going in this direction, to
13 me, it's not the right thing to do. I am
14 totally against it. And the same thing I
15 expressed during those Blue Ribbon Committee
16 meetings, I say it again, this is going to
17 make -- you know, it's going to be more of a
18 Boca. When you go up to Boca Raton and you see
19 all of the architecture trying to do the same
20 thing, this is what is -- in my professional
21 opinion, what this is intended to do and will
22 do. I'm not in favor of this.

23 MR. REVUELTA: Are you in favor of --

24 MR. BEHAR: Keeping what is there today.

25 MR. REVUELTA: No. No. I understand. But

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1 building, on Ponce de Leon, did get a Level II,
2 because I'm sure it did a lot of the public
3 benefit -- incorporated the public benefit,
4 that, at the end of the day, are more
5 beneficial. Whether you put a tile roof, you
6 know, as The Plaza, at 190 feet, you put a tile
7 roof, and that's -- is that a good thing for
8 the public? No, it's not, in my opinion, and
9 you would probably have to agree with that.

10 I think there's more important components,
11 elements that are more important than having
12 the building -- and I'm not taking away from
13 that building. That building is, you know, a
14 very good project, I'm sure. I don't agree
15 with it, but, you know, it's a very good
16 project, it does a lot. You know, that's my
17 opinion.

18 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Claudia?

19 MS. MIRO: I feel the same.

20 MR. TORRE: No, I just want to point out a
21 couple of things. So, I mean, we're trying
22 to -- we've been talking a lot about the
23 Mediterranean bonus, and I just made a point
24 that the buildings that we've made a big deal
25 to discuss and bring up and have caused a lot

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1 of the angst are buildings that are way beyond
 2 3.5 and beyond, so the ones that are not
 3 falling into today's discussion. They're
 4 beyond the discussion.

5 And further to that, what makes a
 6 Mediterranean building, as is trying to be
 7 defined by the Code, there's a building, which
 8 I happen to like a lot, currently being
 9 finished, it's called Villa Valencia. I love
 10 it. It's selling for a lot of money. That
 11 building did get some bonuses. That building
 12 is not Mediterranean. It has really nice
 13 architecture. It doesn't have arches, it
 14 doesn't have anything that's not -- it's kind
 15 of modern, actually. Look at the reigns.

16 So I think there's more to say about
 17 architecture here than trying to define things
 18 from the specific that we've been trying to
 19 make it happen.

20 MR. TRIAS: If I could, just give me a
 21 minute. In terms of best practices of the
 22 1920s and in terms of the beautiful
 23 Mediterranean architecture that we like, I've
 24 written on that topic multiple times. The last
 25 time was my Ph.D. dissertation that went over

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1 the 1920s, which, if we follow them, we
 2 probably could do better architecture. It
 3 doesn't have to be Mediterranean only. It
 4 could be many things. But we don't follow
 5 them. We simply refuse to learn from the good
 6 example, for whatever reason, and you know I'm
 7 right, and I'm trying to rescue those things.

8 Now, the good news is that, today, all of
 9 those books from the '20s, all of those
 10 magazines, are PDFs. They're available online.
 11 It's much easier to find that information today
 12 than it was 10, 15 -- than it was when I was a
 13 student. There is no excuse.

14 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Ramon, let me ask a
 15 question, if I may. In the 1920s, how you
 16 built a building and how you designed a
 17 building was different than the components that
 18 are available today to design or build a
 19 building. So shouldn't an architect be able to
 20 follow or look at what is available today to be
 21 able to design it differently, if he's able to
 22 get those bonuses?

23 MR. TRIAS: Well, I mean --

24 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: To me -- to me, for
 25 example, if you take the Biltmore and you say,

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1 the content and so on.

2 What happened in the 1920s is that there
 3 were very good books, and I have some of them
 4 in my office and at home, that dealt
 5 specifically with the architectural styles.
 6 For example, I have one that talks about
 7 northern Italian architectural details, there's
 8 another one that talks about lesser known
 9 architecture of Spain, no masterpieces, but
 10 lesser known. It's really funny how they're
 11 very specialized. And those books are picture
 12 books from the 1920s, multiple books.
 13 Everybody had them in their offices.

14 And those were the practices. They'd look
 15 at the books, they'd say, "Oh, I'm going to do
 16 a Mediterranean building today, so I'm going to
 17 learn from that book."

18 When I was -- many, many years ago, I
 19 worked in Palm Beach briefly, and somebody, an
 20 architect, showed me the Dutch South African
 21 book that was done by the architect that
 22 designed the South African Village. So that's
 23 how that happened. They'd look at the book and
 24 they'd learn from it and they did a great job.
 25 Those were the practices, the best practices of

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1 "Here's the Biltmore. Here's a plan of the
 2 Biltmore or here's a picture of the Biltmore.
 3 Every building within the City should look like
 4 the Biltmore." To me, I'd have a problem with
 5 that, and that's just my opinion. I have not
 6 asked anybody here.

7 MR. TRIAS: If you allow me, the Biltmore
 8 is a modern building. The Biltmore is a steel
 9 structure building, okay. It's a modern
 10 building. In the 1920s, some people would do a
 11 glass facade, such as Ludwig Mies van der Rohe,
 12 tried to come up with those ideas, at the very
 13 same time, with the same structure. So the
 14 aesthetics is a choice. It could be one or
 15 another.

16 All I'm saying is, I know why they did a
 17 good job in the '20s, because they had best
 18 practices that were based on research, research
 19 of design, of features, of details. I know
 20 that. It's not a secret. In fact, the books
 21 are in the library at the University of Miami
 22 and also the Coral Gables library. If we did
 23 that, if we had the educational process or the
 24 continuing education or whatever, I think we
 25 could raise the quality of the architecture.

1 And it could be many things. It doesn't have
 2 to be necessarily Mediterranean.
 3 Right now we're not doing any of that. My
 4 message is that we need to start doing that,
 5 instead of trying to think that the Zoning Code
 6 is going to solve all of our problems through
 7 micromanagement, which was my take with some of
 8 the discussion that took place in the
 9 Committee. To believe that that's going to
 10 work its way into quality is just not a good
 11 approach.
 12 MR. TORRE: But to say that a brand,
 13 because we can call it the brand of the Coral
 14 Gables, which is Mediterranean, I would prefer
 15 to say that the brand of Coral Gables is high
 16 quality architecture or high quality design.
 17 It's a much better aspirational goal for us to
 18 have. Again, a building that's not properly
 19 scaled can be Mediterranean, but if the windows
 20 are too wide, and not tall enough, you know
 21 they're not going to look Mediterranean, and
 22 those things are just good design practices.
 23 If it goes down to us being rigorous and
 24 the Board of Architects doing their job and
 25 just being, you know, on top of it, but that's

1 MR. TRIAS: You could do it or not do it.
 2 MR. WITHERS: Right.
 3 MR. TRIAS: Now, the City, at different
 4 points, has decided to do that, and it has
 5 worked fairly effectively. We can do better,
 6 sure, but I think that The Plaza certainly
 7 complies. Mr. Behar, I don't think anybody
 8 would object to the fact that it complies. And
 9 the question is whether the Regions Bank would
 10 comply with the changes that we're making.
 11 MR. BEHAR: Or the other project, the Villa
 12 Valencia one.
 13 MR. TRIAS: Or Villa Valencia.
 14 MR. BEHAR: I mean, I --
 15 MR. TRIAS: I think that's the discussion,
 16 the narrow discussion we're having.
 17 MR. WITHERS: No. I mean, you know, my
 18 point is that, you know, I hear what Venny is
 19 saying, the standards is really what we should
 20 at least in my mind focus on a little bit more
 21 than the actual style. I mean, I don't know.
 22 MR. TRIAS: Could be.
 23 MR. TORRE: To prove the point a little
 24 bit, so there's a building that now is
 25 applauded for being saved and that is the old

1 what it boils down to.
 2 MR. WITHERS: So, Mr. Chairman --
 3 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Please.
 4 MR. WITHERS: So when does a standard
 5 become a style, because if you look at the 550
 6 building, those have architectural standards,
 7 but they certainly don't have Mediterranean
 8 style.
 9 MR. TRIAS: Right.
 10 MR. WITHERS: So what makes a balcony go
 11 from a standard to a style?
 12 MR. TRIAS: From a Zoning point of view --
 13 MR. WITHERS: Yeah, from what we're talking
 14 about.
 15 MR. TRIAS: Yeah, the way we have it in the
 16 Zoning Code, which these are the eight
 17 buildings that you need to learn from and then
 18 apply similar elements and so on. That's the
 19 way the Zoning Code --
 20 MR. WITHERS: But then you never get out of
 21 your box.
 22 MR. TRIAS: Absolutely, that's the
 23 limitation of that. So that's really a policy
 24 choice.
 25 MR. WITHERS: Correct.

1 police and fire station building, which a
 2 brutalist building, which people were happy
 3 that it was saved, and that's a building from
 4 the '70s that completely goes against any
 5 Mediterranean style, and it's lauded to be
 6 saved. It's wanted.
 7 MR. TRIAS: Some people, yes.
 8 MR. TORRE: But I'm just saying, in the
 9 fabric of this City, there's a brutalist
 10 building that's lauded for being there. So we
 11 have different things that happen across the
 12 board that are good and they say it.
 13 MR. BEHAR: I think that diversity is
 14 always good.
 15 MR. TRIAS: Yeah. Like I said, this is a
 16 very narrow discussion. This was an issue,
 17 again, identified by the Commission. They set
 18 up a Committee, and the Committee discussed
 19 this multiple nights. At the end, we believed
 20 that some small changes, very small, from our
 21 point of view, were better than some bigger
 22 re-writes. So that's what was before you. If
 23 you agree with it, fine. If you don't, then
 24 that's a perfectly valid position also.
 25 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: But eliminating all

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1 other styles, isn't that a big change?
 2 MR. TRIAS: Yes. For Level I, certainly, I
 3 think that will be a change, yes.
 4 MR. BEHAR: It's a big change.
 5 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Yes.
 6 MR. TRIAS: Yeah. No, it is a change, and,
 7 again, the prevailing view was, the
 8 Mediterranean style language needs to be
 9 targeted towards Mediterranean. That's where
 10 the discussion took place, and, of course,
 11 Mr. Behar had a different opinion.
 12 MR. BEHAR: I'm -- go ahead.
 13 MR. WITHERS: No. No, but, I mean, there's
 14 other standards. There's Green Buildings.
 15 Those standards are important to me. They
 16 might not be Mediterranean.
 17 MR. TRIAS: And we have the LEED
 18 requirement for buildings and so on.
 19 MR. WITHERS: Yeah.
 20 MR. TRIAS: Absolutely. All of this is
 21 policy. Again, it's a choice that we make, and
 22 the brand of the City depends on that choice,
 23 certainly, but I think that the Med Bonus
 24 program has served the City fairly well, and
 25 that we could make it better through some

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1 case, then shouldn't it come back written a
 2 different way?
 3 MR. COLLER: Well, Mr. Chairman, actually,
 4 the way it's written, you could bifurcate it,
 5 because the way the Ordinance is written,
 6 there's one section relating to the conceptual
 7 submission.
 8 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Correct.
 9 MR. COLLER: And the balance of the
 10 Ordinance is related to the Mediterranean style
 11 for Level I. So I think you could make a
 12 recommendation, if that's the desire of the
 13 Board, that you recommend approval of the
 14 conceptual, but recommend denial of the
 15 limitation on the Mediterranean style.
 16 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Is that your motion,
 17 Robert?
 18 MR. BEHAR: Yes, that's my motion.
 19 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Is there a second?
 20 MR. TORRE: I'll second it.
 21 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Venny seconds. Any
 22 discussion? No?
 23 Call the roll, please.
 24 THE SECRETARY: Chip Withers?
 25 MR. WITHERS: Yes.

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1 changes, I do believe that's the case.
 2 MS. MIRO: I wanted to say that I also lean
 3 towards the high quality, rather than marrying
 4 ourselves to one particular style. I think
 5 that limits us too much. And like my
 6 colleagues were saying, it's a big change.
 7 MR. TRIAS: Yeah, and I think what I would
 8 say is that, from practical issue of reviewing
 9 projects, it's easier if it's more targeted
 10 towards Mediterranean than if you open it up.
 11 If you open it up, we can argue for a long
 12 time. So that's just the practical issue here.
 13 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Any other comments?
 14 Anybody want to make a motion?
 15 MR. BEHAR: I'll make a motion not to -- to
 16 recommend not to approve this --
 17 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: As written?
 18 MR. REVUELTA: -- item as written. The
 19 only thing I will maybe approve is the optional
 20 submittal to the Board of Architects.
 21 MR. TRIAS: The optional conceptual review,
 22 okay.
 23 MR. BEHAR: Yeah, but I don't think it's a
 24 good idea to get rid of all of the other --
 25 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: But if that's the

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1 THE SECRETARY: Robert Behar?
 2 MR. BEHAR: Yes.
 3 THE SECRETARY: Claudia Miro?
 4 MS. MIRO: Yes.
 5 THE SECRETARY: Luis Revuelta?
 6 MR. REVUELTA: Yes.
 7 THE SECRETARY: Venny Torre?
 8 MR. TORRE: Yes.
 9 THE SECRETARY: Eibi Aizenstat?
 10 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Yes.
 11 We can move on now to E-4. Mr. Coller.
 12 MR. COLLER: Item E-4, an Ordinance of the
 13 City Commission of Coral Gables, Florida
 14 providing for a text amendment to the City of
 15 Coral Gables Official Zoning Code amending
 16 Article 14, "Process", Section 14-200,
 17 "Procedures", Section 14-202, "General
 18 Development Review Procedures", Section
 19 14-202.9, "Certificate of Use", to provide the
 20 City Manager or designee with authority to
 21 deny, suspend, or revoke a certificate of use
 22 under specific circumstances; providing for
 23 severability, repealer, codification, and an
 24 effective date.
 25 Item E-4, public hearing.