

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item F-5
November 12, 2019
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Raul Valdes-Fauli

Vice Mayor Vince Lago

Commissioner Pat Keon

Commissioner Michael Mena

Commissioner Jorge Fors

City Staff

City Manager, Peter Iglesias

City Attorney, Miriam Ramos

City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Planning and Zoning Director, Ramon Trias

Public Speaker(s)

Jorge Navarro

Agenda Item F-5 [11:06 a.m.]

A Resolution of the City Commission of Coral Gables, Florida granting Conditional Use approval pursuant to Zoning Code Article 3, "Development Review," Division 4, "Conditional Uses," for an Assisted Living Facility (ALF) referred to as "ZOM Coral Gables" on property zoned Industrial District (Section 4-303 C.2.), legally described as Tract A-C, Block 16, Industrial Section, (363 Granello Avenue & 300 Greco Avenue) Coral Gables, Florida; including required conditions, vacating Resolution 2016-09, and providing for an effective date. (Conditional Use approval re ALF)

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: F-5, ALF.

City Attorney Ramos: F-5 is a resolution of City Commission of Coral Gables, Florida granting Conditional Use approval pursuant to Zoning Code Article 3, "Development Review," Division 4, "Conditional Uses," for an Assisted Living Facility referred to as "ZOM Coral Gables" a property zoned Industrial District, legally described as Tract A-C, Block 16, Industrial Section, (363 Granello Avenue & 300 Greco Avenue) Coral Gables, Florida; including required conditions, vacating Resolution 2016-09, and providing for an effective date. This is a public hearing item. Anyone who wishes to testify needs to be sworn in. In addition, we will be adding language to the body which makes clear that the previously approved site plan by Resolution 2016-09, upon approval of this site plan, would be basically voided. Mr. Clerk.

City Clerk Urquia: Anyone from the public expects to testify today, please stand and raise your right hand stand. Stand, sir. Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony you'll provide today will be the truth and nothing but the truth?

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Go ahead, Mr. Trias.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Mayor, Commissioners, the request is for a conditional use for ALF. The building is very similar to a building that you approved previously as a mixed-use project, right there in the industrial district. Greco and Granello are the two streets around it. And you can see that right next to it, there's a mixed-use building. So, it's an infill site and the general area -- this is the existing conditions of the buildings all around it. And here we have a model that shows the building in context. So, that's what's being proposed. Now, the existing land use and the future -- and the zoning is industrial, which, as you know, in this area generally it has been used for mixed-use projects. In this case, one of the conditional uses listed on industrial is ALF, so that is what they're doing. The site plan, at the ground level, has a paseo that is also used for the emergency access, so it's done within the property. And the ground level, the conditions of approval basically request design features that will typically be associated with retail, such as storefronts and minimal height. Retail is not required in the ALF. However, the design of the

building, eventually if the market were to be like that, could accommodate that. There are some minor issues with the emergency access that deal with dimensions that are being worked out and those -- that's one of the conditions of approval. But those -- that's really a building permit type of review. Now, the project looks very similar to the project that we approved. It's a little bit less tall. It's one less story. And it follows the Mediterranean requirements. There has been one minor change. There's one less unit. And there's also a little bit less parking than originally proposed, but it's also within the requirements of the Code, so the project meets the requirements. And as far as the latest design, they had been working trying to optimize the design, so that is why they made those changes. The timeline; the DRC happened in May, Board of Architects reviewed it in September. The required neighborhood meeting was in July. And in September, there was a Planning and Zoning meeting. Letters were sent within a thousand feet as required by Code. And there were additional public notifications. Three times there were letters for the neighborhood meeting, for Planning and Zoning, and for Commission. The property was posted for DRC, Board of Architects and Planning and Zoning. There was a website posting for DRC, Board of Architects, Planning and Zoning and Commission, and two required newspaper advertisements. The request is for conditional use. The staff recommends approval with conditions. There's a few minor updates that the applicant will describe in terms of the conditions, but generally speaking, they're basically what's in the background material. I believe the applicant has a presentation.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Morning.

Jorge Navarro: Good morning.

Vice Mayor Lago: Morning.

Mr. Navarro: Mr. Mayor, Commissioners, for the record, Jorge Navarro, with offices at 33 Southeast 2nd Avenue, Miami, Florida. I'm very excited to be a part of this project here this morning. I've personally experienced the great benefits that these facilities have, not only on families and their loved ones, but also, on the people that live at these facilities which is particularly

seniors. This project is the third phase of a series of development approvals that was approved back in 2016 -- or sorry, back in early 2012, 2014, and 2016. They approved three different buildings, two of them are the ones you see on the south, which are Gables Ponce and Gables Residential. Those have been developed. This is the third component of it. It was a 216-unit residential building with 21,000 square feet of ground floor retail. It also had about 6,800 square feet of pedestrian open spaces. And what we're doing is we're coming back before you here today to ask for an approval for a conditional use. It's a site plan approval. We want to retrofit and tailor this project to serve the senior community. And that is one item that if you think about how Merrick Park has evolved over the years, this once industrial district, there's been a lot of multifamily projects that have been developed, tailored towards young professionals, people working in that area, young families, also large families. But one item that has not been -- that development has not focused on is seniors. And that's a very important component of the community. According to the U S Bureau of Economic Statistics, Miami-Dade County has the largest number of older adult residents in Florida. Nearly half a million are age 60 plus. And that number is expected to double in the next 25 years. It's growing faster than any other age group. And that's considering that the baby boomer generation is getting into this class as well. So, there's a big need in the community for this. And this project targets two types of clientele. The first is seniors who are looking to move to the City Beautiful in order to enjoy all the great services, safe neighborhoods overall quality of life that the City provides and to be closer to their loved ones. The other are those current Gables residents that are tired of dealing with the maintenance of their homes. They want to downsize, but they want to be in an area that they feel safe, that has amenities and that allows them to age in place, which is very important. And the program that we're proposing is a program that allows seniors to be long-term here, to be able to age in place. We have three different types of unit types. We have 103 traditional independent living units. These are your traditional residential unit. We have 63 ALF units, which those provide a little more assistance with everyday activities. And then the main component of this project that I think differentiates it from a lot of projects that are out there is that we have 30 memory care units that are devoted to those residents that later on in their life may be dealing with problems with memory care or with early set of Alzheimer's, which I know a lot of people in this room have had to deal

with. And aging in place is important. Because the project provides memory care on site, residents are able to stay in a familiar location that they feel comfortable in and they could have their changing needs met with staff throughout the life process. If they require assistance with showering or laundry, they could get those services. If they need a little more help as their memory decreases, for instance, someone could wake them up in the morning and bring them breakfast. They could help with transportation, coordinating that and their medication management. And the most important component is that this person gets to stay integrated within the senior community. We designed this project to provide over 46,000 square feet of amenity and recreational space between the upper and lower levels of the building. And I'd like to walk you through -- I think your Planning Director made a very good point, that we have worked hard to not only create a place that creates a safe and active and healthy environment for seniors, but also, we've worked on improving the prior layout that was proposed for the plan. So, one of the things that we've done, and I'll show you a color site plan. We wanted to create a more walkable and safer pedestrian experience in streetscape along Granello Avenue. The original entrance to this property was right through here. All the vehicular entrance was coming through here. With the work of Public Works and Planning, we have now relocated it through the alley and we've been able to provide a continuous streetscape here. It does have amenity space. It has some ancillary uses for the senior living facility, but it also has an art gallery, which we would like to work with the Art in Public Program to be able to provide art in there. And also, we provided this paseo, which is not only a vehicular paseo, which provides a cut-through, but it also has a large covered pedestrian area, a grand public plaza. And one of, I think, the most important changes that we've made, there was a dog park that was tucked in here, which was not really visible or accessible. We've worked through the Board of Architects and the Planning Department to move that park and make it a public park that will be accessible between sunrise and sunset. And it's much more accessible and a more prominent feature, which I think is something that the community can enjoy. With that, I'd just like to tell you where we've gone. We've been to the Planning and Zoning Board and to the Board of Architects. Both boards recommended unanimously approval of this project. As you can see, we've worked very hard on this project and I'm very excited to be a part of it and I hope that we can get your approval here this morning. Our entire team is here to answer any questions

that you may have. I am as well. And before we take a motion, I'd like to just clarify a few housekeeping matters on the conditions of approval. Thank you.

Vice Mayor Lago: Thank you, sir.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you.

Vice Mayor Lago: Ramon, I just have some simple comments just for the record. Can you give us a little bit of explanation the difference between -- obviously, we know what the use is on this projects. It was previously approved. This is a significantly less size and magnitude project, correct?

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yes, yes.

Vice Mayor Lago: And also, obviously, the open space on -- just on the first floor, you can tell, obviously, there's on the ground floor is...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: It's much, much better.

Vice Mayor Lago: More appealing.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yes.

Vice Mayor Lago: Okay.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yes.

Vice Mayor Lago: What is -- and my final issue that I want to make sure is, for that area, I know it's a mix. We have a lot of rentals in the rear, but I want to make sure that the sidewalks, and you

know, if there are any traffic calming initiatives that are required -- because we have a lot of young students that are living in that area, people who will really enjoy that green space. I know it's private and it's not public, but a lot of people are constantly walking their dog. They're walking across the street. Are they going to do anything in reference to crosswalks or ensuring that all the sidewalks are to a certain lighting, tree canopy? I always mention about the tree canopy. I want to ensure that they have some trees on the sidewalk or bulb outs that are there. I want to make sure that those are specimen sized trees and we put it on the record. Could that be a request?

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yes. Those are all in the conditions of approval. I think that the site plan that the applicant is showing clearly shows that 100 percent of the perimeter of the site is high quality sidewalks with landscape, et cetera. The final design, obviously...

Vice Mayor Lago: Yeah.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Is (INAUDIBLE).

Vice Mayor Lago: No, I know, I know. I'm just saying -- but I want to make sure that while we're working through it now, that we put that at the forefront because I think it's important that the applicant, that Mr. Navarro and his client understand the importance of when they come back, that we're dealing with large specimen trees, that we have crosswalks, that we consider the neighborhood, like you always do. You always do a great job of ensuring that it's not just about your client. It's about the neighborhood as a whole. So, just take that into consideration. I really appreciate that -- the park in the corner and really making it a much larger space so that people in the community -- because that park's not only going to be used by residents of the building. It's going to be used by people in the entire neighborhood. Just like Merrick Park is a great amenity for the residents that are going to be living in this building. So, just take that into consideration, the few things that I requested when you come back.

Mr. Navarro: Definitely.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you. Do I hear a motion?

City Attorney Ramos: Just a second.

Commissioner Keon: Could I ask a question?

City Attorney Ramos: Just so we're...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Sure.

City Attorney Ramos: I wanted to make a couple of things clear.

Vice Mayor Lago: Yes.

City Attorney Ramos: This project will not come back. It is a resolution...

Vice Mayor Lago: Oh, I thought it was...

City Attorney Ramos: So, there's no second reading.

Vice Mayor Lago: I thought it was coming back, excuse me.

City Attorney Ramos: So, anything that needs to be discussed needs to be discussed now.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: There's some minor updates on the conditions of approval that the applicant is going to describe. And everything else is covered, as it always is in these types of projects and the three pages of conditions.

Vice Mayor Lago: I just want to make sure that we take care of the crosswalks and we take care of all those issues. I see one crosswalk. I'd like to see maybe, you know, two more.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: And you could suggest more. I mean, certainly...

Vice Mayor Lago: I would.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: The applicant can...

Vice Mayor Lago: It's a large -- it's an entire block. It's a pretty big piece of land. And I think it's -- again, you're talking about elderly people. What's going to be the average age of the individual that's going to be calling this beautiful place home?

Mr. Navarro: So -- I'm sorry. That's...

Commissioner Keon: How old?

Mr. Navarro: (INAUDIBLE) from ZOM Living, who's purchasing and developing the property, around 60 years old is the average age.

Commissioner Keon: For an assisted living facility?

Mr. Navarro: Well, what it is, it's not just an assisted...

Commissioner Keon: No.

Mr. Navarro: Living facility.

Commissioner Keon: Sixty, for an assisted living facility?

Vice Mayor Lago: High sixties.

Commissioner Mena: He said high sixties.

Mr. Navarro: Yeah, because it's not just -- so, if you look at the unit breakdown, the majority of the units are -- approximately over 55 percent are independent living. What the project does is that it attracts a, you know, a young senior to come in with the amenities and then knowing that they don't have to move when they need assisted living. And if they have memory problems, that they could be cared for. So, the age is a little lower than your traditional ALF. By the time you get to an ALF, everybody needs assistance. This is a program that's scheduled to allow you to stay there and age in place, which is important.

Commissioner Keon: Right.

Mr. Navarro: So, that's why the age is a little lower than what you may...

Commissioner Keon: That's the way ALFs are designed. But most ALFs, even though you may be 60, the services of the ALF are available to you and you are generally charged as a result of having those services made available to you as an ALF. But I mean, what your demographic is, is here nor there to me. I don't -- you know your demographic. It's not important to me.

Vice Mayor Lago: Could we -- can I just finish my comment?

Commissioner Keon: Your dog park...

Vice Mayor Lago: Can I just finish my comment just for once?

Commissioner Keon: I'm sorry. I thought you were.

Vice Mayor Lago: It's okay. So, I'd like to ensure -- because I'm not really worried about the age. I'm more worried about the individuals that are going to be living there. So, I'd like to make sure that you have one crosswalk -- you don't have one -- another crosswalk that goes towards the first phase and the second phase. So, we could make sure that we have one or two additional crosswalks to ensure pedestrian accessibility for the individuals, something simple. And it always gets lost, you know, in the mix at the end of the project. And there's always -- I know there's a lot of County approvals. You're very well versed on that, and it's got to get a bunch of County approvals that take a long time, so let's get to work on that now.

Mr. Navarro: Yeah. And that's one of the issues, that the County regulates all of...

Vice Mayor Lago: That's what I'm saying. If we're going to build this -- if you're going to build this, excuse me, it's going to take two and a half, three years by the time you're done. So, let's start working on it now so we can get those approvals. And I think that the County would be more -- you know, they're flexible on allowing for two or three different crosswalks.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: On Granello? You mean on Granello?

Vice Mayor Lago: Well, I leave that up to you.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yeah.

Vice Mayor Lago: But I mean, obviously, if you look -- my eyesight is failing me.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yeah, because right now the condition is...

Commissioner Keon: Right.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: That there will be a study of a crosswalk on LeJeune.

Commissioner Keon: It's LeJeune, yeah.

Vice Mayor Lago: But I think there should be -- I would recommend that you have another crosswalk in between the building and the first phase of the...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yes.

Vice Mayor Lago: Gables residential project that was built. I mean, that's just my opinion. I'm not a traffic engineer.

Mr. Navarro: A crosswalk southside.

Vice Mayor Lago: Yeah, but I just think you...

Mr. Navarro: Right now...

Vice Mayor Lago: Should have one. On LeJeune, we've been talking about it for, I don't even know how long. I mean, I think it's -- we're already -- we're tired of talking about that, the crosswalk issue that we have on LeJeune. And I know that Ed's going to come up and give us some more...

Commissioner Keon: But...

Vice Mayor Lago: Information on that. But I'm talking about the two main lanes here. So -- besides that -- and I also want to make sure that we can put on the record that, you know, we put some trees that are not six-foot shade trees. Let's...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: We made that point already.

Vice Mayor Lago: That's fine, but it's got to be...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yeah.

Vice Mayor Lago: It's not coming back to...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yeah.

Vice Mayor Lago: It's not coming back for a second reading, so I want to put it on the record.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay. Any other comments?

Commissioner Keon: Yeah. The question I was asking was...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Go ahead.

Commissioner Keon: With regard to the park that (INAUDIBLE). Is that park -- it's open -- you know, a lot of times the parks that are connected with facilities are dawn to dusk. They're open and then they're closed. This is not that? This is open and available to the public 24 hours a day?

City Attorney Ramos: I think I heard Mr. Navarro say dawn to dusk for the park.

Commissioner Keon: For the dog...

Mr. Navarro: Yes. I think the condition was -- which is typical when we've done these private parks...

Commissioner Keon: That's what I'm asking.

Mr. Navarro: Is -- and if you give me a second, I know I saw it here. So, proposed passive park shall be publicly accessible from sunrise to sunset on Monday through Sunday.

Commissioner Keon: Right, so it's dawn to dusk.

Mr. Navarro: Yeah.

Commissioner Keon: It's dawn to dusk. So, if there's some fence or there's something that ties it to the building...

Mr. Navarro: It actually has...

Commissioner Keon: Is that -- that's what I'm asking you.

Mr. Navarro: A rendering of the proposed park, but it does not have the security fence around it. We need to work with, I think, the Board of Architects, who regulates those fences as part of the final BOA approval in order to figure out how we would do that, obviously, in an aesthetic way.

Commissioner Keon: That's a pretty small green area there that you said you would make available as a dog park.

Mr. Navarro: No, actually, so we are -- what was originally proposed was...

Commissioner Keon: That's -- yeah, I heard you say that.

(COMMENTS MADE OFF THE RECORD)

Commissioner Keon: Right, and then you said you moved it to a larger area, which it remains a dog park?

Mr. Navarro: No. You could bring your dog...

Commissioner Keon: Oh, you've eliminated the...

Mr. Navarro: Yeah, the dogs can...

Commissioner Keon: Issue of a dog...

Mr. Navarro: Bring their owners, but it's not necessarily a dog park.

Commissioner Keon: No, I know. That's not what I mean. I mean that people can come there and they can walk their dog.

Mr. Navarro: Correct.

Commissioner Keon: Can you provide waste stations and whatever else?

Mr. Navarro: Yeah, but it wouldn't be like...

Commissioner Keon: So, dogs aren't...

Mr. Navarro: A per se...

Commissioner Keon: Prohibited?

Mr. Navarro: Exactly.

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Agenda Item F-5 - Resolution of the City Commission of Coral Gables, Florida granting Conditional Use approval pursuant to Zoning Code Article 3, "Development Review," Division 4, "Conditional Uses," for an Assisted Living Facility (ALF) referred to as "ZOM Coral Gables" on property zoned Industrial District, legally described as Tract A-C, Block 16, Industrial Section (363 Granello Avenue & 300 Greco Avenue). Page 15

Commissioner Keon: That's what you're...

Mr. Navarro: Dogs are not prohibited, but it's not primarily programmed as a dog park.

Commissioner Keon: I don't mean like actually for...

Mr. Navarro: No, because there's a lot of...

Commissioner Keon: I mean that people can...

Mr. Navarro: Those now that...

Commissioner Keon: Walk their dog in that and they're not going to be prohibited from using that green space.

Mr. Navarro: No, at all.

Commissioner Keon: Okay.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Alright.

Commissioner Keon: And to the City, you don't have any problem with them using the alley as the access to the facility?

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: No. That was reviewed by all staff, and that was...

Commissioner Keon: Okay.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Acceptable.

Commissioner Keon: So, you approve alley access.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: And...

Commissioner Keon: Okay.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: In addition, DOT approved the crosswalk, I just heard.

Vice Mayor Lago: Oh really? Wow. That's great.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: You have one...

Commissioner Keon: Thank you. I have no problems with...

Vice Mayor Lago: You did that?

Unidentified Speaker: No.

Vice Mayor Lago: You deserve the credit.

Commissioner Keon: I'll move the project.

Vice Mayor Lago: And by the way, the good thing about it is I know that we're getting caught up on the size of the park, which we always want to have bigger parks, but don't forget this is literally half a block away from the Underline. It's going to be a ten...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay.

Vice Mayor Lago: Ten-mile linear park, so...

Mr. Navarro: It's a nice little urban park.

Vice Mayor Lago: There's a lot of opportunity.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Commissioner Lago has moved.

Vice Mayor Lago: No, I didn't. Commissioner Keon did.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: I'm sorry.

Commissioner Keon: I moved it.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Commissioner Keon, sorry.

City Attorney Ramos: I'd like to just note for the record that I see no one present that wishes to speak on this item.

Mr. Navarro: Before we make a motion, can I clarify the condition on the temporary open space? So, there was a condition that carries forward from the old 2016 resolution that says that the applicant of this project will maintain the green space which is right next to the City parking garage. We are closing on the main project and that vacant green lot right here is a private property that's going to be owned by a third party unrelated to us.

Commissioner Keon: There's somebody else that already owns that, right?

Mr. Navarro: Yeah.

Commissioner Keon: Right.

Mr. Navarro: So, we'd like to remove condition E.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: If anybody would second it...

City Attorney Ramos: In addition, Mr. Navarro, Resolution 2016-09 is being voided and vacated.

Mr. Navarro: Perfect.

City Attorney Ramos: So, no condition that was present there will be present here, only the conditions that are stated in this resolution.

Mr. Navarro: Okay, great. Yeah, if we can just make it consistent and asked for Condition E of this resolution to be removed. I think that one just happened to...

City Attorney Ramos: It made it over?

Mr. Navarro: Yeah.

City Attorney Ramos: Okay.

Mr. Navarro: Yeah, it made it over, so...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Alright.

Commissioner Keon: I moved it.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Will you call the roll, please?

Commissioner Keon: Yes.

Vice Mayor Lago: Yes.

Commissioner Mena: Yes.

Commissioner Fors: Yes.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yes.

(Vote: 5-0)

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you very much.

Mr. Navarro: Alright. Thank you very much.

Vice Mayor Lago: Thank you.