

CITY OF CORAL GABLES  
LOCAL PLANNING AGENCY (LPA)/  
PLANNING AND ZONING BOARD MEETING  
VERBATIM TRANSCRIPT  
HYBRID FORMAT  
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 12, 2024, COMMENCING AT 6:02 P.M.

Board Members Present at Commission Chamber:

Eibi Aizenstat, Chairman  
Robert Behar  
Julio Grabiell  
Wayne "Chip" Withers  
Sue Kawalerski  
Felix Pardo  
Javier Salman

City Staff and Consultants:

Jennifer Garcia, Planning Official  
Arceli Redila, Zoning Administrator  
Cristina M. Suarez, City Attorney  
Jill Menendez, Administrative Assistant, Board Secretary

Also Participating:

Mario Garcia-Serra, On behalf of Item E-1 and E-2  
Maria de la Guardia, Architect  
Jeff Shimonski, Arborist

quorum, the Chairperson or Secretary of the Board, may set a special meeting to consider such matter. In the event that four votes are not obtained, an applicant, except in the case of a Comprehensive Plan Amendment, may request a continuance or allow the application to proceed to the City Commission without a recommendation.

Pursuant to Resolution Number 2021-118, the City of Coral Gables has returned to traditional in-person meetings; however, the Planning and Zoning Board has established the ability for the public to provide comments virtually. For those members of the public who are appearing on Zoom and wish to testify, you must be visible to the court reporter to be sworn in. Otherwise, if you speak, without being sworn in, your comments may not have evidentiary value.

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

As Chair, I now officially call the City of Coral Gables Planning and Zoning Meeting of

THEREUPON:

(The following proceedings were held.)

CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Let's go ahead and get started, please.

For everybody that's watching for their -- for this meeting, I just want to let everybody know that the local channel, 77, is down, and that. The simulcast is only on YouTube and via Zoom at this time. Once again, Channel 77, which is the local channel, is down, and if you want to watch the meeting, it would be on YouTube or Zoom. Thank you.

I'd like to go ahead and call the meeting to order. I'd like to ask everybody to please silence all phones, beepers, if they still have them, and so forth.

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

If a matter is continued, due to a lack of

June 12, 2024 to order. The time is 6:02.

Jill, if you would please call the roll.

THE SECRETARY: Robert Behar?

MR. BEHAR: Here.

THE SECRETARY: Julio Grabiell?

MR. GRABIELL: Here.

THE SECRETARY: Sue Kawalerski?

MS. KAWALERSKI: Here.

THE SECRETARY: Felix Pardo?

MR. PARDO: Here.

THE SECRETARY: Javier Salman?

MR. SALMAN: Here.

THE SECRETARY: Chip Withers?

MR. WITHERS: Here.

THE SECRETARY: Eibi Aizenstat?

CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Here.

Notice Regarding Ex Parte Communications, please be advised that this Board is a quasi-judicial board, that requires Board Members to disclose all ex parte communications and site visits. An ex parte communication is defined as any contact, communication, conversation, correspondence, memorandum or other written or verbal communication, that takes place outside of the public hearing

1 between a member of the public and a member of  
2 a quasi-judicial board, regarding matters to be  
3 heard by the Board.

4 If anyone made any contact with a Board  
5 Member, regarding an issue before the Board,  
6 the Board Member must state, on the record, the  
7 existence of the ex parte communication and the  
8 party who originated the communication.

9 Also, if a Board Member conducted a site  
10 visit specifically to related to the case  
11 before the Board, the Board Member must also  
12 disclose such visit. In either case, the Board  
13 Member must state, on the record, whether the  
14 ex parte communication and/or site visit will  
15 affect the Board member's ability to  
16 impartially consider the evidence to be  
17 presented regarding the matter. The Board  
18 Member should also state that his or her  
19 decision will be based on substantial,  
20 competent evidence and testimony presented on  
21 the record today.

22 Does any Member of the Board have such  
23 communication and/or visit to disclose at this  
24 time?

25 MR. GRABIEL: No.

5

1 MR. PARDO: Yes.

2 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Yes, sir.

3 MR. PARDO: I was contacted via phone by a  
4 resident --

5 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: I think your mic is  
6 not --

7 MR. PARDO: Okay. I was contacted via  
8 phone by a resident, because she is out of  
9 town, and was concerned whether she had  
10 received the right notice or not. And, then, I  
11 told them to please contact the Planning Board,  
12 which she did.

13 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you.

14 MR. PARDO: And that was today.

15 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Perfect. Thank you.

16 MR. PARDO: You're welcome.

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

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

6

1 (Thereupon, the participants were sworn.)

2 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you.

3 Zoom platform participants, I will ask any  
4 person wishing to speak on tonight's agenda  
5 item, to please open their chat and send a  
6 direct message to Jill Menendez, stating you  
7 would like to speak before the Board and  
8 include your full name. Jill will call you  
9 when it's your turn. I ask you to be concise,  
10 for the interest of time.

11 Phone platform participants, after Zoom  
12 platform participants are done, I will ask  
13 phone platform participants to comment on  
14 tonight's agenda item. I also ask you to be  
15 concise, for the interest of time.

16 First we have the approval of the minutes,  
17 which would be May 8th, 2024. Is there a  
18 motion?

19 MR. BEHAR: So motion to approve.

20 MR. PARDO: Motion --

21 MR. BEHAR: Sorry, go ahead.

22 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Felix, do you have a  
23 motion?

24 MR. PARDO: To move the --

25 MR. BEHAR: Second.

7

1 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Second.

2 Any comments? No?

3 Call the roll, please.

4 THE SECRETARY: Julio Grabiell?

5 MR. GRABIEL: Yes.

6 THE SECRETARY: Sue Kawalerski?

7 MS. KAWALERSKI: Yes.

8 THE SECRETARY: Felix Pardo?

9 MR. PARDO: Yes.

10 THE SECRETARY: Javier Salman?

11 MR. SALMAN: Yes.

12 THE SECRETARY: Chip Withers?

13 MR. WITHERS: Yes.

14 THE SECRETARY: Robert Behar?

15 MR. BEHAR: Yes.

16 THE SECRETARY: Eibi Aizenstat?

17 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Yes.

18 The procedure we'll use tonight is, first  
19 we'll have the identification of the agenda  
20 item by the Madam City Attorney, then we'll  
21 have the presentation by the applicant or the  
22 agent, followed by a presentation by Staff.  
23 We'll go ahead and open it for public comment,  
24 first, in Chamber, followed by Zoom, and then  
25 the phone line platform. We'll go ahead and

8

1 then close the public comment, have Board  
2 discussion, and a motion, and further  
3 discussion, if needed, and a second of motion.  
4 Then we'll have the Board's final comments and  
5 a vote.

6 Mr. Behar.

7 MR. BEHAR: Are you ready?

8 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Yes.

9 MR. BEHAR: Okay. Mr. Chair, I want to  
10 recuse myself for item -- I guess it's 1 and 2,  
11 E-1 and E-2, for the reasons that the developer  
12 of this project is a client of mine, so not to  
13 have a conflict with that either.

14 In addition, even though it's been cleared  
15 before, my son is one of the attorneys on the  
16 project, as well. So, in an abundance of  
17 caution, I want to recuse myself for Item E-1  
18 and E-2.

19 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Okay. But you're  
20 recusing yourself not because your son is --

21 MR. BEHAR: No. No. I'm recusing myself  
22 because --

23 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: He's a client.

24 MR. BEHAR: -- he's my client. I know that  
25 I spoke to the City Attorney, and just in an

1 the minutes.

2 MR. PARDO: Okay.

3 THE SECRETARY: It was the applicant  
4 requesting that the item be deferred.

5 MR. PARDO: I thought they had asked for  
6 another deferral, and that's why the  
7 attachment.

8 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: No.

9 MR. PARDO: Okay. Got it.

10 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Okay. Yes, Chip?

11 MR. WITHERS: Do we want to just go to the  
12 Mediterranean Bonus, so Robert can stay and  
13 then leave afterwards or --

14 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: That's a great idea.

15 MR. WITHERS: I don't know. I'm just --

16 MR. BEHAR: Thank you.

17 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: If everybody is okay  
18 with that, I'll go ahead and move it.

19 MR. WITHERS: Is that okay with the Board?

20 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Fine. Sounds great.

21 MR. BEHAR: Thank you.

22 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Madam City Attorney.

23 MS. SUAREZ: Okay. So we will begin with  
24 E-3. E-3 is an Ordinance of the City  
25 Commission of Coral Gables, Florida, providing

1 abundance, you know, mentioned it, but that's  
2 something that already -- it was a previous  
3 City Attorney, it was clear, it was not an  
4 issue, but just in case, I want to make sure  
5 it's transparency, that there's -- you know,  
6 there's that.

7 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you. And you'll  
8 be here for the other items?

9 MR. BEHAR: I -- yeah, if you make it  
10 quick.

11 MR. PARDO: Mr. Chairman --

12 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Yes, sir.

13 MR. PARDO: -- before Robert leaves, the  
14 deferral of Riviera Country Club, did we  
15 recognize that they've been deferred to the  
16 public?

17 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: We did not, on this  
18 one. There is no --

19 MR. PARDO: I received the letter there.

20 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Jill.

21 MS. KAWALERSKI: That was --

22 THE SECRETARY: Yes. That was an  
23 attachment to the minutes, because it was  
24 presented that day, at the last Planning and  
25 Zoning Board Meeting, therefore, it was part of

1 text amendments to the City of Coral Gables  
2 Official Zoning Code, Article 5,  
3 "Architecture," Section 5-200, "Mediterranean  
4 Standards;" Article 3, "Uses," Section 3-402,  
5 Restrictions related to location;" and Article  
6 16, "Definitions;" to enhance the quality of  
7 Coral Gables Mediterranean design by requiring  
8 a conceptual design review; removing  
9 duplicative criteria; relocating inapplicable  
10 standards; supplementing existing criteria; and  
11 including additional Mediterranean building  
12 examples; providing for severability, repealer,  
13 codification, and for an effective date.

14 We have our Planning Official who will  
15 present.

16 MS. GARCIA: Good evening, Jennifer Garcia,  
17 Planning Official.

18 Could I have the PowerPoint, please?

19 So we discussed this at the last meeting.  
20 There haven't been a lot of updates, but  
21 there's been a few, so I want to go through  
22 this, just so you feel comfortable in what  
23 you're looking at today.

24 So, remember, we had discussion and  
25 feedback with the Board of Architects several

1 times, the City Commission, as well as with the  
2 Planning and Zoning Board, and now we're  
3 starting on the actual adoption process, which  
4 are the Planning and Zoning recommendation, and  
5 then the City Commission for two Readings.

6 So the intent and the purpose is being  
7 altered a little bit to strengthen the purpose  
8 of the Mediterranean Bonus. Just a reminder,  
9 there are redundant criteria in our Zoning  
10 Code, that was copied during the Zoning Code  
11 Update, from the Med Bonus criteria to the  
12 underlying Zoning. So that's being stricken  
13 through. There's relocation of some certain  
14 criteria from Med Bonus to a more appropriate  
15 section of the Zoning Code, as part of this, as  
16 well, and then incorporating a lot of  
17 provisions of the architecture standards from  
18 Mediterranean Village Architectural Standards,  
19 which created the Plaza, into these proposed  
20 changes.

21 Expanding the list of architectural  
22 precedent is also part of this, and the new  
23 thing is actually including character defining  
24 features of Mediterranean design, and I'll get  
25 to that in just a second.

13

1 basically. We talked, last time, about  
2 removing the San Sebastian Apartments. And  
3 since then, we've had feedback from the public  
4 to also remove Granada Shops, just because we  
5 don't have a lot of good drawings and  
6 elevations and plans and, really, any permit  
7 drawings from Granada Shops. So the proposal  
8 is to actually eliminate that as an example for  
9 architects to follow when they're proposing  
10 new buildings.

11 We talked about, last time, incorporating  
12 some new buildings. These six buildings were  
13 done by what we call founding architects.  
14 You'll recognize names like George Fink,  
15 Schultzer & Weaver, Phineas Paist. These are  
16 our founding architects, that created a lot of  
17 these good buildings in Coral Gables. So we  
18 found some of those examples here in South  
19 Florida and are incorporating that as examples  
20 for architects to follow.

21 And then what's new are these three new  
22 buildings, done by Martin Hampton, the Antigua  
23 (phonetic) Hotel, which was demolished,  
24 unfortunately, in the North Ponce area, the  
25 Flora Garden Apartments Building, which is in

15

1 So, again, these are pages from the -- the  
2 noise is quite loud.

3 MS. SUAREZ: We're contacting Facilities so  
4 we can address this. So I'm doing that right  
5 now.

6 MS. GARCIA: It's okay.

7 So these are pages from our Zoning Code  
8 Update, highlights or sections that were copied  
9 and pasted from the current status of our  
10 Mediterranean Bonus, into the underlying Zoning  
11 Districts, and other parts of the Zoning Code,  
12 such Landscaping, Parking and such.

13 And, then, this is -- what you're seeing  
14 right now on the screen is copies --  
15 screenshots of the proposed changes to the Med  
16 Bonus, and how some of these more, maybe not  
17 architectural related criteria, is moving into  
18 more appropriate parts of the Code.

19 And, then, these are just pages from the  
20 Mediterranean Village PAD Architectural  
21 Standards, and how some of these ideas and  
22 standards are being incorporated into standards  
23 for Mediterranean architecture bonus.

24 And, then, these are our current  
25 precedents, architectural example buildings,

14

1 Hollywood, and the Spanish Apartment, which is  
2 also called the Villa de Leon, in Tampa.

3 These are local examples we talked about  
4 last time, that weren't done by our more common  
5 architects of the 1920s, but they're still good  
6 examples for precedence, as well as some other  
7 examples outside of our City, Santa Barbara  
8 City Hall, and the Vineta Hotel in Palm Beach.  
9 And, then, what's new, Vizcaya was a good  
10 example that came up -- there you are -- that  
11 came up at the last meeting -- you did a little  
12 switch. I see that -- as well as Everglades  
13 Club in Palm Beach, Palm Beach Townhall, and  
14 also Generalife Garden, which is in Granada  
15 Spain, were other examples that came up.

16 We went through these additional examples  
17 we got from the public to the Board of  
18 Architects, and they agreed that having these  
19 examples would be helpful for architects in the  
20 future to follow during their building  
21 development phase.

22 What's also new is what's called character  
23 defining features. So I know that this is like  
24 very small and hard to read, but I'll quickly  
25 go through them. So asymmetry, projecting and

16

1 recessing bays, articulations, different  
2 textures in the facade, ornate entrances,  
3 towers, varied roof types. A lot of these  
4 features that you see in those precedent  
5 buildings are basically being kind of dissected  
6 and put, line by line, and so the intent here  
7 is that an architect, that's not familiar with  
8 Mediterranean architecture, who's building a  
9 Mediterranean building in Coral Gables, to be  
10 able to highlight different character defining  
11 features of the proposed building by using this  
12 as sort of a start.

13 So the prerequisites table has not changed.  
14 There's been some reorganization, but it hasn't  
15 changed since the last time we went through it  
16 during the last meeting discussion. And,  
17 again, you have to fulfill the architecture  
18 precedence, the building examples, as well as  
19 that prerequisites tables that I just showed  
20 you right here, and that basically allows you  
21 to enter in the Med Bonus criteria, to be able  
22 to apply for Med Bonus.

23 To actually get the Med Bonus, you have to  
24 get -- fulfill Level 1 and Level 2. Level 1,  
25 again, hasn't changed since we spoke about it

17

1 at the last meeting for discussion, and if  
2 you're a multi-family building, you have to  
3 fill six of the twelve of all of these  
4 requirements, and if you're a mixed-use  
5 building, you have to fulfill eight of the  
6 twelve. That's standard. That's already in  
7 our Code right now. It's not really changing.  
8 So once you fulfill those requirements of a  
9 Level 1, then you are -- may be granted, by the  
10 Board of Architects, that additional story,  
11 additional Med Bonus.

12 And, then, Level 2 hasn't changed since we  
13 talked about it in the last meeting, as well,  
14 and that would grant you the top, highest,  
15 level of Med Bonus, by which it would be the  
16 second level, or a third level, depending on  
17 whether you're high-rise or high density. So,  
18 again, you have to comply with the  
19 architectural precedence. The prerequisites  
20 compliance is part of the first table we went  
21 through, Table 1 Med Bonus, and Table Two Med  
22 Bonus, to be able to fulfill the whole Med  
23 Bonus requirement.

24 That's it.

25 MR. BEHAR: Can you -- I have a question,

18

1 Mr. Chair.

2 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Yes.

3 MR. BEHAR: Can you go back to the bonus  
4 Level 1 table?

5 MS. GARCIA: This one?

6 MR. BEHAR: Yeah.

7 MS. GARCIA: Uh-huh.

8 MR. BEHAR: In order to get the Level 1, if  
9 do residential, you have to do six of twelve?

10 MS. GARCIA: Yes. It's not changing.

11 MR. BEHAR: Okay. But I see that you're  
12 scratching out a lot of those. How am I  
13 getting -- the proposed is on the right. So  
14 vertical hierarchy, for example, do we have --

15 MS. GARCIA: Uh-huh.

16 MR. BEHAR: -- a more defined way to get  
17 there or is that -- you know, because, that, to  
18 me, sounds arbitrary.

19 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: I think that was part  
20 of the discussion we had, as far as being  
21 arbitrary.

22 MR. BEHAR: No. It's not specific. You  
23 know, it's not like well -- who's going to  
24 say -- argue yes or no? I mean, to me -- and I  
25 see the changes, but that particular is one

19

1 that, how are we having a more defined  
2 solution?

3 MS. GARCIA: So if you read the language  
4 that goes with the vertical hierarchy, Number  
5 3 -- we can go over it. I think it's here.

6 MR. PARDO: Mr. Chairman?

7 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Yes, sir.

8 MR. PARDO: I'd like to add something. I  
9 understand what Robert is talking about, with  
10 is, at this particular point -- at this  
11 particular point, you're looking at words, but  
12 the example, the specific example of those  
13 elements, that have to be added to be able to  
14 qualify, are not there. They're expressed in  
15 words that are too loose and not tight enough.

16 And the other thing is that, you know,  
17 we've struggled with this. This is supposed to  
18 be able to enhance a specific style. The  
19 examples are wonderful. Now they're all over  
20 the State of Florida, all over the country, but  
21 the specific elements are not followed by, in  
22 any way, shape or form, and I think that's what  
23 you're concerned with, and rightfully so.

24 MR. BEHAR: And out of all of them, that  
25 was the one that caught my attention. I said,

20

1 how do we determine what is compliance from  
2 that wording?

3 MR. PARDO: And the thing is, it is a --  
4 it's a toolbox for the designer, but it's also  
5 a toolbox, you know, that the Board of  
6 Architects understands --

7 MS. GARCIA: Right.

8 MR. PARDO: -- because, if not, you know,  
9 Robert is going to be hitting his head against,  
10 you know, the table there, every time he comes  
11 in, because the elements aren't specific.

12 So, when you say, "Vertical hierarchy,"  
13 there's no example. You know, you're looking  
14 at certain things, but it's too loose.  
15 Obviously, in the hands of someone that's very  
16 good at what they do, they understand it, they  
17 could get there, but it's not made for everyone  
18 to understand. It's very difficult to  
19 interpret.

20 MS. GARCIA: All right. So this particular  
21 one, I believe, was taken from the  
22 Mediterranean Village handbook.

23 MR. BEHAR: And not so much for the  
24 designer, but when the Board of Architects --  
25 it's very subjective.

21

1 residents, who are going to see something that  
2 is either good or not good and that qualifies  
3 or doesn't qualify.

4 So, you know, we're almost like reinventing  
5 part of the wheel here, because when we had the  
6 Mediterranean Committee get-together, and they  
7 were all architects and all kicking it around,  
8 and Robert and I sat on that Board, and we were  
9 looking at these things, we had examples of  
10 things that were given Mediterranean Bonus  
11 before, which were not specifically  
12 Mediterranean, and that was one of the biggest  
13 hurdles to get there. And philosophically, I  
14 think you have an issue with this. I don't see  
15 a betterment in this particular proposal, and I  
16 think it needs more specific work. I'm not  
17 saying it can't be done. I'm just saying, it  
18 needs more specific work.

19 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Are you saying that  
20 when somebody brings in a project to get  
21 approved for Mediterranean Bonus, you're going  
22 to show them that diagram and say it has to  
23 look more like this?

24 MS. GARCIA: No. So the idea was that a  
25 lot of these diagrams from the Appendix C be

23

1 MR. SALMAN: Sure is.

2 MS. GARCIA: Yes.

3 MR. PARDO: Yeah. And it's become more  
4 subjective with this change. There's no doubt.

5 MS. GARCIA: But the idea is that this  
6 update would be accompanied with some kind of  
7 updated best practice manual, and to show  
8 diagrams like this, that are basically  
9 analyzing some of the precedent examples that  
10 we're going through --

11 MR. PARDO: Right.

12 MS. GARCIA: -- and showing what the Board  
13 of Architects should be looking for.

14 MR. PARDO: The other thing is that the  
15 appendix, that was added to the Code by the  
16 previous Planning Director, which was  
17 specifically for The Plaza, they did a better  
18 job there in explaining what they were doing,  
19 but that doesn't necessarily apply to  
20 everything. You mentioned it, but it's not  
21 necessarily adaptable to this.

22 I think that this will create tremendous  
23 confusion and frustration between the applicant  
24 or the developers, the Board of Architects,  
25 and, then, at the end of the day, the

22

1 incorporated into what's now being used as the  
2 best practices manual, which is on our website,  
3 that architects could use, as far as reference,  
4 but it doesn't include all of these diagrams.  
5 I only think it includes this one. This is to  
6 kind of explain what this text is saying, when  
7 it talks about the top, and middle, and bottom,  
8 and where to put emphasis and where to put your  
9 entrance. It's kind of illustrated here.

10 So the idea is that once this maybe gets  
11 adopted, that this also include an update for  
12 the best practices manual, to help architects  
13 be able to illustrate and understand the intent  
14 of this language.

15 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Aren't there  
16 definitions -- I mean, I'm going to ask the  
17 architects on the Board, is there a guide or  
18 something that can be implemented into the  
19 Code, that you have to put in "X" amount of  
20 features, not just it has to look like this or  
21 this is a picture of it, to qualify?

22 MR. PARDO: In the reference of the best  
23 practice, there was an attempt. It was more --  
24 it was more of a graphic interpretation of, you  
25 know, these are the elements, but, you know,

24

1 when you're designing, it's very difficult to  
2 look at this and be able to say to yourself,  
3 well, it looks good, but on top of that, I'm  
4 going to get that checked off, because the  
5 whole point here is that, you know, this is all  
6 about bonuses, and that's where I personally  
7 have a philosophical issue with that, and that  
8 is that I think that the Mediterranean Bonuses  
9 have run their course.

10 I think that, if you really look at this  
11 and you want to look in certain areas, you  
12 know, and you're trying to promote, you know,  
13 very good design, there are certain elements  
14 that are very different than just based on a  
15 specific style. And the other thing is that,  
16 there are -- in my opinion, there are certain  
17 areas where, if you wanted to look at a bonus,  
18 you should be looking at those areas.

19 And my opinion, my personal opinion, is  
20 that I think that the bonuses are discretionary  
21 and I think that they've run their course, and  
22 one of the difficulties that you're going to  
23 get is that, you're going to have people that  
24 are trying to design really nice projects, but  
25 the safety blanket that we have in the City of

25

1 then, again, some of the architecture is  
2 exceptional not being Mediterranean. So that's  
3 the reason I say that I don't think that it's  
4 needed anymore. I think it's more of a  
5 pressing issue of finding a way to come up with  
6 better architecture.

7 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: So what you're saying  
8 is -- so you're advocating that we shouldn't  
9 have a Mediterranei Bonus in the City or in the  
10 Code?

11 MR. PARDO: Well, if you're going to  
12 provide bonuses, in my opinion, there are  
13 certain areas, you know, in the City,  
14 Commercial areas, let's say, where maybe you  
15 could incentivize it, by providing certain  
16 things.

17 Not mixing apples and oranges, for example,  
18 you know, much has been said about, well, if  
19 you provide a park, we'll give you another  
20 floor, you know, and that's an incentive,  
21 especially in a certain area.

22 There are other areas, for example, in the  
23 City, that require that you provide  
24 Mediterranean architecture, with no bonuses.  
25 So that is -- and that is because it's more of

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1 Coral Gables is the Board of Architects and  
2 their commitment to making sure that good  
3 quality architecture is approved, whether it's  
4 Modern, whether it's Mediterranean, whether it  
5 is whatever, but it's all about very good  
6 design.

7 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: What do you mean by  
8 it's run its course?

9 MR. PARDO: I'm dating myself, but when we  
10 looked at the Showroom on Ponce, and we had to  
11 tear it down and come up with something, so the  
12 Historic Board wasn't going to go crazy, we  
13 came up with the first Mediterranean Revival  
14 commercial building. And, then, the  
15 Mediterranean Ordinance was written around it,  
16 to be able to incentivize that, because it cost  
17 so much more to build that, versus, you know,  
18 other types of architecture. Not that other  
19 types of architectures were worse, but it was  
20 giving them an even playing field.

21 And I think, over time, you know, we've  
22 seen that some of these buildings that have  
23 qualified for the Mediterranean Bonus really  
24 aren't necessarily Mediterranean or they're not  
25 necessarily good. Some are exceptions, but,

26

1 a compatibility with the area, with the  
2 neighborhood, and that kind of thing.

3 And I was criticized by Former  
4 Commissioners about the word compatibility. We  
5 all know what compatibility means, does it look  
6 like it belongs here or not. There's no doubt  
7 in my mind that any of the architects that are  
8 sitting in this room today can do something  
9 that looks really, really good, and doesn't  
10 necessarily have to be that, but there may be  
11 other reasons to provide an incentive, in other  
12 parts of the City, but not necessarily where  
13 it's going to usurp the surrounding  
14 compatibility with the neighborhood.

15 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: So if I understand  
16 correctly, what you're saying is that  
17 Mediterranean Bonuses should not give  
18 additional height, it should be part of the  
19 aesthetics as to the compatibility of the area?

20 MR. PARDO: I think that there are already  
21 certain areas that are deemed that they must be  
22 Mediterranean. You can't touch those.

23 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: But you're saying, you  
24 shouldn't have additional height?

25 MR. PARDO: Well, what I'm saying is that,

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1 sometimes it's counterintuitive, you know, to  
2 the particular style, and, you know, after a  
3 certain height, you know, you kind of lose the  
4 perspective of the detailing and the style to  
5 begin with.

6 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Then should that  
7 detail maybe be at a lower level, so that, at  
8 the height that it's at, you don't visibly see  
9 it?

10 MR. PARDO: On the Committee, we had very  
11 healthy discussions about that, about  
12 providing, you know, areas that are more  
13 pedestrian friendly, areas that are more  
14 conducive to the scale of the pedestrian. It's  
15 is a quality issue there. And you could  
16 provide certain bonuses for that, but in my  
17 opinion, though, the reason I said specifically  
18 that it's run its course is, there are so many  
19 buildings right now that are being built, that  
20 it's very difficult to justify that they would  
21 come close to that, but they're still being  
22 given, you know, the bonuses, especially, you  
23 know, the height bonus.

24 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: But then -- I would  
25 think, then, you have to look at unfortunately

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1 hear, Julio, what's your thoughts on it?

2 MR. GRABIEL: I am not sure if the  
3 Mediterranean potential bonus would result in a  
4 positive environment for the City. I mean,  
5 when you look at, not all, but some of the  
6 buildings that have been built, which are  
7 supposedly Mediterranean, they're not  
8 necessarily the highest quality of  
9 architecture. So I don't know how we solve  
10 that.

11 And I think there is also the possibility  
12 that you can have very good or great  
13 architecture that's not Mediterranean. So why  
14 are you penalizing the architects or the  
15 clients who want to build a facility that is  
16 not Mediterranean, but they're being forced to  
17 go the Mediterranean route, because that's the  
18 only way they can get the bonuses?

19 So there's a dichotomy there, which I have  
20 difficulties with.

21 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Okay. Javier, what's  
22 your feeling on that?

23 MR. SALMAN: I understand the issue with  
24 regards to the descriptive words that we're  
25 using, but I think that part of that is

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1 doing again a Zoning Code Re-Write, because  
2 that's something that you've got to correct  
3 within the Code, as opposed to talking about  
4 how to arbitrarily or not arbitrarily determine  
5 it.

6 MR. PARDO: Right. I just think that this  
7 proposal before us today, in my opinion,  
8 doesn't -- doesn't get to any place, as far as  
9 improvement, but that -- I think that taking a  
10 40,000 foot view of everything, you should be  
11 looking at, you know, the possibility of  
12 providing, in certain areas in the City,  
13 certain bonuses, to be able to provide a  
14 certain quality, that you normally would not  
15 provide.

16 But, at the same time, I think that tagging  
17 that bonus on a style, only one style, I think  
18 is wrong. I think it should be different.  
19 That's my personal opinion.

20 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: I mean, we have -- you  
21 know, we're fortunate because we have four  
22 distinguished architects that are sitting on  
23 this panel, and it's good --

24 MR. PARDO: Thank you.

25 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: I mean, I'd like to

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1 answered by the exhibit you have up behind you  
2 right now, where you give specific examples as  
3 to what you're talking about with regards to  
4 vertical hierarchy, emphasis, whatnot. So I  
5 think that answers a lot of those questions, by  
6 just citing the examples and the analytical  
7 drawings that are provided. And, again, these  
8 are analytical drawings of examples, but I  
9 don't think that the examples were meant to be  
10 a definitive list of examples. There are lots  
11 of other Mediterranean buildings.

12 And, honestly, the proportioning and the  
13 emphasis of vertical hierarchy are just as  
14 relevant in modern architecture as they are in  
15 classic or Mediterranean Revival or  
16 Neoclassical or Beaux-Arts. Whatever style  
17 you're going to analyze, the same rules apply.  
18 And, then, the abstraction of those rules, in  
19 the more modern language, can be some really  
20 very beautiful buildings, that don't  
21 necessarily fall within that line.

22 So I see your point. I think what the  
23 problem is, is that we defined early on  
24 Mediterranean being the nadir of beauty, when  
25 it isn't necessarily the nadir of beauty. This

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1 is a city which has its history in the  
2 Mediterranean Revival kind of architecture,  
3 with the work of Mr. Paist and Mr. Fink and the  
4 initial development work that was done, the  
5 Ponce Building -- the Ponce Entrance building,  
6 all of the bits of architecture that are part  
7 of the original development of this, but it  
8 also included, you know, the Normandy Village,  
9 the French Village, the Chinese Village, all  
10 done in very respectful, but derivative  
11 versions of the original styles of the  
12 architecture where they were being selective.

13 The Chinese Village had Chinese  
14 architectural elements in them, with boom  
15 gates, sloped curved roof pitches. And the  
16 Normandy Village has their small windows and  
17 large proportion of wall versus window and  
18 their detailing with regards to the simplicity  
19 of their eaves into the roofs, you know, very  
20 much evocative, and, again, the word is  
21 evocative, of the style, because there's no  
22 replicant -- or replicated design that I don't  
23 think -- that I think the Code is looking for.

24 But with regards to the Mediterranean  
25 Bonus, we decided, early on, that it should be

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1 surround it, but then you have the same  
2 classical architectural problem that Chicago  
3 faced in the starting of the high-rises, where  
4 we developed buildings as almost colonnades,  
5 where the windows become the void spaces  
6 between the piers of the column, and then we  
7 put a dress roof on it, and articulated eaves  
8 and whatnot, to then tie it all back together,  
9 and that's a legitimate way of looking at it,  
10 but the quality of the architecture, in some  
11 cases, is such that it is treated much more as  
12 a prestige, than it is a real architectural  
13 conversation, and that's really -- and how do  
14 you gauge that? How do you qualify that?

15 Well, the City set up a Board specifically  
16 of peer architects to review, to be able to  
17 challenge the person presenting to do his best  
18 work, and in some cases, that's a very helpful  
19 situation, but not always, and sometimes it  
20 leads to better architecture, but not always,  
21 and sometimes, it's just, okay, we've got to  
22 get this thing approved, and let's make sure we  
23 get the check. Here you go and then we get  
24 things built that we then look at and wonder  
25 and express, well, how did that get built?

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1 Mediterranean, was the design style for the  
2 City, and the one that we would want to  
3 promote, and if what we're doing is then  
4 promoting a cartoon realization of that  
5 Mediterranean revitalization, I think that's  
6 what Julio is talking about, and his point of  
7 growing objection.

8 Originally, it was brought up to help  
9 bring -- pay for the increase in the detailing,  
10 by awarding greater development rights to a  
11 slightly larger building, or, in some cases, a  
12 much larger building, to be able to compensate  
13 for the extra cost. And what we're saying is  
14 that we're not seeing the value of that extra  
15 cost or that extra development being expressed  
16 in the quality of the work that's being  
17 presented as Mediterranean Bonus really  
18 architecture.

19 So, for example -- sorry -- the level and  
20 quality of the finishes on the ground floor as  
21 they relate to the people, where you touch them  
22 and where the people walk up to them, the  
23 classic example is the Biltmore, where we have  
24 a fairly rich band of architecture, at the low  
25 level, and on the small scale buildings which

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1 But I'm going to tell you what, I can give  
2 you an example of the value of the Board of  
3 Architects. During COVID, there was a couple  
4 of projects that went through and didn't go  
5 through the Board of Architects, and I can find  
6 them, because I can see that the quality of the  
7 design is really bad, and so, at least, you  
8 meet a minimum requirement, and I think what  
9 this Mediterranean Bonus and this language is  
10 trying to do is establish what that minimum  
11 requirement is, and whereas we're dealing with  
12 people with different levels of talent and  
13 somebody's best is not as good as somebody's  
14 mediocre and somebody's mediocre is not as  
15 good as somebody else's best, it's a very  
16 subjective situation.

17 I think that the documents that you  
18 presented with regard to the examples are  
19 fairly clear in their analysis and in their  
20 presentation, and it's a good basis from which  
21 to judge and to create, because it does give  
22 you the toolbox of things that the Board should  
23 be looking at, and I think that with the forms,  
24 as they're given, I think that we have made a  
25 great stride in helping to define a better

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1 architectural model to development.  
2 So I think it's fine. I don't see it  
3 necessarily as a problem.

4 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Robert.

5 MR. BEHAR: I respectfully disagree with  
6 some of the comments, because in today's  
7 environment, some of the comments that -- of  
8 the examples that you gave, would not be able  
9 to be done today. You mentioned the Chinese  
10 Village, and you're not going to be able to do  
11 that and get the bonuses.

12 And by the way, I kind of like the  
13 diversity that was done at the time it was  
14 done. I think that Julio, and I think that  
15 Felix mentioned it, in order to get good  
16 architecture, a lot of what's been mandated to  
17 get to, discourage an architect to do that. I  
18 think we could use some examples, that  
19 buildings have done -- spent a lot of money,  
20 beautiful buildings, in material that is being  
21 utilized, but when you look at the  
22 articulation, the massiveness of the projects,  
23 to me, are not really the quality of standard  
24 that deserve to do that.

25 And I'm going to use one, which is on

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1 it, because you know this is going in that  
2 direction. I'm not in favor of the  
3 Mediterranean Design Amendment Improvement that  
4 is being proposed. We sat on that Blue Ribbon  
5 Panel, and Felix will remember that I was, a  
6 lot of times, trying to be able to be more --  
7 have a little bit more openness into that, you  
8 know, Code or whatever we were doing at the  
9 time. I think that we've got to be a little  
10 bit more clear, because, to me, that one  
11 particular item is very subjective. I could  
12 bring something in, that any of the four of us  
13 or any of the architects that we have -- and it  
14 could be evaluated, viewed, differently, and  
15 that's my concern. You know, what's good for  
16 one, has to be good for the other. It cannot  
17 be very subjective and that's my concern.

18 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Before we continue, do  
19 we have any speakers for this item, Jill?

20 THE SECRETARY: No.

21 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: On either platform?  
22 Okay. So let me go ahead and close it for  
23 public comment at this time.

24 Chip, would you like to comment on this?

25 MR. WITHERS: Obviously, I'm not an

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1 US-1 -- or two on US-1, okay, across from my  
2 office. Well, that project is very massive.  
3 It got all of the little gingerbread detail,  
4 but at the end of the day, it's not a good  
5 project. Look at the massing. Look at the  
6 scale. Look at everything on that project.  
7 But if you look at it, it probably went, on a  
8 prescriptive basis, what this is asking for,  
9 and I think that's the problem with -- and I  
10 don't want -- don't get me wrong, I'm not  
11 saying that you've got to give me more examples  
12 of exactly what you need to do to get there. I  
13 think that we are discouraging, and I think  
14 Julio was probably alluding, you know, to good,  
15 better architecture.

16 There was a comment by a colleague of ours  
17 in the last meeting here that I find it -- and  
18 I didn't mention anything last time, I found it  
19 very troublesome, that we should be trying to  
20 duplicate 1920s buildings, okay. It doesn't  
21 mean that a 1920 building is what we should be  
22 doing today. To me, that's not the right  
23 approach, you know. And I think we've got to  
24 look at it differently.

25 I'm not in favor -- I'm going to vote to do

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1 architect, but I just have some basic questions  
2 to the architect. When you say, "A good  
3 building," are you saying functionally good or  
4 aesthetically or both?

5 MR. SALMAN: Ideally, both.

6 MR. BEHAR: You have to do both.

7 MR. WITHERS: Okay. So when we look at our  
8 twelve categories, which I have no idea why you  
9 chose six, as opposed to eight or opposed to  
10 nine, why six was the number --

11 MS. GARCIA: Just because that's what's in  
12 the Code right now.

13 MR. WITHERS: It's what?

14 MS. GARCIA: So right now we have twelve  
15 criteria in the Level 2 bonus --

16 MR. WITHERS: So you split it in half, six  
17 and --

18 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: She's following the  
19 Code.

20 MR. WITHERS: I know. I'm wondering where  
21 that came from, though. Why six? Why not  
22 eight or five or seven?

23 MR. BEHAR: Because you've got two levels,  
24 you know.

25 MR. WITHERS: I get that.

40

1 MR. BEHAR: You could get -- and as far as  
2 I remember, it's been like that for --

3 MR. WITHERS: I know, but are some more  
4 important than others? Are some aesthetics and  
5 some functional?

6 MS. GARCIA: Well, obviously, you don't  
7 want the same building to come out of every  
8 single Med Bonus. You want to have some  
9 flexibility. Maybe we want to have an arcade  
10 or we don't want an arcade.

11 MR. WITHERS: I get it, but are some of  
12 those functional elements, that were looked as  
13 being functional, and some of those were looked  
14 at as being aesthetics?

15 MR. PARDO: Mr. Chairman, I can answer  
16 that. I was there when it happened.

17 MR. WITHERS: Okay.

18 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Okay.

19 MR. PARDO: So the point is that --

20 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: And that's, Felix,  
21 without dating yourself, right?

22 MR. PARDO: Right.

23 MR. WITHERS: Well, when you talked about  
24 the Showroom on Ponce, it kind of dated him, I  
25 guess.

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1 reason that the Blue Ribbon Committee was  
2 created, was because of what had been built,  
3 and the examples of what had been given  
4 bonuses, that were not -- were not worthy.

5 And so, to answer your question, they  
6 started off this way, and then they started  
7 throwing things in there.

8 MR. WITHERS: Right.

9 MR. PARDO: And the original one, which was  
10 much better, started talking about, you know,  
11 creating things at the pedestrian level, which  
12 had to do with fountains and providing plazas  
13 and providing these things, where good  
14 architects, you know, would do that  
15 automatically, because they knew that the  
16 pedestrian was all important.

17 So, you know, this has morphed into, we  
18 keep changing it and changing it and changing  
19 it, and when I see the chronology that we see  
20 in the bar chart, with all of the different  
21 changes, you know, it really is -- it doesn't  
22 look like anything.

23 And, then, after having the Blue Ribbon  
24 Committee, implementing this now or trying to  
25 implement this now, it's like, you know, take a

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1 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Yeah.

2 MR. PARDO: So the way that this was  
3 created was that, unfortunately, they tried to  
4 put a point system on it, and, you know, it's a  
5 check, check, check, that kind of thing, which  
6 is, of course -- you know, that's the last  
7 thing you want to do, when it comes to trying  
8 to use creativity, but then you could only use  
9 the crayons in the box.

10 And, then, it became obtuse, because they  
11 started putting in bicycle racks --

12 MR. WITHERS: Right.

13 MR. PARDO: -- and they started putting in  
14 these irrelevant things, that simply should be  
15 required, but through another part of the Code.  
16 It has nothing to do with whether it's  
17 Mediterranei or not. I mean, it's not a  
18 Mediterranean Schwinn bicycle rack. And, then,  
19 it continued being obtuse like that. And,  
20 then, you really didn't get into the meat of  
21 it, until you got to the second level. So you  
22 basically took the first level, it was a given,  
23 and then you had the second level. It's very,  
24 very disheartening.

25 And, then, just keep in mind that the

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1 couple of steps back and really consider what  
2 you really want to do, as far as the quality of  
3 architecture in the City.

4 MR. WITHERS: So would you rather have a  
5 functional building or an aesthetically looking  
6 building? Now, I can tell you, as an untrained  
7 eye, on a non-architect, when I look at a  
8 building, I don't look at the functionality of  
9 it. I look, and, hey, this is a really good  
10 looking building and I like it. You know, I  
11 think most people do. Don't you?

12 MR. PARDO: Yeah, but the thing is that  
13 none of us here are going to be designing, you  
14 know, just the elevation. You're going to be  
15 looking at the site. You're going to be  
16 looking at the floor. You've going to be  
17 looking at the overall height of the massing.  
18 You're going to be looking at all of these  
19 elements. So, at the end of the day, then, you  
20 know, what it looks like, it gets to that  
21 point, and the Board of Architects can  
22 recognize it and be able to evaluate and  
23 provide opinions that are valuable to the  
24 architects before them.

25 MR. WITHERS: Okay. So my last comment,

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1 really, if compatibility seems to be a driving  
2 issue --

3 MR. PARDO: Compatibility is a driving  
4 issue, Chip, when you're looking at, you know,  
5 the surroundings.

6 MR. WITHERS: Right, the aesthetics.

7 MR. PARDO: Well, but it's also the  
8 surrounding. If you have, for example -- you  
9 have Merrick Plaza, where, you know, Julio was  
10 a major designer on it, and if you have now a  
11 building next to it, you don't necessarily want  
12 to replicate what Julio did there, but you  
13 would want to then be able to take certain  
14 elements, and add to it, where it becomes part  
15 of the fabric of the area.

16 MR. WITHERS: So it complements it?

17 MR. PARDO: And it complements it and it's  
18 compatible with it.

19 MR. WITHERS: Okay. And that's both, on  
20 form and function and aesthetics, right? I  
21 mean --

22 MR. PARDO: Yes.

23 MR. WITHERS: So why wouldn't this Code,  
24 then, have certain points of bonuses based on  
25 compatibility in one section and function and

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1 Mediterranean, Old Spanish, nothing. To  
2 shoehorn a Mediterranean into that, probably  
3 would be incompatible. So why have bonuses to  
4 begin with?

5 Just like these gentlemen are saying, let's  
6 just have good architecture, but make it  
7 compatible with the neighborhood, but I see no  
8 reason to keep this bonus thing going. As you  
9 said, it's run its course, and I can tell you  
10 that when my neighbors look at the Zubi  
11 Building and say, "That is Mediterranean?" So  
12 even with guidelines and guardrails, even with  
13 in the old, old Code, who decided that was  
14 Mediterranean and passed it?

15 So where are the guardrail here? I mean,  
16 it's just another bunch of suggestions, and  
17 it's going to be a subjective decision anyway.  
18 You know, it's all about subjectivity here, and  
19 some of this, in the past, has been outright  
20 abuse, taking advantage of certain architects  
21 on that Board to get the okays, okay.

22 So the residents do not trust this  
23 Mediterranean Bonus, as far as you can throw  
24 it. So my suggestion would be that we have a  
25 recommendation -- as opposed to voting on any

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1 other things?

2 MR. PARDO: Compatibility is not addressed,  
3 in any way, shape or form.

4 MR. WITHERS: Okay. That seems like a key  
5 ingredient.

6 MR. PARDO: Of course, and that is -- when  
7 I personally stood right there, and I was, you  
8 know, basically that, well, define  
9 compatibility, you know, it's a --

10 MR. WITHERS: I get it. Okay. Thank you.

11 MR. PARDO: You bet.

12 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Sue.

13 MS. KAWALERSKI: Well, I'm just a resident,  
14 but I'll tell you, from a resident's point of  
15 view, I mean, for years -- you know, I've gone  
16 to the Board of Architects meeting. You  
17 know -- I mean, I've gone to a lot of meetings.  
18 And probably the number one issue that  
19 residents have is this idea of a bonus. They  
20 say, what do you mean, a bonus, for  
21 Mediterranean? That should be up to the Board  
22 of Architects to decide about compatibility and  
23 context.

24 I live in a 1950s area in Coral Gables,  
25 nondescript houses. Nondescript. It's not

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1 of this, have the recommendation back to the --  
2 I guess, the Commissioner who is suggesting  
3 this, that maybe the discussion should be at  
4 the level of eliminating the Mediterranean  
5 Bonus altogether.

6 MR. GRABIEL: Just a point of order.

7 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Yes.

8 MR. GRABIEL: When the Zubi Building was  
9 built, it was not Mediterranean. The way the  
10 Code was written at that time was Mediterranean  
11 inspired architecture, and that was eliminated  
12 after that building was completed, and the idea  
13 was that you have the tower, and you have the  
14 break in the facade, and you have the arcade on  
15 the ground floor, but it was never passed as a  
16 Mediterranean project. It was -- Mediterranean  
17 inspired was the word at that time in the Code.

18 MS. KAWALERSKI: All right. Well, thank  
19 you for that insight, but I see no  
20 Mediterranean inspiration in that building. It  
21 was a subjective vote to give them the bonus.

22 MR. GRABIEL: You have to talk to the  
23 Architect Board at that time.

24 MS. KAWALERSKI: Well, I know. Glenn Pratt  
25 -- in fact, Glenn Pratt once said, looking at

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1 the -- I was in a Board of Architects meeting,  
2 and looking at what was before him as a  
3 Mediterranean feature, railings, that were  
4 supposed to be balconies, and he said, "Those  
5 are paste up balconies." You know, I mean,  
6 even he criticized something like that, and  
7 that was a whole lot more Mediterranean than  
8 what he designed. I mean, he designed the Zubi  
9 building.

10 There's nothing inspirational and  
11 Mediterranean in that building at all, and if  
12 there is, please tell me what it is, but -- I  
13 mean, this is the point of contention that the  
14 residents have. They look at projects like  
15 that, whether it'd be part of a bonus or it's  
16 inspired or whatever, and they're saying, "This  
17 isn't one bit Mediterranean."

18 And, you know, Robert brought up some  
19 buildings on US-1. The Lifetime Building, I'm  
20 sure you're referring to. The Lifetime  
21 Building, come on, you know?

22 So we residents may not have your  
23 credentials, but we've got a good set of eyes.  
24 We can figure it out on our own. And what's  
25 been passed under a Mediterranean Bonus, a lot

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1 of times has nothing to do with Mediterranean  
2 architecture.

3 So, again, I'll reiterate, I think this  
4 Board should recommend to the Commissioner who  
5 brought this up to have a real serious  
6 discussion about eliminating the Mediterranean  
7 Bonus, period.

8 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: For me, I'm here to  
9 analyze what was brought before us, which is  
10 how to look at giving Mediterranean Bonuses.  
11 If there are ideas or wishes of residents or  
12 individuals, that want to do away with the  
13 Mediterranean Bonus, I think that's a different  
14 discussion, and that's something that has to be  
15 brought up, to re-write the Zoning Code, not as  
16 a discussion today.

17 There could be the recommendation, as Sue  
18 says, if that comes about from this Board.  
19 Obviously, that's based on a recommendation and  
20 a second and a vote. To me, what I'm looking  
21 at is, what was presented, and is that  
22 sufficient or not to change the way  
23 Mediterranean Bonuses are given? And that's  
24 why I actually asked the four architects to  
25 comment on it, because, to me, it's very

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1 subjective, the way it's presented, Number One.

2 Number Two, personally, I like the idea of  
3 the Mediterranean being more on the ground  
4 level, as Felix has stated, than way up where  
5 you don't see it or use it, but I don't see  
6 that discussion taking place, at this point, to  
7 do away with the Mediterranean Bonus, and  
8 that's not what the City Staff is bringing  
9 before us.

10 What is it that you're looking for from  
11 this Board?

12 MS. GARCIA: Well, again, so this was  
13 reviewed and kind of workshopped with the Board  
14 of Architects. They're looking for more teeth  
15 to review these projects. Right now, they have  
16 a lot of criteria in the Med Bonus, that's  
17 already required underneath the existing  
18 Zoning. So they are looking for more -- to  
19 strengthen their criteria, to be able to  
20 analyze these buildings, and right now they  
21 don't have that.

22 So they agree that there are some buildings  
23 that are out there, that they probably wouldn't  
24 have liked to give Med Bonus to, or maybe they  
25 weren't on the Board at the time and they don't

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1 agree that it looks like it's Mediterranean,  
2 but they don't really have much to go with.  
3 They have what's in the Code right now, which  
4 has bike racks and --

5 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: But when the Board of  
6 Architects looks at the Level 1, is it a full  
7 panel that looks at the Level 1?

8 MS. GARCIA: Yes, always. Yes.

9 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: So whether it's Level  
10 1 --

11 MS. GARCIA: Basically, any new  
12 construction is a full panel, but definitely,  
13 any time they look at a Med Bonus, it's always  
14 a full panel.

15 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Okay.

16 MS. KAWALERSKI: Mr. Chair, I do have to  
17 take issue with something that you just said.

18 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: What's that?

19 MS. KAWALERSKI: You said, well, if a  
20 resident doesn't want the Med Bonus, let them  
21 like -- do it on their own.

22 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: No, I said -- that's  
23 not exactly what I said.

24 MS. KAWALERSKI: You know, my  
25 understanding, this is a quasi-judicial board,

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1 this is where those suggesting should come  
2 from. This is what we should be doing.

3 MS. SUAREZ: So just one point of  
4 clarification. This item is not a  
5 quasi-judicial item, because this is a proposed  
6 amendment to the Zoning Code. So this is a  
7 legislative item, just for clarification.

8 MS. KAWALERSKI: Right, and I'm just  
9 saying, it's a quasi-judicial board. I didn't  
10 say that it was an item that was  
11 quasi-judicial.

12 MS. SUAREZ: Yes.

13 MS. KAWALERSKI: But if this Board has the  
14 weight it's supposed to have, we should be  
15 making these kinds of recommendations, not just  
16 voting the up or down on a project here or  
17 there. I mean, we haven't even addressed  
18 issues like the Live Local Act that we've  
19 brought up a number of times. You know, that's  
20 my understanding of what this Board should be  
21 doing.

22 We have professionals on the Board. We  
23 have armatures on the Board, with good set of  
24 eyes. We should be bringing this up for  
25 suggestion to the Commission, not just up or

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1 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: We have a motion. Is  
2 there a second?

3 MR. PARDO: I'll make the second, for  
4 discussion -- for discussion.

5 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: So we have second to  
6 eliminate Mediterranean Bonus, and then we'll  
7 get into discussion?

8 MR. PARDO: Correct.

9 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you.

10 Go ahead, Felix.

11 MR. PARDO: So I think you clearly said  
12 that what's before us really is the  
13 Mediterranean -- adjustments to the  
14 Mediterranean Bonus Ordinance. So I think we  
15 would do one of two things, clearly. It's to  
16 (A) defer it, with the discussion and the  
17 transcript going to the Commission or (B) vote  
18 it up or down, the suggestions that are there,  
19 that I feel total uncomfortable with.

20 So what I would like to do is either (A),  
21 defer it, or vote it up or down, but I think  
22 that the message, I think, is clear that the  
23 bonuses themselves and what they're given for  
24 has been a big subject of the discussion this  
25 evening.

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1 down votes on this project or that project, but  
2 the real issues that matter to the residents.

3 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Well, the way I see  
4 it, there are seven members and each one has  
5 their own opinion. So if one member feels a  
6 certain way -- that's why I said, if the  
7 recommendation wants to be made, and then  
8 seconded it, and voted upon, then that's a  
9 vote, but that's not what I see that has come  
10 before us.

11 MS. KAWALERSKI: Okay, but we're allowed  
12 to --

13 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Let me ask you a  
14 question.

15 MS. KAWALERSKI: Yes.

16 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Would you like to make  
17 a recommendation?

18 MS. KAWALERSKI: I would love to make a  
19 recommendation, and I'm assuming this is in the  
20 form of a motion?

21 MS. SUAREZ: Yes.

22 MS. KAWALERSKI: I'd like to present a  
23 motion to make a suggestion to the entire  
24 Commission to eliminate the Mediterranean  
25 Bonus.

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1 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Understood.

2 Right now we have a motion and we have a  
3 second. What I'd like to do first, is there  
4 any other further discussion before I call for  
5 a roll on it? No?

6 Call the roll, please.

7 THE SECRETARY: Sue Kawalerski?

8 MS. KAWALERSKI: Yes.

9 THE SECRETARY: Felix Pardo?

10 MR. PARDO: Yes.

11 THE SECRETARY: Javier Salman?

12 MR. SALMAN: No.

13 THE SECRETARY: Chip Withers?

14 MR. WITHERS: No.

15 THE SECRETARY: Robert Behar?

16 MR. BEHAR: No.

17 THE SECRETARY: Julio Grabiell?

18 MR. GRABIEL: No.

19 THE SECRETARY: No?

20 MR. GRABIEL: No.

21 THE SECRETARY: Eibi Aizenstat?

22 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: No.

23 MR. PARDO: Mr. Chairman -- sorry. Mr.  
24 Chairman --

25 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Yes.

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1 MR. PARDO: -- I'd like to be able to --  
2 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: So that motion fails,  
3 to be clear, for the record.

4 MR. PARDO: Correct.

5 I'd like to make a motion to defer this  
6 item, with the specific discussion being  
7 referred to the Commissioners, so they  
8 understand exactly what was discussed and why  
9 it was discussed, as far as the Mediterranean  
10 Bonuses, et cetera.

11 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: But they read the  
12 minutes --

13 MR. PARDO: Correct.

14 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: -- and the transcript,  
15 either way.

16 What you're saying, just so I'm clear, that  
17 you don't want to have any further discussion  
18 for this item, with our Board, at this point,  
19 to go forward?

20 MR. PARDO: Right.

21 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: But defer it with the  
22 language that is there now?

23 MR. PARDO: Correct. I think it would not  
24 be the tool set that the Board of Architects is  
25 looking for. I think that the deferral would

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1 give Staff more time to be able to do something  
2 different and better.

3 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: But you don't want to  
4 give any recommendation to the Board of  
5 Architects, you don't want to give any further  
6 tools that they should consider, you just want  
7 to go ahead and say, it should go directly to  
8 the Commission, based on the discussion --

9 MR. PARDO: No. I think it should come  
10 back here, with the deferral.

11 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: But to the Commission  
12 first? In other words, normally we would send  
13 this back to the Board of Architects. Am I  
14 incorrect in that, that what we're doing there  
15 is --

16 MS. GARCIA: I mean, for this item, it  
17 makes sense, because this is a Board of  
18 Architects kind of criteria that they look at  
19 every week.

20 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: That's what I --

21 MS. SUAREZ: Well, the general process for  
22 a text amendment is that you all -- you know,  
23 it's gone through the Staff process. There's  
24 been -- like Ms. Garcia said, it's been  
25 workshopped with the Board of Architects, and

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1 so now there is a proposed Ordinance that you  
2 are considering today, and generally the  
3 Commissioners would -- or the Commissioner who  
4 is sponsoring this would want a recommendation  
5 from this Board, so it can go to Commission on  
6 First Reading with a recommendation from this  
7 Board, recommendation yes or no.

8 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: If it's deferred, as  
9 the way --

10 MS. SUAREZ: Deferral means that you would  
11 like it to come back to this Board. That's  
12 what a deferral is.

13 MR. PARDO: Correct.

14 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: But for the Commission  
15 to review our records first? Is that --

16 MR. SALMAN: No. No, it stops here and it  
17 goes back to the Staff to reevaluate, based on  
18 the comments we've been giving her.

19 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: That's what I  
20 misunderstood.

21 MR. SALMAN: Which we've given her plenty  
22 few.

23 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Yeah.

24 MR. SALMAN: All right.

25 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: That's what I

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1 misunderstood. I thought you wanted to defer  
2 so it goes straight to the Commission.

3 MR. PARDO: No. No. No. To give Staff  
4 the opportunity to take the comments that were  
5 made by the Board, to be able to refine, to  
6 redo, et cetera.

7 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you for  
8 clarifying.

9 MR. PARDO: Yes.

10 MS. SUAREZ: And so, just to be clear,  
11 though, if there is a motion to defer by this  
12 Board, Staff or a Commissioner can request that  
13 it still be put on before the Commission, even  
14 without a recommendation from this Board, just  
15 so that's clear.

16 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Understood.

17 MR. PARDO: Let be clearer then with the  
18 motion, the motion would be to defer and give  
19 Staff the opportunity to provide a much more  
20 comprehensive and more specific document to  
21 come back to the Planning Board.

22 MS. SUAREZ: Understood. I'm just saying,  
23 it's still within the Commissioner's  
24 prerogative, if the Commissioner wants to --

25 MR. PARDO: That's fine, but I think this

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1 way the motion has teeth to it.  
 2 MS. SUAREZ: Understood.  
 3 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you.  
 4 Is there a second?  
 5 MR. WITHERS: I'll second that.  
 6 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Chip seconds.  
 7 MR. SALMAN: For discussion.  
 8 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Any discussion?  
 9 MR. SALMAN: I have discussion.  
 10 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Yes, sir.  
 11 MR. SALMAN: You stated that the -- you  
 12 were concerned that there was nothing having to  
 13 do with context, and with appropriateness with  
 14 regards to context as one of the criteria. Is  
 15 that something you would want to add, because  
 16 this is your time to do it?  
 17 MR. PARDO: Well, and I think it was  
 18 specific, and I think that the context is a key  
 19 element for the Board of Architects to review,  
 20 which includes also the massing, as with the  
 21 examples --  
 22 MR. SALMAN: The massing is in it.  
 23 MR. PARDO: I'm sorry?  
 24 MR. SALMAN: Massing is in there.  
 25 MR. PARDO: No. No. The massing is in it,

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1 but it's truly breathtaking, because the Board  
 2 of Architects really has been informed, and I  
 3 have been a witness to it, where they've been  
 4 confirmed that, you know, you can't get into  
 5 the plan, you can't get into the massing, you  
 6 can't get into the compatibility.  
 7 MR. SALMAN: Oh, sure you can.  
 8 MR. PARDO: You and I know that.  
 9 MR. SALMAN: Sure you can.  
 10 MR. PARDO: But, you know, when you have  
 11 someone giving them an opinion, you know, on a  
 12 side bar, saying you can't do that, and then  
 13 you end up with buildings like the one on  
 14 US-1 --  
 15 MR. SALMAN: You can set proportions for  
 16 difference in elevations.  
 17 MR. PARDO: I'm not disagreeing --  
 18 MR. SALMAN: And that could be a very  
 19 simple mathematical equation. If your neighbor  
 20 is one story, you can't do more than two next  
 21 to it.  
 22 MR. PARDO: Well, I think Staff --  
 23 MR. SALMAN: You know, and there's lots of  
 24 ways that we can be very specific as to  
 25 context, and if you're on an axial point of a

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1 building, within a separate context, you have  
 2 to have some sort of (Unintelligible) within  
 3 the context of which you're creating a building  
 4 within that axial view.

5 MR. PARDO: I feel comfortable --

6 MR. SALMAN: There's lots of very specific  
 7 things that we can add into this Code with  
 8 regard to compatibility, and I think what we  
 9 need to do is give them the information and the  
 10 tools of what we're going to be looking for,  
 11 for an approval; isn't that correct?

12 MR. PARDO: I think --

13 MR. SALMAN: Okay. Then that's what you  
 14 want. So let's give them that kind of specific  
 15 direction.

16 MS. GARCIA: And in the table, there's  
 17 something called context analysis, which came  
 18 from the Board of Architects, they're looking  
 19 for this, because they feel like people go and  
 20 they present their building and they have no  
 21 context with what's around them. So that is to  
 22 propose the massing scale and height be  
 23 compatible with adjacent buildings and add an  
 24 analysis, contextually illustrated, to show its  
 25 compatibility of the proposed building and

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1 maintain the character of the existing --

2 MR. SALMAN: That's not true, because when  
 3 you submit to Board of Architects, you have to  
 4 present the buildings which surround your  
 5 building, as part of your presentation.

6 MS. GARCIA: Yes, but their concern was  
 7 that sometimes the images are picking and  
 8 choosing what's around there, and they think  
 9 there was not enough analysis being done.

10 MR. BEHAR: Yes, and let me throw something  
 11 at you. And I remember when we sat on the Blue  
 12 Ribbon Committee, if you -- you have a site.  
 13 Let's say it's adjacent to the old Republic  
 14 National Bank building -- I forget whatever the  
 15 name of the building is today -- on the Circle,  
 16 which is a building that Julio, with Mitch  
 17 Alvarez had done, and you referred to a very  
 18 good -- which I personally think is a very  
 19 beautiful building, and that's my opinion.

20 MR. SALMAN: And it's Mediterranean  
 21 inspired. It's not Mediterranean.

22 MR. BEHAR: But today, when you look at  
 23 those guidelines, it would not be able to  
 24 qualify for the inspiration part or -- you  
 25 know. So that's compatibility. Well, the

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1 building is going to be right next to that  
2 site, and how do you -- how do you address  
3 that?

4 MR. PARDO: This, again, when you used the  
5 word compatibility or the word massing, you  
6 have to provide certain examples, and my  
7 problem right now with the way that what is  
8 being shown us, is that the word may be there  
9 once or twice, you know, each one, but there  
10 isn't a better definition. There isn't -- it's  
11 not explained in a better way, like the example  
12 you just gave.

13 And the issue is, also, that -- on the  
14 compatibility, sometimes it also depends on the  
15 context of the area and when you're designing  
16 it. Giving that tool to the Board of  
17 Architects gives them the ability to do a  
18 better job, what they're looking for.

19 MR. BEHAR: But, Felix, look, for  
20 example -- and you're right on the Board of  
21 Architects, but that building, if you look at  
22 it, it's an office building, and that building  
23 has a large opening, windows, and -- you know.  
24 So that is a feature component of that design  
25 that is critically important to make that

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1 So this is complicated. This was part of  
2 what the Blue Ribbon Committee discussed, as  
3 you'll remember. We never got to that point.  
4 We got cut off at a certain point. But this  
5 doesn't continue or do anything to finish that  
6 particular job, in my opinion.

7 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: We have a motion right  
8 now for deferring.

9 MR. BEHAR: And a second.

10 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: And a second. Any  
11 other discussion?

12 MR. WITHERS: I just have a question for  
13 the architects. The number that was thrown  
14 around to me, in order to encourage  
15 Mediterranean, was an additional cost of 25 to  
16 30 percent to build that building originally.

17 MR. PARDO: Back in the day.

18 MR. WITHERS: Back in the day. Is it  
19 anything close to that now, with the new --

20 MR. PARDO: No.

21 MR. WITHERS: I don't know --

22 MR. PARDO: I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman, if I  
23 could answer that.

24 MR. WITHERS; I'm just curious to know.

25 MR. PARDO: Back in the day, nobody was

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1 successful.

2 Today, in order to receive those bonuses,  
3 the example that I'm seeing, windows have to be  
4 small windows. So how do you -- that, to me,  
5 is an oxymoron, you know.

6 MR. PARDO: And, again, this is what is  
7 wrong in the Code today. Me, I would give the  
8 bonuses to that building, and I would not have  
9 given the same bonuses simply because they went  
10 overboard on the detailing on The Plaza,  
11 because the massing is wrong. Everybody in  
12 this room knows that the massing was wrong.  
13 The same as the building that -- that cube on  
14 US-1, the same thing. The massing is wrong.  
15 We all understand that. And that's where the  
16 compatibility, the contextual, all of these  
17 different things go to.

18 And the other thing is, when you are next  
19 to a historic building, the viewport is very  
20 important for that historic building, where  
21 you're not obstructing it or minimizing it or  
22 destroying it, which is the 2901 building on  
23 Ponce, which is the historic building, that  
24 they couldn't touch, but instead of paying  
25 homage to it, they basically just ignored it.

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1 doing that. In fact, most of the times what  
2 they were doing were a lot of glass boxes, a  
3 lot of this, a lot of that, and then -- until,  
4 for example, again, Julio worked on the bank  
5 building, and then did the beautiful job on the  
6 alley for the Colonnade, and then, you know, it  
7 was different, because the scale was different.  
8 So the cost was there, but it wasn't there. It  
9 was less.

10 So the smaller the building, the more the  
11 cost, but over time, with technology and means  
12 and methods today, there's no way you could  
13 justify that it's a 35 percent increase. It  
14 will be more, but more compared to what, and  
15 will that be approved by the Board of  
16 Architects? And that's also a part of the  
17 formula.

18 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Any other questions?  
19 No?

20 Jill, call the roll, please.

21 MR. GRABIEL: Define the motion again.

22 MR. PARDO: To defer, to give Staff the  
23 ability to come back before us.

24 MR. GRABIEL: Okay.

25 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you.

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1 Jill.  
 2 THE SECRETARY: Felix Pardo?  
 3 MR. PARDO: Yes.  
 4 THE SECRETARY: Javier Salman?  
 5 MR. SALMAN: Yes.  
 6 THE SECRETARY: Chip Withers?  
 7 MR. WITHERS: Yes.  
 8 THE SECRETARY: Robert Behar?  
 9 MR. BEHAR: Yes.  
 10 THE SECRETARY: Julio Grabiell?  
 11 MR. GRABIELL: Yes.  
 12 THE SECRETARY: Sue Kawalerski?  
 13 MS. KAWALERSKI: No.  
 14 THE SECRETARY: Eibi Aizenstat?  
 15 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Yes.  
 16 MS. GARCIA: Thank you.  
 17 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: So you have your  
 18 direction.  
 19 MR. SALMAN: Some.  
 20 MR. BEHAR: A lot.  
 21 MS. GARCIA: Yes.  
 22 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Let me ask the Board,  
 23 should we continue on Number 4 and 5, so Robert  
 24 can stay?  
 25 MR. BEHAR: Look, I think -- I'll go

1 outside. I appreciate it, but in fairness to  
 2 the applicant, I'll sit out for a little while.  
 3 MR. GRABIELL: Thank you.  
 4 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you very much.  
 5 I just wanted to get a consensus.  
 6 Madam City Attorney, if you'd please read  
 7 -- let the record state that Robert Behar has  
 8 left the dais.  
 9 MR. WITHERS: Elvis has left the building.  
 10 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Elvis has left the  
 11 building.  
 12 Thank you.  
 13 MS. SUAREZ: So E-1 is a Resolution of the  
 14 City Commission of Coral Gables, Florida  
 15 approving Conditional Use Review of a Site Plan  
 16 pursuant to Zoning Code Article 14, "Process"  
 17 Section 14-203, "Conditional Uses," for a  
 18 proposed townhouse development referred to as  
 19 "The George" on the property legally described  
 20 as Lots 29 through 41, Block 10, Coral Gables  
 21 Biltmore Section, Coral Gables, Florida;  
 22 including required conditions; providing for a  
 23 repealer provision, severability clause, and an  
 24 effective date.  
 25 E-2 is a Resolution of the City Commission

1 of Coral Gables, Florida approving the  
 2 Tentative Plat entitled "The George" pursuant  
 3 to Zoning Code Article 14, "Process," Section  
 4 14-210, "Platting/Subdivision," being a re-plat  
 5 of 36,634 square feet into 13 platted lots for  
 6 thirteen residential townhouses on property  
 7 assigned Multi-Family 4 District zoning, the  
 8 property legally described as Lots 29 through  
 9 41, Block 10, Coral Gables Biltmore Section,  
 10 Coral Gables, Florida; providing for a repealer  
 11 provision, severability clause, and an  
 12 effective date.  
 13 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: So E-1 and E-2, we'll  
 14 look at together, but have separate votes on  
 15 them.  
 16 MS. SUAREZ: Correct.  
 17 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you.  
 18 MR. GARCIA-SERRA: Good evening, Mr. Chair,  
 19 Members of the Board, Mario Garcia-Serra, with  
 20 offices at 600 Brickell Avenue, here this  
 21 evening representing The George, LLC, the  
 22 applicant and owner of the assemblage of  
 23 property located at 711 to 741 Valencia Avenue.  
 24 And I'm accompanied this evening by Alirio  
 25 Torrealba, the principal of MG Developer, the

1 parent company of The George, LLC, my client,  
 2 as well as Jenny Ducret and Jose Mata, from MG  
 3 Developer, and our project architects, Maria  
 4 del la Guardia and Kegan Marshall.  
 5 So, as I mentioned earlier, The George, LLC  
 6 is a subsidiary of MG Developer, which is one  
 7 of the City's most successful and recognized  
 8 developers. Just in the vicinity of this site,  
 9 as is indicated on the aerial photo, they have  
 10 built four other projects, Biltmore Park,  
 11 Althea Row, Beatrice Row and Biltmore Row. All  
 12 of these projects have been very well received  
 13 and recognized for their architecture and  
 14 sensitive scale.  
 15 The project under review tonight -- Kegan  
 16 is going to show you a few more images of each  
 17 of those projects. The project under review  
 18 tonight, The George, named on in honor of our  
 19 City founder, who is literally looking upon us  
 20 this evening from behind you, continues that  
 21 great tradition of those other projects. It is  
 22 a thirteen-unit, three-story townhome,  
 23 incorporating the best of Coral Gables  
 24 architecture.  
 25 In a demonstration of how this developer

1 thinks differently, even though this property  
2 has one of the more intense Zoning designations  
3 in the City, which is MF4, the project comes  
4 nowhere close to maintaining -- to realizing or  
5 maximizing that development potential. Where  
6 thirteen stories is permitted, this project is  
7 proposing three stories. Where 50 condo units  
8 are permitted, this project is proposing  
9 thirteen townhomes. Where an FAR of 2.5 is  
10 possible, this project is at an FAR of 1.5.

11 Through the good work of my client and  
12 others, this area of the City has indeed  
13 transformed itself in a very positive  
14 direction, and this is the next step in that  
15 evolution. This project complies 100 percent  
16 with its existing Zoning regulations and we're  
17 only requesting Site Plan review and a replat  
18 of the property.

19 We've had two neighbor meetings, one before  
20 the Board of Architects and one before this  
21 Planning and Zoning Board meeting. Both of  
22 them were very well-attended, where we received  
23 very positive feedback on the project from the  
24 neighborhood.

25 With that said, I'll hand it over to Kegan

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1 desire for high architectural standard,  
2 inspired by its beautiful historic  
3 architecture. In keeping with these standards,  
4 The George admirably showcases a preference for  
5 quality and community integration over  
6 maximizing development potential, and I'm going  
7 to repeat some of the numbers that Mario shared  
8 with us.

9 The decision to construct only thirteen fee  
10 simple townhouses, on a site zoned MF4, is a  
11 testament to MG Developers' commitment to  
12 enhancing the residential quality and aesthetic  
13 value of Biltmore Square. The Coral Gables  
14 Zoning Code for an MF4 district allows 50  
15 units, yet 13 are being proposed. It allows  
16 2.0 FAR, yet 1.5 is being proposed. It allows  
17 150 feet height, yet 42 and a half feet is  
18 being proposed. It allows a net floor area of  
19 73,000 square feet, yet 55,000 is being  
20 proposed. Finally, although 26 parking spaces  
21 are required, the project proposes to double  
22 that, with 52 parking spaces.

23 With a proposed lower floor area ratio of a  
24 modest building height, The George is poised to  
25 blend seamlessly into the existing urban

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1 and Maria now to walk you through the project.

2 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Welcome.

3 MS. DE LA GUARDIA: Good evening. Maria de  
4 la Guardia and Kegan Marshall, from DLGV  
5 Architects and Urbanists.

6 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Could you state your  
7 address, also, for the record, please?

8 MS. DE LA GUARDIA: 224 Valencia Avenue,  
9 Coral Gables.

10 In the tradition of its namesake, George  
11 Merrick, The George emerges as a landmark  
12 development on Valencia Avenue, exemplifying  
13 luxury townhouse living, while deeply  
14 respecting the architectural ethos of Coral  
15 Gables.

16 This assemblage of thirteen fee simple  
17 luxury townhouses, meticulously planned by MG  
18 Developer, is an homage to the architecture of  
19 historic Coral Gables. The George's designed  
20 philosophy and execution reflect the  
21 conscientious approach to urban development,  
22 prioritizing spacious, luxurious living  
23 environments within a harmonious community  
24 setting.

25 Coral Gables is a City celebrated for its

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1 landscape, further enriching the neighborhood's  
2 architectural diversity.

3 Drawing inspiration from iconic structures,  
4 such as the Coral Gables City Hall by Phineas  
5 Paist, and James Knox Taylor's historic Old  
6 Federal Building, The George seeks to view its  
7 design with a sense of historical continuity  
8 and architectural elegance. These influence  
9 manifest in the project's facade, weaving the  
10 two-story order, including the domestic third  
11 floor, with the rusticated base. The facade is  
12 grand, yet the base presents a relatable scale  
13 to the pedestrian. This architectural approach  
14 not only pays homage to the City's heritage,  
15 but also promotes a pedestrian friendly  
16 streetscape, that enriches the community's  
17 public realm.

18 The design process for The George involved  
19 the thoughtful study of classic townhouse  
20 design, to strike a balance between the  
21 individual character and the collective  
22 harmony. This research informed the facade  
23 layout and composition, drawing cues from the  
24 cohesive architectural expressions in the Upper  
25 East Side and Boston's Back Bay and the unified

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1 elegance of the collective whole at The Circus  
2 in Bath, English. The individual distinction  
3 and the architectural continuity coalesced to  
4 form a vibrant urban type of street.

5 The George introduces a collection of  
6 three-story townhouses, each with balconies and  
7 terraces, in four-bedroom configurations. The  
8 inclusion of an elevated second floor principal  
9 living space reflects a contemporary  
10 interpretation of the traditional Piano Nobile  
11 concept, enhancing resident privacy, while  
12 fostering engagement with the outdoor  
13 environment. The individual four-car garages  
14 are accessible only from the alley, thus does  
15 not disrupting the streetscape.

16 This design philosophy extends to the  
17 careful selection of materials -- this design  
18 philosophy extends to the careful selection of  
19 materials and architectural details, where each  
20 element was chosen to evoke the Mediterranean  
21 heritage of Coral Gables. The building has a  
22 first floor cast stone rusticated base, with  
23 Mahogany widows and doors and arches that march  
24 down Valencia. The second floor is punctuated  
25 by three nine-foot tall French doors, opening

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1 Villa Valencia is, a block away, so we could  
2 have done pretty much Villa Valencia on this  
3 site, we're proposing 42 feet and three  
4 stories, and 13 units, instead of 50.

5 As this project comes before the Planning  
6 and Zoning Board, it does so with the  
7 commitment of the design and development team,  
8 renown for its contribution to award winning  
9 projects within the community. The George  
10 presents not just a continuity of this legacy  
11 of excellence, but also in not maximizing  
12 development opportunity, to contribute a new  
13 chapter to the architectural narrative of Coral  
14 Gables, with a design that respects its past,  
15 while representing the needs of modern living.

16 The George stands as a beacon of thoughtful  
17 community-oriented development, ready to enrich  
18 The Biltmore Square for generations to come.

19 MR. GARCIA-SERRA: Thank you very much,  
20 Maria.

21 We spent most of the time taking about the  
22 Site Plan. We are requesting a replat of the  
23 property, too. If you could maybe show --  
24 there you go -- the tentative plat. It's  
25 pretty straight forward, basically replatting

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1 to a balcony, with finely designed geometric  
2 metal railings. The second and third floors  
3 are finished in stucco, with precast  
4 architectural accents.

5 The three-story building is capped with a  
6 precast cornice that has been proportioned to  
7 the building height. The flat clay tile  
8 represents the balance of the materials on the  
9 facade. Moreover, The George's contribution to  
10 the streetscape of Valencia Avenue, through  
11 thoughtful urban planning and street planning,  
12 underscores its commitment to community  
13 enhancement. The proposed six-foot sidewalk  
14 and twelve-foot parkway improvements,  
15 accompanied by the strategic placement of the  
16 street trees, parking and lighting, are  
17 designed to foster a welcoming and vibrant  
18 pedestrian experience, in line with the  
19 character of adjacent townhouse developments by  
20 the same team.

21 Urbanistically, The George is charged with  
22 the responsibility of transitioning from  
23 multi-family high density to single-family  
24 residence. So although we could have built 150  
25 feet in height and 13 stories, which is what

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1 the lots on the side. So it's going to be 13  
2 lots, a lot corresponding to each townhome, so  
3 they can be conveyed in fee simple. There, of  
4 course, will be a master covenant governing the  
5 whole property, just so that it's sort of  
6 managed in a unified fashion.

7 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: So no association for  
8 each home?

9 MR. GARCIA-SERRA: It's not going to be a  
10 condominium. It's going to be a property  
11 that's subject to a master covenant that  
12 everybody has to participate in, and sort of  
13 governs how common areas are maintained, and  
14 party wall issues and stuff like that.

15 MR. SALMAN: Is there an authority for  
16 that?

17 MR. GARCIA-SERRA: What do you mean?

18 MR. SALMAN: I mean, is there a group that  
19 will be charged with the enforcement of that?

20 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Can you speak into the  
21 microphone for the court reporter, please?

22 MS. DE LA GUARDIA: So, in these  
23 townhouses, there's a property homeowners  
24 association, and the exterior of the building  
25 is codified, in terms of what can be done and

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1 what can't be done. And, then, there's  
2 typically sort of a management team, that takes  
3 care of the entire perimeter. So everything is  
4 the same and --

5 MR. SALMAN: So it works like a  
6 condominium, except it's not a condominium.

7 MS. DE LA GUARDIA: But it's a condominium.

8 MR. SALMAN: Just an association. They do  
9 collect fees?

10 MS. DE LA GUARDIA: Minimal, like \$200 a  
11 month, I think.

12 MR. SALMAN: Do they have the right to cite  
13 one of the individual owners if he doesn't want  
14 to paint his building?

15 MR. GARCIA-SERRA: There are usually  
16 mechanisms in place, so that if one isn't, you  
17 know, doing what they have to do, the other  
18 ones can pay and lean the one who hasn't paid,  
19 and, then, you know, be able to ultimately  
20 collect.

21 MR. SALMAN: Sounds like a mess.

22 MR. GARCIA-SERRA: It ends up being like an  
23 association form of structure, but it's not a  
24 condominium.

25 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Continue, please.

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1 Garcia, Planning Official.

2 So, the location, as you know, is on  
3 Valencia, between Cardena and Anderson Road.  
4 It's just to the south of what's known as the  
5 David Williams Hotel, next to Beatrice Row, and  
6 across the street from Biltmore Park, and what  
7 is under construction right now, 701 Valencia.  
8 The Land Use right now is Multi-Family High  
9 Density, and the Zoning is MF4.

10 The request, there's two requests, the Site  
11 Plan, which is required, because they're more  
12 than 29,000 square feet, and then the tentative  
13 plats.

14 So, the lot area is, more or less, 36,000  
15 square feet. There's no change in Zoning, no  
16 change in Land Use. The FAR 1.51. The maximum  
17 would be 2.2. The maximum height is 43.5, so  
18 33 and a half feet, and 13 units, and they're  
19 providing 26.4 percent open space, where the  
20 requirement is 25 percent, and the parking, the  
21 requirement would be 26 spaces total, and  
22 they're parking 52, which is four spaces per  
23 unit.

24 Under the Site Plan, the parking is in the  
25 rear, accessed from the alley. There's an

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1 MR. GARCIA-SERRA: No. I think that's it,  
2 for our main presentation.

3 MR. SALMAN: What's the width of those  
4 lots?

5 MS. GARCIA-SERRA: The width of the lots?

6 MR. SALMAN: That you're proposing for the  
7 replat. I can't read it from here.

8 MS. DE LA GUARDIA: The internal lots are  
9 24-6. The end lots, because there are setbacks  
10 and the unit is exactly the same, is 29-6. The  
11 property is not completely rectangular, so  
12 there's -- but, basically, internal lots are  
13 24-6.

14 MR. GARCIA-SERRA: That's the extent of our  
15 presentation. We'll reserve time for  
16 questions, of course, or rebuttal, if  
17 necessary.

18 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you.

19 MR. SALMAN: You want to tell --

20 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Sorry?

21 MR. SALMAN: The public --

22 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: No. Staff, the City,  
23 is going to make their presentation.

24 MR. SALMAN: Okay.

25 MS. GARCIA: Good evening. Jennifer

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1 alley on the rear, as well as on the side, all  
2 of the entrances. There's no additional curb  
3 cuts being proposed on the side block.

4 These are renderings of what it would look  
5 like. And the tentative plat is -- like I  
6 said, it's 13 individual lots. The lots, on  
7 either side, are wider, given the setbacks  
8 they're required.

9 So the DRC reviewed this in December. It  
10 went to the Board of Architects in April. And  
11 here we are for the Planning and Zoning. It  
12 will go to the City Commission for the Site  
13 Plan resolution, to be determined when, and the  
14 final plat would go to the County, and then  
15 come back for final approval by the City  
16 Commission in the coming months.

17 So there were letters sent out to the  
18 property owners and current occupants within a  
19 thousand feet of the project three times, for  
20 two neighborhood meetings and tonight's  
21 meeting, as well as the property was posted  
22 twice, for DRC and PZB. The website was posted  
23 twice, as well, newspaper advertisement was  
24 once, and one e-mail was sent out last week.

25 So the application has complied with the

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1 findings of fact, that's part of your Staff  
2 Report, that you have before you, and there are  
3 conditions of approval. Those are located on  
4 the last few pages of your Staff Report. But  
5 the unique ones are to relocate the six-foot  
6 mature live oak trees, for them to coordinate  
7 with Public Works on that, to pay for any loss  
8 of on-street parking, as well as any additional  
9 trees that would be provided on Valencia,  
10 Biltmore Court, Cardena and Biltmore Way, in  
11 the future, based on any funds collected from  
12 the canopy mitigation payments or funds that  
13 are required in the future. And, then, also,  
14 minimizing the construction dust. There is  
15 concern for the neighbor on the north side of  
16 all of the construction dust and demolition,  
17 during construction, so that was also a  
18 condition of approval.

19 That's it.

20 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you.

21 Jill, we have two e-mails that you  
22 circulated to us. Those are going to be  
23 entered, for the record?

24 THE SECRETARY: Yes.

25 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Are there any other

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1 the architect should have commended, that we  
2 have developed a brand new village in that  
3 section of town, with all of the townhouses  
4 that have been built. The scale is right and  
5 everything is right.

6 I think this is the best townhouse project  
7 that you have done, by the way, and I think  
8 it's a great project and I would vote for it.

9 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you.

10 Chip.

11 MR. WITHERS: I just want to know how long  
12 it took you to come up with the name. I mean,  
13 seriously, was it discussed or did it just,  
14 bang, or how did it just happen? I think we  
15 never had The George. What comes next?

16 MR. GARCIA-SERRA: You think it should have  
17 happened already, but each of them have a  
18 history behind them, you know.

19 MR. WITHERS: I mean, I'm real curious --

20 MR. GARCIA-SERRA: Maria will tell you,  
21 Althea, Beatrice --

22 MR. WITHERS: I know it has nothing to do  
23 with the application, but I'm just curious to  
24 know how you came up with that name.

25 MS. DE LA GUARDIA: We named one after his

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1 comments, besides these two, that you received  
2 via e-mail?

3 THE SECRETARY: No. Those were the only  
4 two.

5 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Okay. As far as  
6 speakers in the Chambers, what do we have? Did  
7 anybody sign up?

8 THE SECRETARY: I mean, no one was --

9 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: No. No. Do we have  
10 any speakers in Chambers?

11 THE SECRETARY: No.

12 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Do we have any on Zoom  
13 or telephone?

14 THE SECRETARY: No.

15 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Okay. So, at this  
16 time, I'll go ahead and close it for public  
17 comment.

18 Julio, will you start us off, please?

19 MR. GRABIEL: Yes. You know, we spent a  
20 lot of time in the previous discussion about  
21 what is quality architecture and what is  
22 Mediterranean, and I think this is a perfect  
23 example of what quality architecture is, how it  
24 reacts to the street, to the massing, creating  
25 a new district. Actually, the developer and

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1 mother.

2 MR. WITHERS: Right.

3 MS. DE LA GUARDIA: Althea, Althea Row.  
4 And there's a series that were named after  
5 female names, which is sometimes the case in  
6 townhouse projects in England.

7 MR. WITHERS: Right.

8 MS. DE LA GUARDIA: And, then, we just  
9 wanted to break with sort of the Row, and so we  
10 just came up with The George. And we coined it  
11 really fast, as soon as we came up with it.

12 MR. WITHERS: I just tried to grab  
13 TheGeorge.com and it's already been taken, so  
14 you know.

15 MR. PARDO: There's still The Chip.

16 MR. WITHERS: I hope they have elevators,  
17 too.

18 But I just have a question for Staff on the  
19 parking. Are they actually taking more of the  
20 sidewalk into the right-of-way or why --

21 MS. GARCIA: No. So right now there's no  
22 curb cuts and there's no bump outs on that  
23 street, except for one, I think, that's next to  
24 the alley.

25 MR. WITHERS: Okay.

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1 MS. GARCIA: So, one of the requirements of  
2 the Zoning Code is to provide street trees.

3 MR. WITHERS; Okay.

4 MS. GARCIA: So the standard is, usually,  
5 two spaces and a bump out and then two spaces  
6 and a bump out and so on.

7 MR. WITHERS: So there's paid parking there  
8 now?

9 MS. GARCIA: Right now -- what do you mean?  
10 Right now there's asphalt.

11 MR. WITHERS: I mean -- you said they're  
12 paying for the parking spots.

13 MS. GARCIA: Well, that's standard, right.  
14 So they're incorporating a little bit more bump  
15 outs than we would normally be okay with.

16 MR. WITHERS: No. No. Is there meters  
17 there now?

18 MS. GARCIA: There are no meters there  
19 right now. Residential parking only.

20 MR. WITHERS: But we're going to charge  
21 them as if there were meters there?

22 MS. GARCIA: No. So, in the City Code,  
23 you're required to pay 43,000 and some  
24 change --

25 MR. WITHERS: I know. Is that because of

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1 record?

2 MR. WITHERS: I'm just trying to figure out  
3 the logic behind it. That's all. And then  
4 we'll discuss it here.

5 MS. GARCIA: So any time you remove a  
6 parking spot, whether it's metered or not  
7 metered, the City charges you for it, because  
8 you're impacting the curb.

9 MR. WITHERS: Except if you're in a  
10 residential neighbor and then we don't charge  
11 for parking?

12 MS. GARCIA: No., you're still charged.  
13 Like if you're in the North Ponce, where you  
14 have on-street parking, that you're not paying  
15 a meter, if you remove parking, the City will  
16 charge you for removing that parking space.  
17 Residential, as far as single-family, no,  
18 because it's swale, it's not a parking space.

19 MR. WITHERS: So I'm not clear. Are we  
20 charging people if they want to park there now?

21 MR. GARCIA-SERRA: No. Right now -- any of  
22 us could go park there right now and would not  
23 have to pay any sort of fee. It is a  
24 residential parking zone. So, at certain  
25 times, you have to have your decal, indicating

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1 lost parking revenue?

2 MS. GARCIA: I guess there is --

3 MR. WITHERS: I guess my question is, if  
4 there's no parking there now, so we're not  
5 losing revenue now, why are we charging them  
6 for revenue that we're not enjoying right now?  
7 I'm just curious for the logic behind that.

8 MS. GARCIA: The curb space.

9 MR. WITHERS: What?

10 MS. GARCIA: The curb space. So there's  
11 some analysis, before I was here, that however  
12 much you're generating from a parking space --  
13 and, yes, it's not metered, so technically,  
14 yes, we're not losing metered space, but you  
15 are losing that curb space to park more cars;  
16 therefore, putting more demand on parking on  
17 other parts of the area.

18 MR. WITHERS: Are we charging there now?

19 MS. GARCIA: We are not charging per hour  
20 on that spot, no.

21 MR. WITHERS: So I can park there for free?

22 MS. GARCIA: I think it's residential  
23 parking right now. I could be wrong.

24 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Could I ask you to  
25 come up, because that way it will be on the

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1 you're a resident, or another one that  
2 indicates you're a guest of a resident, but  
3 there's no -- it's not being charged now, nor  
4 has it ever been, in my living memory, at  
5 least.

6 MS. GARCIA: You can only park there if you  
7 have a decal. You only can park if you have a  
8 permit with the Parking Department.

9 MR. GARCIA-SERRA: But is that the whole  
10 day or only at certain times?

11 MS. GARCIA: I'm not sure.

12 MS. SUAREZ: Yeah, I'm not sure, in that  
13 area --

14 MR. WITHERS: Are they developing the curb?

15 MS. GARCIA: Yes. If you want me to go  
16 into the Site Plan, I can show you.

17 MR. WITHERS: No. So there's no parking  
18 charge now. They're developing the curb.  
19 They're actually underbuilding what they can  
20 and enhancing the neighborhood, and we're  
21 charging them as if we could park there. Is  
22 that the logic?

23 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: I think Chip is asking  
24 why do they have to pay into a fund for  
25 parking, when there's no parking there?

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1 MS. GARCIA: Now, there's -- it's  
 2 accommodating cars that park there.  
 3 MR. WITHERS: But they don't pay.  
 4 MS. GARCIA: They pay a permit, I believe,  
 5 a residential permit.  
 6 MR. PARDO: I think they do.  
 7 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: But the cars that are  
 8 parked there now, are they going to lose the  
 9 ability to park?  
 10 MS. GARCIA: I wish Michael was here --  
 11 MS. SUAREZ: There will be a loss of  
 12 parking, correct, Jennifer? There will be a  
 13 loss of parking there.  
 14 MS. GARCIA: Yes, which is triggering the  
 15 payment --  
 16 MR. WITHERS: So I'm going to ask my  
 17 question again, are people paying to park  
 18 there? That's my very simple question. It's  
 19 either a yes or a no.  
 20 MR. GARCIA-SERRA: My client, who's there  
 21 every day, advises it's a residential parking  
 22 zone 24/7, and you do have to pay to get your  
 23 permit or decal in order to park there.  
 24 MR. WITHERS: Okay. Okay. Got you. That  
 25 answers my questions.

1 MR. GARCIA-SERRA: 50 dollars --  
 2 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: The court reporter is  
 3 not able to capture that.  
 4 MR. GARCIA-SERRA: I'll repeat it. The  
 5 space in front of this property, as well as  
 6 across the street, is a residential parking  
 7 zone 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and the  
 8 resident needs to pay for a decal to put on  
 9 their car, which I believe I was told it was  
 10 fifty dollars a year.  
 11 MR. WITHERS: Fifty dollars --  
 12 MR. GARCIA-SERRA: A year.  
 13 MR. WITHERS: A year?  
 14 MR. GARCIA-SERRA: Yeah.  
 15 MR. WITHERS: And how many parking spots  
 16 are there?  
 17 MS. GARCIA: Right now, there are fifteen  
 18 parking spaces. They're providing eight.  
 19 MR. WITHERS: Wait a minute. Let me do the  
 20 math here. So that's -- I'm not that sharp.  
 21 That's about \$750 a year, right, we're getting  
 22 in revenue. And how much are we charging for  
 23 the parking?  
 24 MS. GARCIA: So it's a one time fee that a  
 25 developer pays when they're impacting any

1 parking --  
 2 MR. WITHERS: I get it.  
 3 MS. GARCIA: -- whether it's metered or  
 4 whether's it's permitted.  
 5 MR. WITHERS: So that number is what?  
 6 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: 43,000.  
 7 MS. GARCIA: 43 and some change.  
 8 MR. GARCIA-SERRA: 42 and change.  
 9 MR. WITHERS: So 4,200?  
 10 MR. GARCIA-SERRA: 42,000.  
 11 MR. WITHERS: Oh, so we're basically saying  
 12 for 200 years of parking.  
 13 MR. GARCIA-SERRA: There is a reduction, if  
 14 you're losing the parking space because you're  
 15 putting in a bulb-out because of the  
 16 streetscape requirement --  
 17 MR. WITHERS: Okay. So I'm in favor of  
 18 this, but I'm against charging them for the  
 19 parking. I'm just telling you, that's how I  
 20 feel, and I don't know how the rest of the  
 21 Board --  
 22 MS. GARCIA: So that's a Code requirement.  
 23 MS. KAWALERSKI: If I can comment. That's  
 24 a public street. That's public, right? That's  
 25 a public street. Residents don't own that

1 street -- I mean, a resident. I mean, we all  
 2 own that street. Is that correct?  
 3 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Yes.  
 4 MS. GARCIA: It's a right-of-way.  
 5 MS. KAWALERSKI: Any taxpayer owns that  
 6 street, that's public property, correct?  
 7 MS. GARCIA: It's a right-of-way, yes.  
 8 MS. KAWALERSKI: It's a right-of-way, it's  
 9 public property.  
 10 MS. GARCIA: Yes.  
 11 MS. KAWALERSKI: Why would we give away my  
 12 right to park there to a developer?  
 13 MS. SUAREZ: So our Code requires this  
 14 parking replacement assessment, so that the  
 15 City can then develop additional public parking  
 16 elsewhere in the City.  
 17 MS. KAWALERSKI: Well, what happens to the  
 18 people who are now parking there?  
 19 MS. SUAREZ: So that's why there is a  
 20 \$42,000 per space --  
 21 MS. KAWALERSKI: I understand, but what  
 22 happens to the people that are now parking  
 23 there, who, all of a sudden, are not going to  
 24 have their public parking spot?  
 25 MS. SUAREZ: There are other available



1 parking areas.  
 2 MS. DE LA GUARDIA: I think what's  
 3 important to note, you're losing parking, but  
 4 you're losing parking so that we can make the  
 5 street more beautiful. You're losing parking  
 6 so we can create bulb-outs, so we can plant oak  
 7 trees. Right now, in the stretch in front of  
 8 the property, there's not a single street tree.  
 9 It's on the north side of the street, so it  
 10 gets blasted by the sun all day.

11 So, on the south side, at least, Biltmore  
 12 Park gives a little bit of shade to the  
 13 sidewalk, but the north side, it just gets  
 14 blasted, blasted, blasted. So we're losing  
 15 parking, but not because we're -- it's because  
 16 we want to put trees. And, actually, we've put  
 17 a lot of effort into studying what would be the  
 18 best spacing between the trees, in order to  
 19 create a continuous tree canopy, in order to  
 20 protect the pedestrian. So all of this is not  
 21 because we're going to benefit by eliminating  
 22 parking. All of this -- it's our chance to  
 23 really hit it out of the park on Valencia.

24 MS. KAWALERSKI: Look, I understand. Look,  
 25 I love trees. I understand what you're saying

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1 about trees and beauty. I'm for trees and  
 2 beauty. But if I have a car, and I live on  
 3 that street, and I've been relying on that  
 4 parking space, and it disappears, I'm more  
 5 concerned about where I'm going to park my car.

6 MS. DE LA GUARDIA: Yeah, but if you live  
 7 on the street, you have a park -- you have four  
 8 parking spaces. If you live in The George, you  
 9 have four parking spaces in your unit. If you  
 10 live in Biltmore Park, across the street, you  
 11 have your internal garage. If you live in  
 12 Beatrice Row or Biltmore Row, you have your  
 13 parking spaces.

14 So you have to live maybe one or two blocks  
 15 away, to need that parking space, and we --  
 16 it's not like we're eliminating all of the  
 17 parking spaces on the street. You know, we're  
 18 keeping seven to eight parking spaces on that  
 19 street, but most importantly, we're beautifying  
 20 the street. We're trying to create a shady  
 21 canopy, so that everybody who wants to take a  
 22 stroll down the sidewalk, can do so in the  
 23 shade.

24 MS. KAWALERSKI: No, I understand.  
 25 But let me ask you something, these bump

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1 outs -- these bump outs, does that count  
 2 towards the 26.4 percent open space that you  
 3 are required?

4 MS. DE LA GUARDIA: No.

5 MS. KAWALERSKI: Is this part of your open  
 6 space?

7 MS. DE LA GUARDIA: No. All of the open  
 8 space has to be accommodated within our  
 9 property line, within our property.

10 MS. KAWALERSKI: All right, because that  
 11 has happened in the past with some projects.  
 12 Trust me.

13 MS. DE LA GUARDIA: Okay. I know, for a  
 14 fact, that all of our projects --

15 MS. KAWALERSKI: Okay. So this doesn't  
 16 account for any of the required -- minimum  
 17 required open space, okay.

18 MS. DE LA GUARDIA: No.

19 MS. KAWALERSKI: All right. So you're  
 20 saying you're taking seven to eight parking  
 21 spaces away from the fifteen that are currently  
 22 there. Did we do any study about -- I mean,  
 23 are those spaces vacant all of the time, where  
 24 we can just give away the parking spaces?

25 MS. DE LA GUARDIA: So there's currently

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1 seventeen units, in our buildings, on that  
 2 site, and those units don't have any garages,  
 3 zero garages. So all of those current existing  
 4 apartments either park on the street or they  
 5 park in the alley. Basically, everything is  
 6 accommodated on the street and the alley.

7 Now we're offering 52 spaces for the  
 8 thirteen townhouses, and that's all internal.  
 9 So that's a car that you're not even seeing.  
 10 That's a car we're taking off the road, which  
 11 means, you know, that we're not taking up --

12 MS. KAWALERSKI: No, I understand, but  
 13 where is the UPS driver, where is the FedEx  
 14 driver, where is the deliveries -- now that  
 15 you're taking away these spaces that normally  
 16 would be taken by potentially somebody that  
 17 lives on that street or the street over and/or  
 18 you're taking away any opportunity for those  
 19 delivery trucks to have a space to park.

20 MS. DE LA GUARDIA: Well, there will be  
 21 space -- I don't know if we can pull up the  
 22 Site Plan. There will be space for the  
 23 delivery trucks. We're not getting rid of all  
 24 parking. We are proposing seven parking  
 25 spaces.

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1 But, most importantly, I mean, I think we  
2 want to make a beautiful City. We want to make  
3 a beautiful Valencia. Valencia, on that side,  
4 is horrendous. The only way to do it is to add  
5 trees and add bulb-outs and add green, because,  
6 right now, it's an asphalt jungle.

7 MS. KAWALERSKI: I'm with you. I'm with  
8 you. I totally understand, but let me ask you  
9 this, according to Sheryl Gold, who is a  
10 resident who notified us, there are 91 trees on  
11 the property. Is that true, there are 91 trees  
12 on the property? How many will remain on the  
13 property?

14 MS. DE LA GUARDIA: Right now, we are  
15 relocating or cutting most of them.

16 MS. KAWALERSKI: Okay. So you want a tree  
17 canopy, but you're cutting down almost all of  
18 the 91 trees that are currently there. So  
19 that's kind of like --

20 MS. DE LA GUARDIA: No. The street trees  
21 is a tree canopy for the pedestrian. That's  
22 what it's going to do. It's going to give  
23 shade to the sidewalk. The trees that are on  
24 the property are not shading the sidewalk.  
25 Right now, you can walk there, and there's zero

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1 MS. KAWALERSKI: Well, I mean, you could at  
2 least have one rendering -- I mean, but you  
3 don't have one rendering that actually shows  
4 that. I mean, it looks like a concrete jungle.  
5 It looks like a beautiful structure --

6 MS. DE LA GUARDIA: Have you driven around  
7 the other townhouses? You have such a hard  
8 time seeing the facades of the townhouses,  
9 because the trees are so large.

10 MS. KAWALERSKI: Okay. We have two people  
11 here, that we have e-mails from, that are  
12 concerned about the fact that trees are going  
13 to be cut down, lots of trees are going to be  
14 cut down, and it's going to take forever to get  
15 that shade on that street that you're talking  
16 about.

17 Where are these massive oaks going to?

18 MS. DE LA GUARDIA: Okay. Currently, we  
19 are in conversation with the City and the Staff  
20 to see about relocating the oaks. It's quite  
21 challenging, because of the size of the oaks  
22 and the root balls of the oaks, and the lack of  
23 access to any good receiving sites.

24 MS. KAWALERSKI: So we may not have any  
25 location for them?

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1 shade on the sidewalk.

2 MS. KAWALERSKI: You know what, can you  
3 show the picture, please, the rendering of --  
4 not that, but keep going.

5 MS. DE LA GUARDIA: The pedestrian view?

6 MS. KAWALERSKI: Yeah, where it shows --  
7 you know, it's a better depiction. If you  
8 could just move forward with that.

9 MR. PARDO: Of the parking?

10 MS. KAWALERSKI: No, the frontage. Okay.  
11 Keep going. There was one in daylight that was  
12 more of a flat front. Okay, right there.

13 Okay. Architecturally, beautiful, but this  
14 looks so stark. This looks like a concrete  
15 jungle right there. That's a concrete jungle.  
16 So, as much as you're saying those bulb-outs  
17 will be providing shade trees, where the heck  
18 is the shade there?

19 MS. DE LA GUARDIA: You know, honestly, you  
20 know, these trees get planted a certain size  
21 and then they start growing and then they start  
22 filling out. And we are proposing a tighter  
23 spacing between trees. And the other thing is  
24 that, for the rendering, if I show a full tree,  
25 we're not going to see the building.

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1 MS. DE LA GUARDIA: Okay. Parallel to  
2 that, we have proposed to the City, and this is  
3 a conversation, so nothing about this is  
4 definitive, but we have proposed to the City  
5 that we will improve two streets that are very  
6 bare right now, which are Biltmore Court and  
7 Cardena Street.

8 MS. KAWALERSKI: Uh-huh.

9 MS. DE LA GUARDIA: Those two streets don't  
10 have much, in terms of street trees, and so  
11 we're proposing doing bulb-outs and adding  
12 street trees, to create more shade.

13 MS. KAWALERSKI: Taking more parking spaces  
14 away?

15 MS. DE LA GUARDIA: Well, you want trees  
16 and you want parking, and --

17 MS. KAWALERSKI: Listen, I don't have a  
18 flying saucer at this point. I've got a car.  
19 I need to park it somewhere, okay, and you're  
20 taking away parking spaces. So, as much as we  
21 want to beautify the City, we also have to  
22 think about people's transportation needs,  
23 right?

24 MS. DE LA GUARDIA: Right.

25 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Sue, are the trees

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1 that you're taking away inside the property  
2 itself?

3 MS. DE LA GUARDIA: Yes.

4 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: What shade do those  
5 trees give to anybody that's outside that  
6 property? Anything?

7 MS. DE LA GUARDIA: They don't give any  
8 shade to the sidewalk.

9 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Do they give any shade  
10 to anybody else?

11 MS. DE LA GUARDIA: They might give  
12 shade -- because of the angle of the sun, they  
13 might give shade to the alley, but --

14 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Okay. Because the way  
15 I see it, you're adding to the area where  
16 pedestrians walk.

17 MS. DE LA GUARDIA: Yes. I mean, we're --

18 MS. KAWALERSKI: Listen, when you're  
19 talking about tree canopy, you're not talking  
20 about just what hangs over a sidewalk. You're  
21 talking about, when you take an aerial view,  
22 there's a canopy. Is this correct or not?  
23 You're an architect. A canopy is a canopy,  
24 it's not just over a sidewalk, it's a canopy,  
25 and there's 91 trees on that property right

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1 it, and Staff is recommending approval. So we  
2 have, we think, struck that balance correctly,  
3 but, of course, we're open to any input.

4 MS. KAWALERSKI: Yeah. I just don't like  
5 contradictory statements. We want to form a  
6 tree canopy, but we're taking away almost 90  
7 trees. That's a contradictory statement.

8 MR. GARCIA-SERRA: Well, we are admittedly  
9 reducing tree canopy on the property, but, in  
10 exchange, trying to enhance it on the street  
11 and in the neighborhood.

12 MS. KAWALERSKI: One more question I have.  
13 The alley is going to be looked at for a  
14 Bike/Ped? What am I reading in this? Why  
15 would an alleyway be considered as part of the  
16 Coral Gables Bike/Ped? What are you doing to  
17 the alley? You're making improvements for bike  
18 and ped. Isn't it a 20-foot alley, and you  
19 have incoming, outgoing vehicles on 20 feet?

20 MS. GARCIA: Yes.

21 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Can you speak into the  
22 microphone, please?

23 MS. GARCIA: So, yes, there's no bike plan  
24 for the alley.

25 MS. KAWALERSKI: Well, yes. If you read --

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1 now. It may not affect the sidewalk at this  
2 point in time, but there's 91 trees creating a  
3 canopy from the air, right?

4 If you take an aerial view right now, there  
5 are 91 trees there, there's a canopy. If you  
6 take 91 trees away, there's no canopy.

7 MR. GARCIA-SERRA: And there's regulations  
8 in place to decide, you know, what should be  
9 removed, what should be kept, what you should  
10 try to relocate. You know, this City is  
11 everything about tree canopy, and this  
12 developer, I have to say, if you look at the  
13 other projects, we've shown some on the screen,  
14 is also about improving streetscapes,  
15 preserving trees. On the Gables Village site  
16 right now, they are relocating, you know,  
17 significant trees there. And so you have to  
18 balance all of these things.

19 You have to balance the right of the  
20 developer to be able to design a project that  
21 makes sense on this property, parking, versus  
22 trees on the street, and that's what we're  
23 trying to strike, you know, in cooperation with  
24 your City Staff. So what we proposed right  
25 now, we think is a good option, and we stand by

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1 and I'm sorry, I don't have the exact page, but  
2 it struck me that you're using the alleyway and  
3 considering the Coral Gables Bike/Ped to make  
4 improvements for a Bike/Ped in the alleyway.  
5 It's in your description.

6 MS. GARCIA: So maybe it's when I talk  
7 about the alley to be designed with a flare  
8 style curb cut, as in like the pedestrian --

9 MS. KAWALERSKI: No. Look specifically.  
10 It says, Bike/Ped, Coral Gables Bike/Ped and it  
11 mentions the alleyway.

12 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Can you go to the  
13 microphone, so the court reporter can hear you?

14 MS. DE LA GUARDIA: So there's two alleys,  
15 the one in the back that you use to turn into  
16 the garage and then there -- it's like a "T,"  
17 and then there's the alley that comes out to  
18 Valencia. So I think what it might be  
19 referring to is when the sidewalk crosses over  
20 the alley, that that sidewalk is part of the  
21 bicycle. Do you understand? It's more when it  
22 crosses --

23 MS. GARCIA: Yeah, I think it's 3,  
24 Subsection E, the Bike Pedestrian Plan.

25 MS. KAWALERSKI: Uh-huh.

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1 MS. GARCIA: Right. So what it says is,  
2 alleys shall be designed with a flared curb  
3 cut, which the curb cut is where the alley  
4 meets the curb of the street, with a continuous  
5 level sidewalk through the alley, to create a  
6 pedestrian friendly environment. So the alley  
7 coming out to the street is not disrupting the  
8 sidewalk, it's the sidewalk that's going  
9 through the alley. That's all that means.  
10 There's no bike lane --

11 MS. KAWALERSKI: Okay. That's what I  
12 wanted to clarify. It was not clear, from what  
13 I read.

14 All right. I love the architecture. You  
15 heard my concerns. I think it's going to be a  
16 very stark project for the next twenty years,  
17 with bulb-out trees only, cutting almost 90  
18 trees, and if I was a resident that didn't live  
19 in that building and are currently using those  
20 parking spaces, all of a sudden, I'm out of  
21 luck. So I don't have like the fact that a  
22 public street is being repurposed for a  
23 developer. That's Number One, okay, and that's  
24 what very clearly it is. It's being repurposed  
25 for a developer, and I want to make that very

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1 clear, on the record.

2 And, again, the starkness of the project,  
3 by taking away the trees. I think there's a  
4 better solution here. And especially if you're  
5 saying that the mature oaks, there's no place  
6 for them, let's face it, they're dead trees at  
7 this point in time is what you're telling me.

8 MR. WITHERS: Just so a quick question, the  
9 people that are living there now, where do they  
10 park? Don't they park on the street?

11 MR. GARCIA-SERRA: In all likelihood, they  
12 park on the street.

13 MR. WITHERS: So you're now taking all of  
14 those cars off of the street and you're  
15 tripling the amount of parking spots that you  
16 have?

17 MR. PARDO: No, they're only taking out six  
18 parking spaces, out of the total fifteen, and  
19 then adding more internally, correct.

20 MS. KAWALERSKI: Right. No, well, seven to  
21 eight parking spaces will be eliminated, and  
22 right now there are fifteen, correct?

23 MR. WITHERS: But they're adding 32.

24 MS. KAWALERSKI: But what if those people  
25 currently parking there are not living on that

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1 property that this is --

2 MR. WITHERS: Then they're living three  
3 blocks away.

4 MS. KAWALERSKI: Wherever they're living,  
5 they're using it.

6 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: All right.

7 Javier, would you go next?

8 MR. SALMAN: Okay.

9 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you.

10 MR. SALMAN: Can you go back to the Site  
11 Plan just real quick, please?

12 So within your bounded frontage, you're  
13 going to have one, two, three, four, five, six  
14 and a third trees, because there's a bulb-out  
15 just outside the limit of your project. Is  
16 that part of your project?

17 MS. DE LA GUARDIA: Yes. I mean, we would  
18 do it. It's outside, but we would do it.

19 MR. SALMAN: No. My question is, is it  
20 part of your project? Is that part of the  
21 Public Works portion of the project?

22 MS. DE LA GUARDIA: Yes.

23 MR. SALMAN: Okay. So we're getting one,  
24 two, three, four, five, six, seven trees. Are  
25 any of the existing mature oaks being relocated

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1 to some of these bulb-out?

2 MS. DE LA GUARDIA: That was our initial  
3 intention, was to move them into the bulb-outs,  
4 and, then, we discovered that there was a  
5 twenty-inch water transmission line, that could  
6 not be moved, and it was four feet below grade.  
7 So we were not able to move any of the specimen  
8 out to the bulb-outs, because of that  
9 twenty-inch transmission line that is running  
10 exactly below those parking spaces.

11 MR. SALMAN: But you're moving them  
12 somewhere else.

13 MS. KAWALERSKI: Maybe. They don't have a  
14 location.

15 MS. DE LA GUARDIA: Yes. That's what --  
16 we're working with the City right now --

17 MR. SALMAN: But you're committed to moving  
18 these trees? It's going to be part of your  
19 approval today, right?

20 MR. GARCIA-SERRA: The intent is to  
21 relocate those trees. Now, what it's going to  
22 take, the mechanics of relocating those trees,  
23 we're still working on. In part, we're waiting  
24 on the demolition of the existing structures to  
25 see what the root span is of the existing trees

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1 and so forth, to figure out how we can move  
2 them and where.

3 MR. SALMAN: Okay. Yeah, they're big and  
4 you have to go through underneath street lights  
5 and you need a clear path to be able to move  
6 something that large down the street.  
7 Understood. Got it. And now they've mentioned  
8 other trees.

9 Yeah, because some of those are pretty big,  
10 aren't they? I think there's three or them or  
11 four of them that are there, that are really  
12 big, and there's a lot of garbage trees. You  
13 know, you've got a lot of Brazilian Peppers and  
14 Chifleras and all sorts of just junk stuff that  
15 people threw out their window and started  
16 growing and became a tree, which some of them  
17 are invasive, I've discovered, in similar  
18 projects in the area.

19 Okay. Assuming that the trees aren't  
20 removed and relocated, because it becomes  
21 impossible to do so, which is seeming to become  
22 more and more likely, is there an equivalent  
23 tree canopy replacement that would be then used  
24 to mitigate those trees?

25 MS. DE LA GUARDIA: Yes. So we've met

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1 multiple times with Vice Mayor Anderson, in  
2 talking about -- brainstorming as to what else  
3 we could do, in order to mitigate the trees,  
4 and one of her big concerns were those two  
5 streets, Cardena Street and Biltmore Court,  
6 which are very -- which don't have street  
7 trees, they don't have bulb-outs, and so she  
8 wanted to create more canopy on that. And so  
9 presented an idea of adding street trees and --  
10 you know, street trees and bulb-outs on those  
11 two streets, and that's a conversation.

12 MR. SALMAN: And they don't have the whole  
13 water main?

14 MS. DE LA GUARDIA: They don't have -- it's  
15 not just the water main. It's the twenty-inch.

16 MR. SALMAN: Yeah, I understand what it is.

17 MR. PARDO: Transmission.

18 MR. SALMAN: No. No. It's the  
19 transmission line going -- it's regional. All  
20 right.

21 It seems reasonable to me. I like the  
22 project. I like the very subtle changes in the  
23 frontage, to give some relief to the building.  
24 I think I can see where you saw the -- the  
25 Royal Crescent in Bath in the development of

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1 the design and I think it's an admirable  
2 project.

3 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you, Javier.

4 Felix.

5 MR. PARDO: So I have a few questions. In  
6 one of the letters that we were given, just  
7 reading from the tree canopy component, because  
8 obviously this is -- just tell me if it's  
9 wrong.

10 The proposed elimination of 91 trees on the  
11 property, while only 12 were identified by the  
12 arborist as in poor condition and recommended  
13 for removal -- is that true or not?

14 MR. GARCIA-SERRA: I'll ask our arborist to  
15 come up here and address it.

16 Jeff, if you can.

17 MR. PARDO: And is he also the landscape  
18 architect or he's just -- you're only the  
19 arborist on this project?

20 MR. SHIMONSKI: My name is Jeff Shimonski  
21 and I'm the consulting arborist. I am not a  
22 landscape architect.

23 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Could you state your  
24 address, for the record, please?

25 MR. SHIMONSKI: 7330 Southwest 55 Avenue,

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1 Miami.

2 MR. PARDO: The reason I ask that is  
3 because the second question, really, has to do  
4 with the landscape architect. Now, I did look  
5 at the landscape drawings in detail.

6 And the second question is, the Code  
7 requires 24 shade trees on the property, zero  
8 are being provided. So I don't know if you  
9 could address it, also.

10 MR. SHIMONSKI: No, I can address what's on  
11 the property and I can discuss trees'  
12 relocation, and I can discuss horticulture, but  
13 I didn't do the design.

14 MR. PARDO: Okay. Is there a mitigation  
15 loss, because it says, mitigating the loss of,  
16 contributing approximately \$100,000 to the tree  
17 fund, does little to offset the loss of  
18 benefits of mature trees and does not provide  
19 the replacement in the neighborhood.

20 MS. DE LA GUARDIA: Let me correct that,  
21 because that's not totally correct.

22 So to mitigate the trees that are being  
23 removed would be \$350,000, not 100,000. That  
24 would be \$350,000, to mitigate the trees that  
25 are being removed. And although we are not

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1 providing 24 large tree specimen, we are  
2 providing 46 medium to small trees, which is  
3 really what you can do on townhouse sites. I  
4 mean, that --

5 MR. PARDO: I'm sorry, on this site, you  
6 have 46 trees that you're providing, on the  
7 site?

8 MS. DE LA GUARDIA: Yes.

9 MR. PARDO: So besides the bump outs, are  
10 those trees from the edge of the sidewalk to  
11 the face of the building?

12 MS. DE LA GUARDIA: Exactly. So, you know,  
13 they're pretty much around the property and  
14 then there are some terraces on the second  
15 floor of --

16 MR. PARDO: I saw that, on the rear  
17 elevation.

18 MS. DE LA GUARDIA: Each one of that  
19 terraces has a pair of native Simpson stoppers.

20 MR. PARDO: Right.

21 MS. DE LA GUARDIA: So, right there, 13  
22 times two is 26. And so if you add all of the  
23 others, it's 46, but it's 46 small to medium  
24 trees. It's very difficult to incorporate a  
25 large tree. So we have 46, which is what we

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1 outs is misguided. Obviously, you can't do it,  
2 because of the water transmission line. So  
3 that's off the table.

4 And the other thing that has been brought  
5 up over and over and over, and I know that  
6 there have been discussions, and that is that,  
7 you know, planting new live oaks, compared to  
8 other trees, because it seems like not only do  
9 you have an issue with the water line, but it  
10 seems like, you know, we keep putting all of  
11 our eggs in one basket. In other words, all in  
12 one species instead of others, and the arborist  
13 can tell you that, you know, you get one plague  
14 of any type and you knock out most of your  
15 trees.

16 The ficus, is that a native?

17 MR. SHIMONSKI: No.

18 MR. PARDO: Is that an aurelius ficus?

19 MR. SHIMONSKI: You mean, the ficus on  
20 site, 361?

21 MR. PARDO: Right.

22 MS. SHIMONSKI: That's a tree that  
23 Miami-Dade County DERM wants you to remove when  
24 you're develop a site. That's a ficus  
25 benjamina. That's a large tree.

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1 can incorporate in the project.

2 MR. PARDO: So if you were mitigating  
3 everything, it would be \$300,000, but you're  
4 mitigating approximately 100,000 because that's  
5 the balance of what you can't --

6 MS. DE LA GUARDIA: No. No. I think the  
7 mitigation right now -- so what we're taking  
8 out, minus what we are adding new, would be the  
9 350,000. It might end up less, if we do end up  
10 doing the two street canopy improvement  
11 projects on Cardena and Biltmore, because,  
12 obviously, that money, the 350,000, would go  
13 towards introducing street trees on Cardena and  
14 Biltmore, but that's not final yet. That idea  
15 is not final. It's a conversation.

16 MR. PARDO: More of less. More of less.  
17 It's a conversation.

18 So if you were stroking a check to the City  
19 for their tree fund, is there an amount that  
20 you've been kicking around so far?

21 MR. GARCIA-SERRA: That number, the  
22 \$350,000, is potentially what the maximum  
23 payment would be in tree mitigation.

24 MR. PARDO: Okay. So, also, this person  
25 wrote, transplanting the live oaks into bump

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1 MR. PARDO: Okay. But it's not a native --

2 MR. SHIMONSKI: No, it's from Malacia.

3 It's not a native. It's in moderate condition.  
4 It's not a good tree for relocation. As a  
5 matter of fact, in the long-term, if that tree  
6 was kept, it would have to be cut down  
7 substantially, because there's so much decay in  
8 the trunk.

9 MR. PARDO: Right. And, then, the --  
10 because if it was an aurelius, then you're  
11 talking about a native tree and you would try  
12 to save it, if it was in good shape.

13 MR. SHIMONSKI: If it was in good  
14 condition, I would recommend it. We also need  
15 to remember that there are many invasive  
16 species on this site, and most of the trees are  
17 palms number-wise.

18 MR. PARDO: Right.

19 MS. DE LA GUARDIA: There is a lot of  
20 palms. It's not 91 specimen trees.

21 MR. PARDO: And what are most of the trees  
22 that you're planting between the back of the  
23 sidewalk and the face of the building?

24 MS. DE LA GUARDIA: So a variety of things.  
25 I think we have sort of -- (Inaudible.)

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1 MR. PARDO: Okay. It's not just a bunch of  
2 solitaires or something like that? Okay.  
3 You've clarified that. Thank you.

4 So the next issue is, in this letter about  
5 the endangered pieces, Florida Bonneted Bat. I  
6 know that that created a lot of heartburn for  
7 the developers next to the zoo, and I know that  
8 this is a fairly new law, where they're looking  
9 at it very, very carefully, at DERM, and I  
10 wanted to know, have you done any analysis on  
11 that yet, because it's going to be obviously  
12 required for your tree permit and for your  
13 demolition of the building?

14 MR. GARCIA-SERRA: To my knowledge, we  
15 haven't done that assessment. We will have to  
16 do it, though, as part of the DERM review of  
17 the building permit.

18 MR. PARDO: I think that's, you know, a  
19 heads up for the developer, because that could  
20 become a real headache for you, and I know that  
21 there are bats, because I see them when I run  
22 early in the morning.

23 And as far as the residential parking, the  
24 largest impact, of course, to the residents,  
25 and, you know, visitors, where they would be

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1 allowed to park in the back. Your trash  
2 pick-up, et cetera, is around the back alley?  
3 So they would pull the containers out and they  
4 would be picked up by Waste Management or  
5 whomever?

6 Why did you leave the green buffer that you  
7 left with the building that's under  
8 construction to your east?

9 MS. DE LA GUARDIA: Code required.

10 MR. PARDO: Okay. A ten-foot strip or  
11 something like that? I couldn't see the  
12 dimension.

13 MS. DE LA GUARDIA: I think it's 10.

14 MR. PARDO: Okay. And that's where you  
15 have some of your landscaping, also?

16 MS. DE LA GUARDIA: We have not --

17 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Can you talk into the  
18 microphone for the reporter? Thank you.

19 MS. DE LA GUARDIA: Sorry.

20 It is where we're planning on hiding a lot  
21 of things that we don't like to see from the  
22 sidewalk. So, meaning, you know, the back flow  
23 preventers and the FP&L transformer, towards  
24 the alley side. So we're using that ten-foot  
25 to take care of that.

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1 Also, we will be using that for drainage,  
2 the ten-foot.

3 MR. PARDO: Okay. But you'll probably have  
4 to put a well or something in there to --

5 MS. DE LA GUARDIA: Uh-huh. Exactly.

6 MR. PARDO: And, then -- and these are fee  
7 simple, you said --

8 MR. GARCIA-SERRA: Correct.

9 MR. PARDO: -- with the homeowners  
10 association.

11 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Master homeowners  
12 association, not a homeowners association  
13 project.

14 MR. PARDO: Right. Right. But not a  
15 condo.

16 Okay. And, then, the last question for our  
17 City Attorney is, I'm a little confused. I  
18 thought that part of the issue that occurred on  
19 the properties north of Biltmore, compared to  
20 the properties south of Biltmore, guaranteed  
21 that there would be no more than a certain  
22 height south of Biltmore or am I mistaken?

23 MR. SUAREZ: I think that's a different  
24 issue. This one is -- I think our Planning  
25 Official can explain the difference there.

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1 MR. PARDO: I know they're under the  
2 height, but I just want to make sure, because  
3 it's a little confusing, you know, since it  
4 started as a mistake, and then it was fixed.  
5 But the thing is that, you know, you keep  
6 saying, well, you know, we're allowed 150 feet.  
7 I know you're well below anything you're  
8 allowed, but I wanted to make sure that it was  
9 right.

10 MS. GARCIA: Right. So anything south of  
11 Biltmore Way, that is Zoned FM4, doesn't have  
12 the allowance to the additional height or  
13 additional FAR and density for Med Bonus.

14 MR. PARDO: So the height was allowed, but  
15 not the intensity?

16 MS. GARCIA: Height, intensity and density,  
17 those three things, are not allowed as part of  
18 the bonus south of Biltmore Way.

19 MR. PARDO: So what is the allowable  
20 height?

21 MS. GARCIA: 150.

22 MR. PARDO: Okay. And what is the  
23 allowable height north of that, 190?

24 MS. GARCIA: 190.5.

25 MR. PARDO: Okay. So that is the

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1 difference. The difference is the Med Bonus.

2 MS. GARCIA: Yes, correct.

3 MR. PARDO: Okay. And in this area, it  
4 must be met without any bonuses?

5 MS. GARCIA: Yes, I believe so. Yes.

6 MR. PARDO: Yeah, this whole area. Am I  
7 mistaken?

8 MR. GARCIA-SERRA: That was definitely the  
9 case with the MFSA Zoning -- do you remember  
10 that -- when it was adopted to sort of address  
11 this.

12 MR. WITHERS: I remember it, yeah.

13 MR. GARCIA-SERRA: I'm pretty sure it was  
14 continued under MF4, but, you know, I'll check  
15 that.

16 MR. PARDO: Okay. Thank you.

17 Those are all of my questions.

18 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you.

19 I want to compliment the architect and the  
20 entire team on a design very well done, in my  
21 opinion. I'm not an architect, but I think  
22 it's very well done, designed.

23 I think that we have responsible developers  
24 in this project, with a lot of experience  
25 developing within our City. This building, to

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1 support Staff --

2 MR. WITHERS: No, I'm going to support it,  
3 but I just want to voice my opinion.

4 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Okay.

5 Yes, Sue.

6 MS. KAWALERSKI: And I have a reservation.  
7 I mean, I would vote for this, but I have a  
8 strong reservation against using public  
9 property for a developer's purposes, and also  
10 the notion that this is going to increase a  
11 tree canopy is just not the case.

12 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you, Sue.

13 Any other comments? No?

14 Call the roll on E-1, please.

15 THE SECRETARY: Javier Salman?

16 MR. SALMAN: Yes.

17 THE SECRETARY: Chip Withers?

18 MR. WITHERS: Yes.

19 THE SECRETARY: Julio Grabiell?

20 MR. GRABIEL: Yes.

21 THE SECRETARY: Sue Kawalerski?

22 MS. KAWALERSKI: Yes.

23 THE SECRETARY: Felix Pardo?

24 MR. PARDO: Yes.

25 THE SECRETARY: Eibi Aizenstat?

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1 me, incorporates the feel of Coral Gables, and  
2 it -- I think the name is fitting for it, The  
3 George, because I think it actually  
4 incorporates a vision that I see that he has.

5 I don't have any other -- any issues. I am  
6 in favor of the project.

7 Is there --

8 MR. SALMAN: Mr. Chair, I'd like to make a  
9 motion that we approve the project.

10 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: We have a motion --

11 THE SECRETARY: We're going to need two  
12 separate motions, please.

13 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Correct.

14 So on the first item, E-1.

15 MR. SALMAN: On the first item, E-1, I  
16 would like to make a motion to approve the  
17 project as presented, as recommended by Staff,  
18 with the Staff recommended conditions.

19 MR. GRABIEL: Second.

20 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: We have a first. We  
21 have a second. Any discussion?

22 MR. WITHERS: I will support the motion,  
23 but I do not support Staff's recommendation on  
24 charging for parking.

25 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: So if you don't

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1 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Yes.

2 Do we have a motion on E-2?

3 MR. SALMAN: Mr. Chair, I'd like to make a  
4 motion on Item E-2, that we approve Staff's  
5 recommendation and the project.

6 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: As presented?

7 MR. SALMAN: As presented.

8 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Do we have a second?

9 MR. GRABIEL: Second.

10 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Julio is the second.

11 Any discussion? No?

12 Call the roll, please.

13 THE SECRETARY: Chip Withers?

14 MR. WITHERS: Yes.

15 THE SECRETARY: Julio Grabiell?

16 MR. GRABIEL: Yes.

17 THE SECRETARY: Sue Kawalerski?

18 MS. KAWALERSKI: Yes.

19 THE SECRETARY: Felix Pardo?

20 MR. PARDO: Yes.

21 THE SECRETARY: Javier Salman?

22 MR. SALMAN: Yes.

23 THE SECRETARY: Eibi Aizenstat?

24 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Yes.

25 MR. GARCIA-SERRA: Thank you very much. We

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1 wish everybody a good night and a safe drive  
2 back home.

3 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you.

4 MR. SALMAN: A dry drive home.

5 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Let's take a  
6 five-minute recess and then we'll --  
7 (Short recess taken.)

8 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Elvis is back in the  
9 building.

10 All right. Let's go ahead and come back  
11 into session. The next item is E-4.

12 Ma'am City Attorney.

13 MS. SUAREZ: E-4 is an Ordinance of the  
14 City Commission of Coral Gables, Florida,  
15 providing for text amendments to the City of  
16 Coral Gables Official Zoning Code Article 15,  
17 "Notices," Section 15-102, "Notice," to require  
18 mailed notice of Board of Architects meetings  
19 to consider granting Mediterranean Style Bonus,  
20 providing for repealer provision, severability  
21 clause, codification, and providing for an  
22 effective date.

23 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you.

24 MS. GARCIA: Good evening, Jennifer Garcia,  
25 Planning Official. I have one slide for this,

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1 is, it goes to the Planning and Zoning, which  
2 has a full-fledged, you know, posting the  
3 property, mailed notice, e-mail, legal ad and  
4 then to the City Commission for those same  
5 requirements.

6 So what's proposed before you today is to  
7 require mailed notice for those Med Bonus  
8 applications before the Board of Architects.  
9 This would be required for those properties  
10 that are greater than 20,000 square feet, that  
11 would be required to go to the City Commission  
12 for approval, but also the ones that are  
13 smaller, that go straight to building permit  
14 after they get their approval from the Board of  
15 Architects.

16 So that's the change.

17 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you.

18 Jill, do we have anybody in Chambers for  
19 this item?

20 THE SECRETARY: No.

21 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Chambers are empty,  
22 sorry.

23 THE SECRETARY: On Zoom, no.

24 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: On Zoom? And on the  
25 phone platform?

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1 that shows the different mailing noticing  
2 requirements. If I could have the slide,  
3 please? If not, that's fine.

4 So, right now, there's no -- perfect.

5 All right. So if you look at the top row  
6 of Process, that's for a Conditional Use Site  
7 Plan Review for sites that are more than 20,000  
8 square feet, and that's the threshold, and the  
9 bottom one is showing smaller parcels that are  
10 just kind of Coral Gables by right, that would  
11 just go through the Board of Architects, to a  
12 building permit.

13 So the mailing noticing processes get a  
14 little more stringent as you go through the  
15 process. So, at DRC, for example, is the  
16 first, I guess, public meeting that you have,  
17 and that's required to post the property and  
18 it's required mailed notice for right-of-way  
19 vacation, Then it proceeds to the Board of  
20 Architects.

21 The Board of Architects, it's just posting  
22 the property, no matter if it's just  
23 preliminary review or if it's Med Bonus --  
24 granting Med Bonus by the Board of Architects.

25 After that, depending on what the process

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1 THE SECRETARY: No.

2 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: I'll go ahead and  
3 close it for public comment.

4 Sue.

5 MS. KAWALERSKI: You know, like I said at  
6 the last meeting, the more we can notify  
7 residents of what's happening in their  
8 neighborhoods, the better. So I'm good with  
9 this.

10 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Okay.

11 Chip.

12 MR. WITHERS: No, I'm good.

13 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Felix.

14 MR. PARDO: Yeah, I'm good.

15 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Julio.

16 MR. GRABIEL: I'm great.

17 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Robert.

18 MR. BEHAR: Let me tell you an experience  
19 I'm going through right now. I'm ready to  
20 submit to the Board of Architects a project,  
21 and we've been waiting almost six weeks to try  
22 to get the neighborhood to do a meeting, and we  
23 cannot get consensus from the neighborhood of  
24 when they would like to meet, and we cannot  
25 submit to the BOA, because unless you meet with

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1 the residents, you can't submit, and we've been  
2 going at it five, six weeks, and -- I think you  
3 know, the 760 Ponce project.

4 MS. GARCIA: Yes.

5 MR. BEHAR: And I can't get a consensus to  
6 meet with the residents. So you cannot submit  
7 until you meet with them. And that could go on  
8 for months.

9 MS. KAWALERSKI: But does that have  
10 anything to do with this?

11 MR. BEHAR: Well, because this has notices,  
12 and the further you put the notices -- this  
13 went from -- what was the original diameter  
14 that you had to notify, a thousand --

15 MS. GARCIA: That's not changing yet. It's  
16 staying at the 1,000 for this.

17 MR. BEHAR: This is staying? I thought I  
18 read 1,500. No?

19 MS. GARCIA: 1,500 -- as it's written in  
20 the Code right now, 1,500, if it's a change of  
21 Land Use, like you're changing the  
22 Comprehensive Future Land Use Map, which is  
23 what it is right now. This is only requiring  
24 mailed notice for Board of Architects. There's  
25 no change in the radius, no change in the

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1 to be read in public during that meeting.

2 Look, if residents are upset enough and  
3 they show up, they should be heard. So I do  
4 have that caveat to this --

5 MS. GARCIA: Yeah. So that's not what was  
6 proposed today. That was the recommendation  
7 from the Board of Architects. What is proposed  
8 today is normal --

9 MS. SUAREZ: And there is a public comment  
10 period during the Board of Architects meetings.  
11 So, yes, there would be public comment.

12 MS. KAWALERSKI: Okay. But the way it's  
13 written there, it says only e-mailed or --  
14 e-mail or e-comments are allowed.

15 MS. SUAREZ: That wasn't Staff's proposal  
16 or that's not the proposal that's before you  
17 today. That was a comment or feedback from the  
18 Board of Architects.

19 MS. KAWALERSKI: Okay. So that's not part  
20 of this Resolution?

21 MS. SUAREZ: Correct.

22 MS. GARCIA: No, it's not.

23 MS. KAWALERSKI: Okay.

24 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Javier, do you have a  
25 question?

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1 timing, no additional meetings. This is just,  
2 in addition to posting the property, if someone  
3 is requesting Mediterranean Bonus, they would  
4 also do mailed notice.

5 MR. BEHAR: Which goes to the point -- you  
6 know, the problem I'm going through now, is  
7 that for the Board of Architects, you've got to  
8 give the residents more notices. And if you  
9 cannot -- I don't have a problem sending  
10 notices. I have a problem with, you know,  
11 until you meet with them, you cannot submit.  
12 So the more notice that you're going to send,  
13 the more difficult it becomes.

14 MS. KAWALERSKI: I disagree with that. I  
15 just think that's a separate issue.

16 But, you know, I do have one caveat for  
17 this, there is written in here that the Board  
18 doesn't want any public comment during the  
19 meetings. I totally disagree with that,  
20 because just like we have e-mails here, no one  
21 actually reads them into the record, and I'm  
22 not so sure that other Board Members don't  
23 actually read the e-mails, either. So I think  
24 it has to be either -- you can allow public  
25 comment or the e-mails that are submitted have

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1 MR. SALMAN: A small one. What's the cost  
2 implication to the applicant?

3 MS. GARCIA: Oh, I forgot to bring that. I  
4 think it was two or three thousand, average,  
5 including all of the postage and all of the  
6 work to be done, and that would be added, not  
7 to the applicant -- it will be added to the  
8 applicant through an increase of the Med Bonus  
9 fee. The Staff is going to be the one -- per  
10 the Commission, Staff is going to be the one  
11 doing the mailing.

12 MR. SALMAN: Okay. That was my question.  
13 Thank you.

14 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Any other comments?  
15 I'm fine with the notice.

16 Just Madam City Attorney, I'm just curious,  
17 and it does not have to do with what we're  
18 looking at, as Sue says, but if Robert, for  
19 example, or an architect, is trying to set up a  
20 meeting, and for some reason, he can't get that  
21 meeting, what's the procedure?

22 MS. SUAREZ: So I'm not aware -- I haven't  
23 heard before of having this issue of, you know,  
24 trouble coordinating the meeting. These  
25 meetings, I believe, are coordinated by the

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1 developer, right, Jennifer?  
 2 MS. GARCIA: Correct. Yes.  
 3 MS. SUAREZ: So, you know, I think that  
 4 they have to just set a date and a location  
 5 that's within proximity of their proposed  
 6 project and then they mail out the notice. So,  
 7 perhaps, I don't know his particular case, but  
 8 perhaps there's a unique situation or some  
 9 particularly vocal residents that are not  
 10 available, I'm not sure, but it's a matter of  
 11 scheduling a date, choosing a date within the  
 12 time frames, and providing the mailed notice.  
 13 MR. PARDO: Robert, up in that area, a lot  
 14 of it is City of Miami.  
 15 MR. BEHAR: Well, and that's the other  
 16 thing, you've got to notify the City of Miami  
 17 and you've got to notify -- not only Coral  
 18 Gables, because it says, if you're abutting  
 19 another municipality, you have to do that, too.  
 20 MS. SUAREZ: I think it's 500 feet.  
 21 MR. BEHAR: In my case, yes, you're  
 22 absolutely right, we've got to notify the City  
 23 of Miami.  
 24 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: All right. So would  
 25 anybody like to make a motion, on the item

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1 before us right now, on E-4?  
 2 MR. PARDO: I'd like to move it.  
 3 MR. WITHERS: Second.  
 4 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: We have Felix. We  
 5 have Chip on a second. Any comments?  
 6 MS. SUAREZ: Just it's a motion to  
 7 recommend.  
 8 MR. PARDO: Right. Sorry.  
 9 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: No comments? Call the  
 10 roll, please.  
 11 THE SECRETARY: Robert Behar?  
 12 MR. BEHAR: No.  
 13 THE SECRETARY: Julio Grabiell?  
 14 MR. GRABIELL: Yes.  
 15 THE SECRETARY: Sue Kawalerski?  
 16 MS. KAWALERSKI: Yes.  
 17 THE SECRETARY: Felix Pardo?  
 18 MR. PARDO: Yes.  
 19 THE SECRETARY: Javier Salman?  
 20 MR. SALMAN: Yes.  
 21 THE SECRETARY: Chip Withers?  
 22 MR. WITHERS: Yes.  
 23 THE SECRETARY: Eibi Aizenstat?  
 24 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Yes.  
 25 MR. WITHERS: Robert.

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1 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: All right. The last  
 2 item on the agenda, Madam City Attorney, E-5.

3 MS. SUAREZ: So E-5 is an Ordinance of the  
 4 City Commission providing for a text amendment  
 5 to the City of Coral Gables Official Zoning  
 6 Code, amending Section 14-202.6 "Building Site  
 7 Determination" to facilitate building site  
 8 determination applications; providing for  
 9 severability, repealer, codification, and for  
 10 an effective date.

11 MR. WITHERS: Wow. That was like one of  
 12 those informercials.

13 MS. REDILA: Good evening. Arceli Redila,  
 14 Zoning Administrator.

15 The last item for tonight, so the proposed  
 16 item before you tonight is regarding a building  
 17 site determination, Section 14.202.6 of the  
 18 Zoning Code.

19 So, as you may all know -- can I, please,  
 20 have the presentation? Okay.

21 As you may all know, a building site  
 22 determination is required for a single-family  
 23 dwelling and duplex building, to go through a  
 24 building site determination, that is required  
 25 prior to a permit issuance. Now, that is to

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1 ensure that there is a buildable site.

2 So the process is that, an applicant will  
 3 submit an application for a building site  
 4 determination, and then that would be reviewed  
 5 by the DRO. In this case, the DRO is me. I am  
 6 the one that reviews and processes this  
 7 application.

8 If the DRO determines that the site is  
 9 buildable, a letter will be issued to the  
 10 applicant, and then they go through the  
 11 building permit process. If the DRO denies the  
 12 application, because it does not meet those  
 13 criteria, the applicant may have the option to  
 14 submit for a Conditional Use process, asking  
 15 the City Commission eventually. So there's --  
 16 so if they move forward with what they are  
 17 proposing, they go through the DRC, they go to  
 18 the Board of Architects, before you for a  
 19 recommendation, and then ultimately to the City  
 20 Commission.

21 Now, with that, when you are recommending  
 22 an approval, when you're considering this,  
 23 there's criteria, and this criteria, the  
 24 application must satisfy three of the four  
 25 criteria below, which is that the building

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1 created would have a street frontage equal or  
2 larger than the majority of the building sites  
3 within a thousand feet radius of the subject  
4 property. Now, the building site separated or  
5 established will not result in any  
6 non-conformities, And the third one is that  
7 there is no restrictive covenants,  
8 encroachments, easements, unity of title and  
9 all of that, and that the building site created  
10 has been owned by the current owner for at  
11 least ten years.

12 Now, what we are proposing here is to  
13 eliminate C, because this is already addressed  
14 in other areas of the code. It's kind of like  
15 redundant. So, with this, to streamline that,  
16 and we recognize that there is that redundancy,  
17 what we are proposing is to eliminate C, and  
18 instead of satisfying three of four, it will  
19 be satisfying two of three.

20 With that, this went to the City Commission  
21 for First Reading, here for you, and going back  
22 to the City Commission. So Staff is hopefully  
23 -- hoping for your recommendation.

24 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you.

25 MS. REDILA: Any questions?

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1 as long --

2 MS. REDILA: One year.

3 MR. WITHERS: One year.

4 MS. REDILA: One year.

5 MR. WITHERS: And then after one year --

6 MS. REDILA: After one year -- you have one  
7 year to submit a building permit, essentially.

8 MR. WITHERS: And then that letter is  
9 revoked and they have to start the process all  
10 over again?

11 MS. REDILA: If within one year, they have  
12 to go back to us and we either extend or -- do  
13 an analysis, again, if there's anything that  
14 changes. If there's nothing that changes, then  
15 that letter could be extended or we will issue  
16 another letter.

17 MR. WITHERS: Okay. And so the other  
18 question I have is about an existing structure.  
19 That would be a fence, a tennis court, septic  
20 tank, a wall.

21 MS. SUAREZ: Or even part of the main  
22 structure.

23 MR. WITHERS: Or even part of the existing  
24 structure. It could be any driveway.

25 MS. REDILA: Yes, all of those is

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1 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Jill, do we have  
2 anybody --

3 THE SECRETARY: No.

4 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: -- in any of the  
5 platforms? No?

6 Let's go ahead and close it for public  
7 comment.

8 Chip.

9 MR. WITHERS: You know, the letter used to  
10 be given by the Building Department, correct?

11 MS. REDILA: Yes. Yes. It still goes  
12 through the Development Services Department.

13 MR. WITHERS: Okay. I'm not sure of the  
14 City's org chart. So is your department inside  
15 the Building Department?

16 MS. REDILA: Yes. Yes. Planning and  
17 Zoning is under Development Services.

18 MR. WITHERS: And you report to?

19 MS. REDILA: To Development Services.

20 MR. WITHERS: Okay. Okay. And so let me  
21 get this straight, so if I own a piece of  
22 property and I want to -- and I get a building  
23 site determination letter, because I want to  
24 build on it, I would write you a letter and you  
25 would say -- is that letter good for how long,

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1 considered, but typically this building site  
2 determination process only happens when the  
3 site is more than one lot.

4 MR. WITHERS: Right, where it's tied  
5 together and they want them separated.

6 And then the last question I have is the  
7 requirement about properties within a thousand  
8 feet. If the property is smaller, say it's 49  
9 feet, instead of 50 feet --

10 MS. REDILA: The minimum street frontage is  
11 50 feet. They need to meet it.

12 MR. WITHERS: Okay. Let's say it comes up  
13 at 49 feet. Is there an appeal process to --

14 MS. REDILA: They would have to analyze all  
15 of the properties within a thousand feet.  
16 Typically they would give us a table, of all of  
17 the streets -- all of the houses in that  
18 street, in that block, within a thousand feet,  
19 and then we will average it up. Typically all  
20 of the sites should meet the minimum lot, which  
21 is 50 by 100.

22 MR. WITHERS: Okay. I'm good. Thanks.

23 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: You know, for me,  
24 Chip, I mean, I am going on what you asked  
25 about encroachments and covenants. I've served

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1 on the Planning and Zoning Board for many, many  
2 years, long. One of the taboos that I've  
3 always seen is, if you have anything that  
4 crosses the property line, whether it's a wall,  
5 a fence -- I haven't heard of a septic tank --  
6 that's built, you can't undue that covenant.

7 MR. WITHERS: Right.

8 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: And I have seen, as of  
9 late, a lot of covenants being undone, on  
10 people that say, we have four lots or two lots,  
11 and now we want to build two homes. And I've  
12 always been of the position that, if you have  
13 something that crosses that property line, you  
14 shouldn't be able to undue it.

15 So, for me, I have an issue when you're  
16 going to take away -- I understand it's  
17 redundant, but if you're going to go ahead and  
18 strike that out completely -- you know, I'm  
19 just piggybacking on what you said, to me, I  
20 have an issue with that.

21 MS. SUAREZ: Can I perhaps just clarify a  
22 little bit here?

23 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Yeah, please.

24 MS. SUAREZ: So this isn't -- this doesn't  
25 change the requirements for when it's a

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1 comes through to the public hearing process  
2 here, and at Commission. And the rationale is  
3 that, a restrictive covenant cannot be released  
4 by Staff anyway, only the City Commission can  
5 release a restrictive covenant.

6 So if the encroachment no longer exists,  
7 right, and it was demolished within the prior  
8 ten years, so it no longer exists, and then  
9 they want to go through this building site  
10 determination process, through the Conditional  
11 use process and go to Commission, they can do  
12 that and they -- because, ultimately, it would  
13 be up to the Commission whether to release that  
14 covenant. They have the authority to release  
15 the covenant.

16 So if the Commission is willing to grant  
17 them that Conditional Use, then they can  
18 necessarily provide for release of the  
19 covenant.

20 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: But if C was still  
21 there, then could they not --

22 MS. SUAREZ: It would be precluded from  
23 even going through the process.

24 MR. WITHERS: They have to go through the  
25 lot split or something like that.

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1 building site determination that's made by the  
2 DRO.

3 MS. REDILA: Yes. So there are criteria  
4 when I'm analyzing as a DRO, the first step.  
5 There are criteria. So the first is that  
6 there's more than building site. One of those  
7 criteria actually is that there no  
8 encroachments, including fences, walls and  
9 other associated improvements, with the  
10 building site, which typically travels with the  
11 unity of title. Yes, it's already in there.

12 And if there's a unity of title on the  
13 site, then me, as the DRO, would automatically  
14 deny that, and it will go through the motion of  
15 going through for a conditional --

16 MS. SUAREZ: This is just making changes to  
17 the process, that would allow someone to go  
18 through the process, that comes to the Planning  
19 and Zoning Board and the City Commission. This  
20 is not changing the way it's done  
21 administratively by Staff.

22 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Now I understand.

23 MS. SUAREZ: So this would just allow,  
24 perhaps, additional properties to be able to go  
25 through this Conditional Use process, that

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1 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: But --

2 MR. WITHERS; How do you deal with the  
3 easement?

4 MS. SUAREZ: I'm sorry. Hold on.

5 MR. WITHERS: I'm sorry.

6 MS. SUAREZ: Whoever wants --

7 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: My question is -- my  
8 concern is, there's been a bunch of properties  
9 that have come before this Board for a lot  
10 split, that, technically, her Department would  
11 have had to say you can't.

12 MS. SUAREZ: Correct.

13 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: But it's come by  
14 through this Board anyways.

15 MS. SUAREZ: And that's still going to  
16 happen. This doesn't change that. This just  
17 allows perhaps additional properties, that  
18 would have been told, you don't meet the  
19 threshold to even go to Commission, to then  
20 come through the process.

21 MR. PARDO: You're talking about the  
22 barbecue instance.

23 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Yeah. That's one of  
24 the instances.

25 Well, there was one property that we saw

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1 clearly was stated as two properties, but  
2 there's actual another property which I'm  
3 talking about.

4 MR. BEHAR: We had one recently.

5 MS. REDILA: This is -- since when I first  
6 started in 2017, there were only two building  
7 site determination requests that came before  
8 the Board, which is the Sunset one and then --

9 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Right.

10 MR. PARDO: Can I ask a question? So was  
11 this brought up by a Commissioner or was this  
12 brought up by an individual? Was this brought  
13 up only by Staff?

14 MS. REDILA: This was as instructed by the  
15 City Commission, and that's why we're bringing  
16 it here.

17 MR. PARDO: But, I mean, is it like a  
18 specific Commissioner or is it the Commission  
19 as a whole, they said, "We want you guys to  
20 take a look at this, Staff"?

21 MS. REDILA: The sponsor of the item -- it  
22 already went for First Reading.

23 MS. SUAREZ: Yes. It was sponsored by  
24 Commissioner Castro.

25 MR. PARDO: Okay.

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1 just giving an example, you know, as far as,  
2 you know, the bending of certain things,  
3 setbacks and things like that.

4 And one of the things that makes Coral  
5 Gables special is that, when you go before the  
6 Board of Adjustment --

7 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: It's got to be a  
8 hardship.

9 MR. PARDO: -- it has to be a hardship, not  
10 a self imposed hardship.

11 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Agree. Agree.

12 MR. PARDO: Not many people ever do that,  
13 and that's what makes or supposedly makes us  
14 stricter. But, then, all of a sudden, you get  
15 into PADs and things like that, and, you know,  
16 you could kind of -- you know it as well as  
17 anyone, you could push this or you could push  
18 that, and all of a sudden, it's just different.  
19 And I have a huge concern with the Site  
20 Specific Zoning Regulations, because we have in  
21 our Code, in Appendix A, 57 pages of  
22 restrictions of properties throughout the City,  
23 and I've seen where they've been -- they could  
24 be altered by the Commission and a majority,  
25 but they don't make it to Commission sometimes,

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1 MS. SUAREZ: But the Commission approved it  
2 on First Reading.

3 MS. REDILA: Yes.

4 MR. PARDO: Me, I'm in full agreement with  
5 the Chairman. I think, you know, redundancy --  
6 in aviation, check, check, double-check, you  
7 miss it, things get clouded, you know, and --  
8 over the years.

9 My biggest concern, and you say, you know,  
10 you've seen this, I've seen them. I've seen  
11 also big public hearings where they've been  
12 denied, where people said, well, you know, I  
13 can easily have two big lots, but, listen,  
14 that's not the way it was.

15 Me, my biggest concern in the preservation  
16 of the City of Coral Gables as we have known it  
17 in the past, is Site Specific Zoning  
18 regulations. They are under constant attack.  
19 And for me, the Board of Adjustment has always  
20 been a very important Board -- which is now  
21 almost shriveled up to nothing, as far as the  
22 cases that go before it.

23 MS. REDILA: The Board of Adjustment does  
24 not review this.

25 MR. PARDO: No. No. I understand. I'm

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1 and I have a real concern with that, the same  
2 as I have a real concern with this.

3 I am of the opinion that if it ain't broke,  
4 don't fix it.

5 MS. SUAREZ: So this is not Site Specific  
6 Zoning Regulation. This is simply a  
7 modification to the process.

8 MR. PARDO: No, I know it's not a Site  
9 Specific. I'm saying, these are relatively  
10 similar issues and it's the same thing as --  
11 because the stricter -- I think, the stricter  
12 you make certain elements, the more you're  
13 preserving the quality of life of why people  
14 live in this City.

15 MR. BEHAR: But Felix, not necessarily,  
16 because -- and maybe I'm -- if you have one  
17 site that you could say, you know, I could  
18 maybe build a larger home, versus if there's a  
19 determination that you could have two lots, you  
20 could do two smaller homes, which is -- I mean,  
21 the flip side, I don't know if that has to do  
22 with it, because I'd rather, personally, if I  
23 lived in an area, have two smaller homes than  
24 one larger home.

25 MR. PARDO: Well, I'll tell you a story.

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1 The property next door to my property, we have  
2 a 10,000 square foot double lot, and most of  
3 the houses there are either 100-foot wide,  
4 125-foot wide, some are 75, very few, just the  
5 way the math worked out when they were building  
6 at that time.

7 There was a parcel that had -- there was an  
8 issue, right, about an inch, and there's, you  
9 know, some type of story going back to a card  
10 game. The point was that eventually they got  
11 it cleared, and they put the smaller house,  
12 two-story house. They have no rear yard,  
13 because we're on septic tanks. So they had to  
14 push that -- slam it all of the way to the  
15 back. They're got maybe six, seven feet in the  
16 back, almost unusable. They've got a barbecue  
17 out there. Great people. Great neighbors.  
18 But the problem is, is that then it gets to the  
19 point that you've got two grown up children,  
20 you have two adults, you have four cars. It's  
21 not the same. You alter the compatibility of  
22 the neighborhood. They do have in here, right  
23 now, which has existed forever, about the  
24 percentages of lots and the widths and that  
25 kind of thing.

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1 Pardon me, but back in the day, we had  
2 people that were extremely qualified and their  
3 first priority was maintaining the consistency  
4 of these neighborhoods throughout the City of  
5 Coral Gables. I have a real issue with that,  
6 because this is like the last place where you  
7 could protect the quality of life of our  
8 residents, where they live, where their largest  
9 investment is, in many cases -- in most cases.  
10 I have a real problem with this.

11 When I saw it, it was, you know -- there's  
12 no reason to change this, to make it more  
13 expeditious to be able to go through a lot  
14 change.

15 MS. SUAREZ: It's not more expeditious.  
16 It's just simply facilitating certain  
17 properties, that otherwise would not be able to  
18 do it. So that it is doing. It is  
19 facilitating it -- or not streamlining,  
20 facilitating for certain properties that would  
21 not currently qualify.

22 MR. PARDO: For me, I'll tell you what  
23 facilitating is for the residents, my neighbor  
24 across the street took three and a half years  
25 to get a building permit for his swimming pool.

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1 So I'm for looking at this very carefully,  
2 because, you know, they're just taking out  
3 covenants, encroachments, easements and these  
4 words mean something, and you could stretch it  
5 to another place. I know that we're being told  
6 it's in other parts of the Code, but I'd like  
7 to see it on the front -- the first chapter.

8 MS. SUAREZ: So if I can clarify. It's  
9 not -- only the City Commission can release  
10 those covenants. So if this process is -- this  
11 is just addressing the process by which someone  
12 who's making this request can get to the City  
13 Commission. So if the City Commission is  
14 considering it anyway, the City Commission has  
15 the ability to decide whether to release the  
16 covenant, which you would necessarily have to  
17 do if you were to approve this.

18 MR. PARDO: To me, with all due respect, it  
19 just seems like -- you know, when you're  
20 putting yourself in the hands of the  
21 Development Director, which could be an  
22 engineer and not a person that's qualified in  
23 Planning or Zoning, and all of a sudden they're  
24 the ones that can make a determination like  
25 this, I have a real problem with that.

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1 It took him three and a half years. Robert is  
2 complaining about people, you know, not  
3 returning the thing, because of a process  
4 issue. In this particular case, I just want to  
5 have more protection for the residents. I have  
6 an issue with it. I just don't see the  
7 advantage of anything that we're discussing,  
8 where it's going to protect, you know, that  
9 neighbor from a lot split.

10 And if the Commission wants to split a lot,  
11 they could split a lot anyway.

12 MS. SUAREZ: No, they cannot. There are  
13 some properties that do not qualify with this  
14 requirement. So the Commission doesn't get to  
15 see those. So that's the purpose of this.

16 MR. PARDO: Which one doesn't qualify?

17 MS. SUAREZ: There are certain properties  
18 that would have -- they do not meet three out  
19 of these four criteria.

20 MR. PARDO: Oh, no, that's fine.

21 MS. SUAREZ: So the Commission doesn't get  
22 to decide to do that. They don't get to -- the  
23 applicant doesn't get there. They don't  
24 qualify to even get to Commission. So this  
25 would certainly facilitate additional

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1 properties being able to go through that  
2 process.

3 MR. PARDO: Okay. I just don't -- I just  
4 don't think it's a good idea. That's all I  
5 have to say.

6 MS. REDILA: I just want to clarify, that  
7 during Staff's review, my review as the DRO, I  
8 also have to check those. I have to consider  
9 it. I have to check if there's any unity of  
10 title, and if there is, then that's one of the  
11 criteria for it to be denied. And then it gets  
12 to the City Commission.

13 MS. KAWALERSKI: Yeah. I personally am for  
14 this, because it does allow more properties to  
15 go through the process. You always have the  
16 Commission as the stopgap, right. So I'm  
17 actually for it.

18 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Javier.

19 MR. SALMAN: I don't have a problem with  
20 it.

21 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Okay. Julio.

22 MR. GRABIEL: No problem.

23 MR. SALMAN: Copy cat.

24 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Anybody that would  
25 like to make a motion.

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1 the --

2 THE SECRETARY: The motion to denied passed.

3 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: The motion to deny  
4 passed.

5 THE SECRETARY: Yes.

6 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Would you like to make  
7 a motion to adjourn, Chip?

8 MR. WITHERS: I'll make a motion to adjourn.

9 MR. GRABIEL: Second.

10 MR. SALMAN: If I might, through the Chair,  
11 we're coming to the end of a period where we  
12 all need to do our reporting, our financial  
13 statements --

14 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: July 1. July 1st.

15 MR. SALMAN: We should probably have them  
16 before our next meeting. So I think this would  
17 be a good time just to remind anybody who still  
18 needs to do it, to get it in.

19 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Electronically.

20 MR. SALMAN: Electronically now.

21 MS. SUAREZ: You all should have received  
22 an e-mail, right?

23 MR. SALMAN: Several.

24 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Jill is very --

25 MR. BEHAR: Especially if you have

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1 MR. PARDO: I'll make a motion to deny.

2 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: A motion to deny?

3 Is there a second?

4 MR. WITHERS: I'll second, so we can vote  
5 on it.

6 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: We have a second to  
7 deny. Any comments?

8 Call the roll, please.

9 THE SECRETARY: Julio Grabiell?

10 MR. GRABIEL: No.

11 THE SECRETARY: Sue Kawalerski?

12 MS. KAWALERSKI: No.

13 THE SECRETARY: Felix Pardo?

14 MR. PARDO: Yes.

15 THE SECRETARY: Javier Salman?

16 MR. SALMAN: No.

17 THE SECRETARY: Chip Withers?

18 MR. WITHERS: Yes.

19 THE SECRETARY: Robert Behar?

20 MR. SALMAN: He's confused.

21 MR. BEHAR: Yes.

22 THE SECRETARY: Eibi Aizenstat?

23 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Yes.

24 MR. WITHERS: I'll move approval of the motion.

25 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Just to be clear,

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1 multiple --

2 (Simultaneous speaking.)

3 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: We have a motion and  
4 we have a second. Everybody in favor to  
5 adjourn say aye.

6 (Board Members voted aye.)

7 (Thereupon, the meeting was adjourned at 8:55

8 p.m.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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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 19th day of June, 2024 .



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NIEVES SANCHEZ  
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