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CITY OF CORAL GABLES  
PLANNING DEPARTMENT

1 CITY OF CORAL GABLES  
2 PLANNING AND ZONING BOARD MEETING  
3 VERBATIM TRANSCRIPT  
4 CORAL GABLES CITY COMMISSION CHAMBER  
5 405 BILTMORE WAY, CORAL GABLES, FLORIDA  
6 WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2010, 6:02 P.M.  
7  
8 Board Members Present:  
9 Tom Korge, Chairman  
10 Eibi Aizenstat, Vice-Chairman  
11 Robert Behar  
12 Jeffrey Flanagan  
13 Javier Salman  
14  
15 City Staff:  
16 Eric Riel, Jr., Planning Director  
17 Elizabeth M. Hernandez, City Attorney  
18 Walter Carlson, Assistant Planning Director  
19 Scot Bolyard, Planner  
20 Jill Menendez, Administrative Assistant  
21 Eli Gutierrez, Code Enforcement Lead  
22 Charles L. Siemon, Esq.  
23 Siemon & Larsen  
24 Special Counsel to the City.  
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26 Also Participating:  
27 Sanford I. Rakofsky, M.D.  
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1 MR. BEHAR: Yes.  
2 MS. MENENDEZ: Eibi Aizenstat?  
3 MR. AIZENSTAT: Yes.  
4 MS. MENENDEZ: Jeff Flanagan?  
5 MR. FLANAGAN: Yes.  
6 MS. MENENDEZ: Tom Korge?  
7 CHAIRMAN KORGE: Yes.  
8 The second item on the agenda is  
9 Application Number 09-10-119-P; Change of Land  
10 Use from "Commercial Use, Mid-Rise Intensity,"  
11 to "Commercial Use, High-Rise Intensity," for a  
12 .6 acre parcel described as Lots 1 through 10  
13 of Block 7 of the Crafts Section, on Andalusia  
14 Avenue.  
15 MR. CARLSON: Good evening.  
16 CHAIRMAN KORGE: Hello.  
17 MR. CARLSON: For the record, Walter  
18 Carlson, with the Planning Department, and as  
19 you just noted, this first item before you this  
20 evening is a change of land use request, and  
21 this is similar -- a similar request to the one  
22 which came before you last month, which was the  
23 Mercedes Benz application. As an aside, for  
24 your information, that application was approved  
25 by the Commission at yesterday's Commission

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1 THEREUPON:  
2 The following proceedings were had:  
3 CHAIRMAN KORGE: We have a quorum, so we'll  
4 begin the meeting.  
5 MS. MENENDEZ: Eibi Aizenstat?  
6 MR. AIZENSTAT: Here.  
7 MS. MENENDEZ: Robert Behar?  
8 MR. BEHAR: Here.  
9 MS. MENENDEZ: Jack Coe?  
10 Jeffrey Flanagan?  
11 MR. FLANAGAN: Here.  
12 MS. MENENDEZ: Pat Keon?  
13 Javier Salman?  
14 Tom Korge?  
15 CHAIRMAN KORGE: Here.  
16 The first item on the agenda is the  
17 approval of the minutes --  
18 MR. BEHAR: Motion to approve.  
19 CHAIRMAN KORGE: -- of the meeting of  
20 September 15th. There's a motion and --  
21 MR. AIZENSTAT: I'll second.  
22 CHAIRMAN KORGE: And a second. Any  
23 discussion, changes or corrections?  
24 Hearing none, we'll call the roll.  
25 MS. MENENDEZ: Robert Behar?

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1 meeting.  
2 This property is also located in the CBD,  
3 and is one block north of the Mercedes Benz  
4 site, and is now occupied by a series of  
5 one-story commercial buildings. The request is  
6 a change of land use from "Commercial, Mid-Rise  
7 Intensity," to "Commercial, High-Rise  
8 Intensity." This change would only increase  
9 the permitted height of the future development  
10 of this property. It would not increase the  
11 allowable FAR that could be constructed on the  
12 site.  
13 In Staff's report, which is before you, we  
14 found that the proposal is consistent with the  
15 Comprehensive Plan's goals, objectives and  
16 policies. The proposed land use designation is  
17 consistent with the property's existing  
18 commercial designation. The infill development  
19 of this property which would occur is in  
20 character with the similar commercial projects  
21 which are being constructed in the CBD. And  
22 finally, the proposal would not adversely  
23 affect the use of other properties in the area.  
24 Staff is recommending approval of this  
25 request. For your information, this property

1 was posted, there was a notification published  
2 in the paper, and there were courtesy notices  
3 mailed to all the property owners within a  
4 thousand feet.

5 That concludes my presentation. If you  
6 have any questions, I'd be glad to answer them.

7 CHAIRMAN KORGE: Are there any questions at  
8 this time?

9 MR. AIZENSTAT: Did this come about -- I  
10 remember at that meeting, we had a comment  
11 about other properties that were -- that would  
12 lie between this that would not be zoned. Is  
13 that why this is coming before us?

14 (Thereupon, Mr. Salman arrived.)

15 CHAIRMAN KORGE: Excuse me. For the  
16 record, Javier Salman has arrived.

17 MR. RIEL: I mean --

18 MR. AIZENSTAT: We were talking about  
19 spot --

20 MR. RIEL: -- from Staff's -- You know, as  
21 I indicated previously, we don't go out and  
22 pursue property owners.

23 MR. AIZENSTAT: Correct.

24 MR. RIEL: But, you know, I can't comment  
25 on that. I mean, perhaps the applicant can.

1 MR. AIZENSTAT: Is the applicant here?

2 MR. RIEL: Yes.

3 MR. CARLSON: Yes, the applicant is here.

4 MR. AIZENSTAT: Would you come up, please?

5 CHAIRMAN KORGE: Hi. Would you like to  
6 make your presentation before we question you?

7 DR. RAKOFSKY: Yes, please question me.

8 Good evening, gentlemen. I'm Dr. Rakofsky.  
9 I've lived in Coral Gables for the past 38  
10 years, and the past 25 at 37 Arvida Parkway. I  
11 practice medicine in Coral Gables, right across  
12 the street, the 401 Building, the round  
13 building. I've been in there for 38 years,  
14 practicing ophthalmology.

15 As you know, I also own property in Coral  
16 Gables, the Andalusia property, and I'm happy  
17 to say that Staff suggested that I come here,  
18 for my request to change the zoning from mid  
19 intensity to high intensity, because, as you  
20 know, all of the garages on the north side of  
21 Andalusia have been changed to high intensity,  
22 and to the west of me, we've got Publix, which  
23 the entire building is high intensity. To the  
24 east, we have the Ponce de Leon, then we have,  
25 across the street, the First Union and Wachovia

1 building, and the one -- on the following  
2 block, next to SunBank, you have also a high  
3 intensity, and as was mentioned, south,  
4 Mercedes Benz just got approval.

5 So, in my opinion -- it's my opinion that  
6 this would be very, very good for the City of  
7 Coral Gables, and also for the citizens,  
8 because it increases the financial -- the tax  
9 bases, and we all know we need this  
10 desperately. So I'm hoping for your blessing  
11 and your approval, and I'm ready for all the  
12 questions.

13 CHAIRMAN KORGE: Any questions?

14 MR. AIZENSTAT: My question was actually,  
15 at our last meeting, when we approved this, we  
16 were looking, for example, at your property,  
17 that was zoned differently than what we had  
18 approved, and we were wondering why certain  
19 owners hadn't come before us at the same time  
20 in order to change their zoning. So, for me,  
21 I'm glad that you're coming before us now.

22 DR. RAKOFSKY: Thank you. Yeah, I'm coming  
23 here before you because I think that -- First  
24 of all, I love the City of Coral Gables, and  
25 you guys, too, otherwise you wouldn't be on the

1 Board. And I have a vision, like we all do. I  
2 think Coral Gables is a great city, and it's  
3 going to be greater. And knowing that there  
4 are plans to do something on the 200 garage, I  
5 would like to join in with the City on  
6 something like that, in a -- now, I'm being  
7 very visionary, now. I really think in terms  
8 of George Merrick with the Venetian concept,  
9 all the Mediterranean buildings, and having two  
10 of them together, being built together, and  
11 maybe an archway, like the Ponte Vecchio they  
12 have in Florence, something like that. So I  
13 know I'm just pipe dreaming, but I would like  
14 to get involved with the City, and I think now  
15 is the time, since you're making the changes, I  
16 saw all that, I got copies of it, and I  
17 figured, well, let me go, also, and see if I  
18 can do the same thing.

19 CHAIRMAN KORGE: Any other questions of the  
20 applicant?

21 MR. BEHAR: No.

22 CHAIRMAN KORGE: Hearing none, I'll take a  
23 motion or open it for discussion.

24 MR. BEHAR: Yeah, I'm opening it for  
25 discussion. I -- This is again -- I mean, I'm

1 glad you're coming forward, but this is again,  
2 we look -- we're looking at this whole sector  
3 in pieces. I think that, if we had all the old  
4 property owners like you come forward, I think  
5 we would make a much better --

6 DR. RAKOFSKY: I agree.

7 MR. BEHAR: -- you know, decision, in  
8 order -- I'm in favor of doing it. I just --  
9 Again, there's no method of being able to --

10 You know, Eric, any --

11 MR. RIEL: And that was actually an issue  
12 that was brought up by the Commission at  
13 yesterday's meeting, when the other property  
14 came through. They actually asked the Manager  
15 to schedule an upcoming meeting or workshop to  
16 talk about the area in general, the CBD, in  
17 terms of, you know, development of a Master  
18 Plan, or to look at, you know, from a holistic  
19 basis, the area from Almeria north. So that's  
20 in motion.

21 MR. BEHAR: Okay.

22 CHAIRMAN KORGE: Any other discussion or  
23 questions?

24 MR. BEHAR: If there's none, I make a  
25 motion to approve.

1 CHAIRMAN KORGE: There's a motion to  
2 approve.

3 MR. SALMAN: I'll second it.

4 CHAIRMAN KORGE: Seconded. No further  
5 discussion? Let's call the roll, please.

6 MS. MENENDEZ: Jeff Flanagan?

7 MR. FLANAGAN: Yes.

8 MS. MENENDEZ: Javier Salman?

9 MR. SALMAN: Yes.

10 MS. MENENDEZ: Eibi Aizenstat?

11 MR. AIZENSTAT: Yes.

12 MS. MENENDEZ: Robert Behar?

13 MR. BEHAR: Yes.

14 MS. MENENDEZ: Tom Korge?

15 CHAIRMAN KORGE: Yes.

16 DR. RAKOFSKY: Thank you very much.

17 CHAIRMAN KORGE: Our next item is a change  
18 of zoning in the University of Miami Campus  
19 boundaries. This a City-initiated change of  
20 zoning for certain privately-owned properties  
21 within the boundaries, bounded -- in the area  
22 generally bounded by Levante Avenue, Red Road,  
23 Mataro Avenue, and San Amaro Drive.

24 MR. CARLSON: The second item which is  
25 before you this evening is a change of zoning

1 application. At last month's -- Last month,  
2 the Board approved a change of zoning for  
3 University-owned properties, from UMCAD to  
4 University Campus District, or UCD.

5 At that meeting, Staff informed the Board  
6 that a change of zoning for private properties  
7 which are located within the campus, being the  
8 fraternity properties and the religious  
9 institutional properties, would be made at this  
10 month's Board meeting.

11 This change would bring these private  
12 properties into compliance with their existing  
13 University Campus land use designation. With  
14 this change, there are seven fraternities and  
15 five religious institutions included in this  
16 change of zoning. Currently, the fraternities  
17 are zoned single-family residential, and the  
18 religious institutional -- institutions are  
19 zoned UMCAD, which remains from the previous  
20 UMCAD zoning designation.

21 All 12 of these properties would be rezoned  
22 to the University Campus District designation,  
23 or the UCD designation, similar to the  
24 University-owned properties which surround  
25 them.

1 This change of zoning is City-initiated,  
2 and the Planning Department is recommending  
3 approval of this application. Each of these 12  
4 properties were sent a certified letter,  
5 notifying them of this, of this proposal, and  
6 for the record, I would like to submit the  
7 receipts, the certified letter receipts.

8 CHAIRMAN KORGE: Thank you.

9 MR. CARLSON: I would also like to note  
10 that each one of these properties was posted  
11 and that there were courtesy notices mailed to  
12 all property owners within a thousand feet of  
13 these properties, and at the back of your  
14 report, you can note -- I hope you can note  
15 that there was only one returned, and that was  
16 no objection.

17 That concludes Staff's presentation.

18 CHAIRMAN KORGE: Thank you.

19 Is anybody here representing the  
20 University? Would you like to speak to this?

21 UNIDENTIFIED WOMAN: We're not the  
22 applicant.

23 CHAIRMAN KORGE: I know you're not the  
24 applicant. I didn't know if you wanted to say  
25 anything before we -- No?