

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item G-1
June 28, 2022
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Vince Lago

Vice Mayor Michael Mena

Commissioner Rhonda Anderson

Commissioner Jorge Fors, Jr.

Commissioner Kirk Menendez

City Staff

City Manager, Peter Iglesias

City Attorney, Miriam Ramos

City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Deputy City Attorney, Cristina Suarez

Development Services Director, Suramy Cabrera

Public Speaker(s)

Maria Cruz

Agenda Item G-1 [Start: 4:40 p.m.]

Presentation by staff of a comprehensive plan and analysis on metal roofs in order for Commission to make a decision regarding same. (Sponsored by Mayor Lago)

Mayor Lago: Moving onto City Commission items, G-1, Presentation by staff of a comprehensive plan and analysis on metal roofs in order for the Commission to make a decision regarding same. I put this on the agenda. I want to try to run through my items as quickly as possible. I've been getting calls non-stop in regard to metal roofs. This has been a discussion that has been ongoing for years and years. I'm ready to make a decision. I think the Manager has some very good points in regard to ballas and existing structures, obviously historic buildings that we would never consider even discuss for metal roofs, but I think we need to come up with an idea or a plan of action to start considering this. I want to understand your opinion regards to the building code, when you have an existing roof that has tile or concrete, and they are transitioning to a metal roof. How are other municipalities able to do it? Is it compromising the structure, something that is

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accepted by the Florida Building Code? What are you seeing out there right now in regard to this possible transition to metal roofs as an option?

Development Services Director Cabrera: They may very well compromise the structure since you're removing all the ballas, but as for what other cities are doing, I don't think they have – I'm not sure they are doing anything, and a lot of homeowners probably don't know. But under the building code, there is nothing we can do in a reroof that would require that they show us proof that the strapping down of the trusses and the design, not just the trusses, but the conventional framing and that the anchoring is able to take the reversal from the...So, I think we consider it here because we have Peter, City Manager, who is highly, highly technical and understands that this is an issue, but for the older structures, yes, it may very well be an issue.

Commissioner Anderson: Actually, the opposite happened with me. I reroofed and I added strapping on my 1951 home on every single truss coming across. I had to sign a document acknowledging that I was not required to do that.

Development Services Director Cabrera: Yes, the code doesn't require that you upgrade the structure supporting the roof.

Commissioner Anderson: But if I want to put on a copper roof, I get no notice to alert me to the fact that I probably should add the strapping.

City Manager Iglesias: We would have noticed you. We would have told you the problem and then you make the decision. There is no building code requirement as the Building Official said for this. Its really up to the individual owner if they wish to do it or not, but it does, especially on the older structures it does make a difference.

Mayor Lago: That's where I have a conundrum. You are talking about the code allows you right now to install a copper roof, yes, incredibly costly, probably four, five times more costly than a standard metal roof, but you can do it, and if there is supposedly a risk, putting yourself at risk, but it is permissible, and we would allow it as a city. So that's why I'm getting to the point where we need to take some sort of action here, because in good faith I just can't say no to somebody when, again, I think there is an opportunity. Is there an appetite on this Commission to consider metal roofs throughout the city? If there is not an appetite, I kind of need to understand what is the will of this Commission?

Commissioner Anderson: Well, we have historic districts and that's not part of where I'd be willing to go, but I do think we need to inform residents so they can make an informed decision that if you take the ballast off, this is what you lose, and they can make an informed decision just like riding a motorcycle without a helmet on. Cost me \$3,000 to add the strapping. It was a negligible cost. I save it on the insurance and then some on my home. So, people can make informed decisions but if you don't know the issue – because you have the background on experience you know this. But if they are an artist or a lawyer even, they are not going to know it, but they can make an informed decision if we let them know about it. But I don't see how we can allow copper roofs but not allow anything else.

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City Manager Iglesias: Let me just say that copper roofs, that I recall last time when somebody tried to do one because they are so expensive, and I think that if somebody tried to do a copper roof, we would advise them of the problems and then they can make that decision. So, if that's what the Commission wishes to do, we can certainly advise the property owner saying, this is what you're doing and they proceed, but as long as they are advised, I guess, then they can make that decision, but I don't recall last time we went from tile to copper. The copper roofs that we have in Coco Plum and areas like that were designed originally for that copper roof. And so, a lot of the things that the ballast effect was not used on those roofs, if I recall correctly.

Commissioner Anderson: There are people coming in, I know one in particular came to me before I was elected and she did put the copper roof on, so no, its not designed for it.

City Manager Iglesias: Its highly unusual to go with copper because of the cost is so high.

Mayor Lago: Does anyone else on the Commission have any interest in taking this up. Would you like for me to prepare legislation to bring before the Commission?

Commissioner Menendez: I personally, you know, we all know there are a lot of folks in the community that are very interested in having metal roofs on their homes for good reason, and its not now its been for years, and if we can find a way forward that takes into consideration the historic districts and also the safety concerns, I think its something we definitely should look at, because there is interest in the community. Mayor, I know you've been leading the charge and you are very passionate about this, as is a lot of other people as well. So, if you want to come back with a concept that we can discuss and hopefully get our arms around, I support that completely.

Vice Mayor Mena: I agree.

Mayor Lago: Okay. Mr. Clerk do we have any comments?

City Clerk Urquia: Yes sir, we do. Ms. Maria Cruz.

Mayor Lago: Ms. Cruz. This is the last person we have.

City Clerk Urquia: Yes sir.

Mayor Lago: Please close the public comment.

Ms. Cruz: Do not worry, I'm not going to put a metal roof on my house, but I say the same way that people have to go before the Board of Architects if they want to change their roof, they should do that, and they would have to prove that they have everything in place to do it and let them decide. You know, they are not going to approve it unless they are ready to be approved, so let the people chose what they want. What's the issue? To me, its very clear. If I wanted a metal roof on my house, I would find out what do I need to do in order to have a metal roof, and if I complete

that, then approve it. If I don't do what I have to do, then you won't approve it. Its simple. Let the people chose.

Vice Mayor Mena: I think its two different things; one, is the policy decision, that's what we need to make one way or another.

Mayor Lago: I just want to know if there is an appetite.

Vice Mayor Mena: If we make that policy decision whether it can be done, of course it can be done. It happens everywhere else.

Commissioner Fors: I have an appetite.

Mayor Lago: Perfect. So, what I'll do with the Commission's will, please I ask my colleagues to please engage with staff. We'll address this through the Manager and hopefully we can prepare something for August to bring before the Commission.

City Manager Iglesias: The Board of Architects can approve it aesthetically; the technical matter is a non-issue because the code doesn't require it.

Mayor Lago: We'll discuss that, and we'll bring it before. We'll sit down with Ms. Cabrera, the Manager and we'll have a conversation to see what we can put together considering aesthetics, structural implications, the code, again, historic preservation, historic districts. Its not as easy as people think it is. You have to navigate a few issues.

Development Services Director Cabrera: If you want us to come back with something that's – because I think we've discussed before having a divider line that anything south...

Mayor Lago: I'm going to be upfront here. I have an issue with that, with south and north.

Vice Mayor Mena: Yes. I don't like that either.

Mayor Lago: I don't like that idea.

Commissioner Menendez: Something comprehensive.

Mayor Lago: Because I feel that we're drawing the line.

Vice Mayor Mena: What's good for the goose is good for the gander.

Commissioner Menendez: And honestly, we are not going to get very far if we just go piece by piece. This has been bouncing around for years and years and years, and I think this Commission has the will to take it on.

Commissioner Anderson: We have sections north of U.S.-1 that, in fact the home that I was referring to was north of U.S.-1 that copper was put on it. I made a suggestion design-wise to make it aesthetically pleasing and she took it to the Board of Architects with those revisions and it was accepted by the Board of Architects. Now whether it was copper or some other metal, it still, it's the same basic design.

Development Services Director Cabrera: It would still go to the Board of Architects. If the City Architect isn't comfortable that if it's the style, it would go to the Board of Architects as any roofing job would, and I believe that the City Planner had recommended that we definitely not allow it in the historic districts, not just historic homes.

Mayor Lago: I wholeheartedly agree, and it should go through the process, structural review, aesthetic, everything that needs to be reviewed for its approval. Okay. Moving forward.