

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item E-1
January 28, 2025
Police and Fire Headquarters
2151 Salzedo Street, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Vince Lago
Vice Mayor Rhonda Anderson
Commissioner Melissa Castro
Commissioner Ariel Fernandez
Commissioner Kirk Menendez

City Staff

City Attorney, Cristina Suárez
City Manager, Alberto Parjus
City Clerk, Billy Urquia
Planning and Zoning Director, Jennifer Garcia

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Item E-1[9:49 a.m.]

An Ordinance of the City Commission providing for text amendments to the City of Coral Gables Official Zoning Code, Article 5, “Architecture,” Section 5-200, “Mediterranean Standards;” Article 3, “Uses,” Section 3-402, “Restrictions related to location;” and Article 16, “Definitions;” to enhance the quality of Coral Gables Mediterranean design by requiring a conceptual design review; removing duplicative criteria; relocating inapplicable standards; supplementing existing criteria; and including additional Mediterranean building examples; providing for severability, repealer, codification, and for an effective date. (09 26 24 PZB continued, Vote 5-0; 09 11 24 PZB deferred, Vote 7-0; 08 14 24 PZB continued, Vote 6-0; 07 10 24 PZB deferred, Vote 5-0; 06 12 24 PZB deferred, Vote 6-1) (10 29 24 PZB approved the proposed legislation, as amended, Vote: 6-1) (Sponsored by Vice Mayor Anderson)

Mayor Lago: Moving onto item E-1.

City Attorney Suarez: E-1 is an Ordinance of the City Commission providing for text amendments to the City of Coral Gables Official Zoning Code, Article 5, “Architecture,” Section 5-200,

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Agenda Item E-1 – Ordinance providing for text amendments to the Coral Gables Official Zoning Code, Article 5, “Architecture” Section 5-200, “Mediterranean Standards”

“Mediterranean Standards;” Article 3, “Uses,” Section 3-402, “Restrictions related to location;” and Article 16, “Definitions;” to enhance the quality of Coral Gables Mediterranean design by requiring a conceptual design review; removing duplicative criteria; relocating inapplicable standards; supplementing existing criteria; and including additional Mediterranean building examples; providing for severability, repealer, codification, and for an effective date.

Mayor Lago: Good morning.

Planning and Zoning Director: Good morning. Jennifer Garcia, Planning and Zoning Director. So, after first reading in December, we discussed about the zoning conceptual review by Planning and Zoning, that was also on this agenda on first reading, but I do have one PowerPoint slide to bring up to kind of illustrate what the intent of this update to the criteria for Mediterranean design standards is going to do. If I could have the PowerPoint, please. Just one slide. On the left you can see – so you remember the project on University and Ponce de Leon, and how in 2022 it had a more modern Mediterranean design look to it and how that was not well-received by the community. And then the developer went back, he hired a new architect and entirely new staff, and he developed a more pleasing, more Mediterranean looking building. And now its very well received by the community. They were even here at City Hall, asking the Commission to approve this building because they liked the look of it so much more than the original design. So, this is kind of showing that our...that we have today that are in place today are more subjective and what you’re hopefully going to vote on today to change it. Its going to be more clear, more Mediterranean-based. That’s all I have.

Vice Mayor Anderson: So, a couple of comments. This was a long journey to get here. That slide, because its two pictures put side-by-side – this did not also reflect that the height of the new building was shorter than the one that was pictured. It looks like a wedge of cheese, the way I describe it, but it was a long journey of listening to the residents. It was something that the developer learned must be done and in listening to the residents, that’s what this particular code change did as well. It took over two years of listening, comments, and modifications by residents, as well as the Board of Architects, and yielding what was necessary to get the type of result that you saw in Allen Morris’ building. The end result that was applauded, embraced, and loved by the community. Listening is important. We’ve done that in this revision of the Mediterranean design. Many of the things that points were given for to get the two additional floors no longer exist. Those were taken out. You are no longer going to get points for prerequisites, such as bicycle racks, that’s just required for all buildings that meet these requirements. So, I’m hoping that this is one of these items that this entire Commission can embrace and that we can move forward and have better buildings in the future, better quality, higher quality in something that reflects what the residents want. So, if no one else has any comments, I’d like to move it.

Commissioner Fernandez: I’ll second.

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City Clerk Urquia: Mr. Mayor, I have a member of the public requesting to speak on the item, Mrs. Maria Cruz.

[No speaker]

Vice Mayor Anderson: Yes

Commissioner Castro: Yes

Commissioner Fernandez: Yes

Commissioner Menendez: Yes

Mayor Lago: Yes

(Vote: 5-0)

City Clerk Urquia: Thank you.