

CITY OF CORAL GABLES
LOCAL PLANNING AGENCY (LPA)/
PLANNING AND ZONING BOARD MEETING
VERBATIM TRANSCRIPT
HYBRID FORMAT
WEDNESDAY, JULY 10, 2024, COMMENCING AT 6:00 P.M.

Board Members Present at Commission Chamber:

Julio Grabiell
Wayne "Chip" Withers
Sue Kawalerski
Felix Pardo
Javier Salman, Acting Chairman

City Staff and Consultants:

Jennifer Garcia, Planning Official
Arceli Redila, Zoning Administrator
Craig Collier, Special Counsel
Jill Menendez, Administrative Assistant, Board Secretary

Also Participating:

Maria Cristina Longo
Zully Pardo
Rafael Portuondo
Joseph Fadel, via Zoom

MR. WITHERS: The reason we're having this third hearing is because both of them had questions to be brought back here.

MR. COLLIER: A motion to defer is always in order, if that's what you choose to do.

MR. WITHERS: Yeah, I know, but I don't want to --

MR. COLLIER: I don't know, I'd like to know from our Planning Head, whether there's an urgency to have this item addressed by the Commission.

MS. GARCIA: No. So if the Board prefers to wait until we have more members to continue the discussion, I don't think there's any pressing need to have it now and have you defer it. I mean, it's up to you. If the Board prefers --

MR. PARDO: I would agree, for one reason, that it's not one member, it's two members that are missing, and I think Chip is right.

MR. WITHERS: I'll move to defer, sir, which I think takes precedent over the first --

MR. COLLIER: May I make a suggestion before you do that?

MR. WITHERS: Sure.

THEREUPON:

(The following proceedings were held.)

MR. COLLIER: Good evening. Members of the Board, we have no Chair or Vice Chair tonight. So it's up to you all to decide who you would like to Chair this meeting. The actual Chair is left open for whoever you all decide --

MR. SALMAN: Literally.

MR. COLLIER: -- to --

MR. GRABIEL: Can I move?

MR. COLLIER: You may move.

MR. GRABIEL: I move Mr. Salman as Chair.

MR. SALMAN: Thank you.

MR. GRABIEL: You're welcome.

MR. COLLIER: Do we have a second for that?

MR. PARDO: Second.

MR. SALMAN: That was good.

MR. WITHERS: Can we discuss -- is anybody wanting to defer this? I mean, I respect their input a great deal, both of these Board Members, and they've been through the first two hearings already with us.

I'm just throwing that out. I mean, they --

MR. COLLIER: A motion to --

MR. COLLIER: There are certain members in the community that came tonight and signed in. I don't know if there's, obviously, an objection from them to defer or there's not, but let's put it this way, it's up to the Board, and since we don't have a Chair, I don't have a Chair to address, whether you wish to hear from the members that signed in and planned to speak tonight, only on the issue of deferral.

MR. WITHERS: So I would love to have our temporary Chairman chair the next meeting, as well, so I'll certainly throw that in the hat, if we have to, as part of the motion.

MR. COLLIER: Before we do the deferral, may I suggest we first appoint a Chair, and then you can go --

MR. WITHERS: However you want to do it, coach.

MR. COLLIER: So let's do it that way.

MR. WITHERS: I'll hold back on my motion, then, sir.

MR. COLLIER: So we have a motion and a second. All those in favor -- are there any other nominations for Chair tonight?

1 Hearing none, we have a motion and a
 2 second. We can do it as a voice vote. All
 3 those in favor?
 4 (Thereupon, the Board Members voted aye.)
 5 MR. COLLER: Any opposed?
 6 Hearing none, you now have the chair,
 7 literally and figuratively. You're supposed to
 8 sit there.
 9 MR. PARDO: I would dust that off first.
 10 You don't know where it's been.
 11 MR. WITHERS: Oh, my goodness.
 12 MR. SALMAN: Before we entertain any
 13 motion, can I ask the City Attorney if we need
 14 to --
 15 MR. COLLER: I think we should call the
 16 roll.
 17 MR. SALMAN: Call the roll and the meeting,
 18 go through the order of business?
 19 MR. COLLER: Yes. Yes. Yes.
 20 MR. SALMAN: Okay. There's a little script
 21 that has to do with the opening of a meeting
 22 and all of the legal whereas and whereofs, but
 23 I don't have it memorialized.
 24 MR. WITHERS: We're going to have to
 25 rethink this appointment.

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1 MR. COLLER: Let me just say this about the
 2 script, because this is an unusual meeting, in
 3 that the only item on your agenda happens to be
 4 a legislative item. So issues with regard to
 5 swearing witnesses don't apply, because it's
 6 not a quasi-judicial meeting. It also doesn't
 7 apply to the issue of ex parte communications,
 8 because in a legislative arena, it's okay to
 9 have people come to you on a legislative item,
 10 as long as they don't talk to you about a
 11 quasi-judicial item.
 12 So most of the remarks that would have been
 13 made tonight don't apply, because we're not
 14 going to be swearing in witnesses. You're not
 15 going to be asking if you've had any
 16 communications, and, of course, there is no
 17 site, per se, for this. So you're good in not
 18 having those legal things that are typically
 19 read at the beginning of a meeting.
 20 MR. SALMAN: Okay. Well, thank you for
 21 that clarification.
 22 Having said that, I would like to call the
 23 meeting to order, and could you please take a
 24 roll?
 25 THE SECRETARY: Robert Behar has requested

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1 to be excused.
 2 Julio Grabiell?
 3 MR. GRABIEL: Here.
 4 THE SECRETARY: Sue Kawalerski?
 5 MS. KAWALERSKI: Here.
 6 THE SECRETARY: Felix Pardo?
 7 MR. PARDO: Here.
 8 THE SECRETARY: Javier Salman?
 9 MR. SALMAN: Here.
 10 THE SECRETARY: Chip Withers?
 11 MR. WITHERS: Here.
 12 THE SECRETARY: Eibi Aizenstat also
 13 requested to be excused.
 14 MR. SALMAN: All right. The first order of
 15 business is the minutes of the last meeting.
 16 Do I have a motion to approve?
 17 MR. PARDO: So moved.
 18 MR. SALMAN: We have a motion.
 19 And a second?
 20 MS. KAWALERSKI: Second.
 21 MR. SALMAN: Jill, will you call the roll,
 22 please?
 23 THE SECRETARY: Julio Grabiell?
 24 MR. GRABIEL: Yes.
 25 THE SECRETARY: Sue Kawalerski?

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1 MS. KAWALERSKI: Yes.
 2 THE SECRETARY: Felix Pardo?
 3 MR. PARDO: Yes.
 4 THE SECRETARY: Chip Withers?
 5 MR. WITHERS: Yes.
 6 MR. SALMAN: And I believe Mr. Withers had
 7 a motion he wanted to make with regards to the
 8 legislative item before this Board today.
 9 MR. WITHERS: Yes, and just a question.
 10 Would it be out of order if we listen to who is
 11 here, that made the trip, speak --
 12 MR. COLLER: It would not be out of order.
 13 I think I need to read the item in, though,
 14 first, so we can do that.
 15 MR. WITHERS: So if the Board is willing to
 16 postpone it or table it, whatever, but, still
 17 allow whoever is here to speak, since they've
 18 already come, I'm certainly in favor of that.
 19 MR. COLLER: And, of course, a transcript
 20 would be available to anyone that wasn't here,
 21 so they could hear their testimony.
 22 MR. PARDO: That's fair, more than fair.
 23 MR. SALMAN: So the motion is to --
 24 MR. COLLER: Well, right now, I think what
 25 I could do is read the item --

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1 MR. SALMAN: So you do want to read the
 2 item into the record?
 3 MR. COLLER: Yes.
 4 MR. SALMAN: Yes? Okay.
 5 MR. COLLER: Okay. So there's only one
 6 item on the agenda tonight. It's Item E-1, an
 7 Ordinance of the City Commission of Coral
 8 Gables, Florida, providing for text amendments
 9 to the City of Coral Gables Official Zoning
 10 Code, Article 5, "Architecture," Section 5-200,
 11 "Mediterranean Standards;" Article 3, "Uses,"
 12 Section 3-402, "Restrictions related to
 13 location;" and Article 16, "Definitions;" to
 14 enhance the quality of Coral Gables
 15 Mediterranean design by requiring a conceptual
 16 design review; removing duplicative criteria;
 17 relocating inapplicable standards;
 18 supplementing existing criteria; and including
 19 additional Mediterranean building examples;
 20 providing for severability, repealer,
 21 codification, and for an effective date.
 22 Item E-1, public hearing.
 23 MR. SALMAN: So we have an active motion
 24 made by Mr. Withers to defer, with the
 25 concession to allow anybody who came to go

1 ahead and address this Board.
 2 MR. COLLER: May I suggest that we should
 3 hear, and then entertain the motion at that
 4 time, after the people have spoken.
 5 MR. SALMAN: Okay. That will be fine.
 6 So we're not going to do the
 7 presentation -- or are we going to do the
 8 presentation?
 9 MR. COLLER: You don't have to do the
 10 presentation, if you don't wish to.
 11 MR. SALMAN: I'm personally thinking that
 12 when we have the rest of the Board here, they
 13 can all hear it at the same time. Of course,
 14 we can always read it --
 15 MR. COLLER: Well, you'll accommodate these
 16 people. You don't necessarily have to
 17 accommodate them fully.
 18 MR. SALMAN: No, but --
 19 MR. COLLER: If you don't want to have the
 20 presentation of the Staff tonight, you can
 21 certainly wait until that time.
 22 MR. PARDO: Mr. Chair, can I make a
 23 suggestion?
 24 MR. SALMAN: Go right ahead.
 25 MR. PARDO: That you open it up, just for

1 the public comment, to accommodate the people
 2 that are here, and, therefore -- we have the
 3 previous minutes from the last time, and, then,
 4 when the other members are here at the next
 5 meeting, we could pick up and we've already
 6 heard their comments, instead of a full
 7 presentation by --
 8 MR. SALMAN: Well, that's exactly what I
 9 was thinking, you know.
 10 Thank you very much for being here and for
 11 having the presentation ready for us, but I
 12 think we'd rather, as a Board, it would be more
 13 complete to hear it all at once, but yet still
 14 go ahead and entertain it.
 15 So I'm going to go ahead and open it to
 16 public hearing.
 17 MS. KAWALERSKI: Can I add one comment,
 18 Mr. Chair, please?
 19 MR. SALMAN: Go ahead.
 20 MS. KAWALERSKI: Perhaps they wanted to
 21 comment on the presentation, which they have
 22 not heard. I mean, they have not heard the
 23 presentation. So maybe we should ask them if
 24 they would prefer to hear it, and if they would
 25 prefer to hear it, ask them if they would like

1 to come back next month. If not, then -- I
 2 mean, I think that would be the choice. You
 3 can come back next month and comment, at that
 4 point, after you've heard the presentation,
 5 because you don't know what she's going to say,
 6 right?
 7 MR. COLLER: Well, we need to have you --
 8 because there's a court reporter present, we
 9 need you to come up to the mic, if you've
 10 signed in.
 11 MS. KAWALERSKI: Both of you. Yeah, you're
 12 the only two here commenting, I think.
 13 MR. SALMAN: Come on up.
 14 MR. COLLER: Why don't you state your name
 15 and address, for the record, please?
 16 MS. LONGO: My name is Maria Cristina
 17 Longo, and I live at 16 Phoenetia Avenue.
 18 I honestly would love to have the
 19 presentation today and speak to you all today,
 20 because I prepared, and I work a lot of hours
 21 and I never know -- this is always a little bit
 22 of a sacrifice, just like it's for you, but if
 23 there's no presentation and background from
 24 Jennifer, and then there's only five of you, I
 25 will come back, gladly, because it will be more

1 -- I think it will be worthwhile for me to do
2 it that way, okay?
3 MS. KAWALERSKI: Okay. Fair.
4 And Zully.
5 MS. PARDO: Good evening. My name is Zully
6 Pardo. I reside at 49 Campina Court.
7 I agree with Ms. Longo. We have two
8 members that are not here. If we're not going
9 to have a presentation -- I'd rather speak when
10 everybody is here and we've looked at the
11 presentation. So, if it's all right with you,
12 I will also come back.
13 MR. SALMAN: Well, the purpose was to
14 listen to your desires and try to accommodate
15 them.
16 MS. PARDO: My only concern with that is
17 that I would like to have everybody present and
18 hear your -- you know, and after speaking, hear
19 your discussions and so forth -- I think that's
20 really important -- and to see the
21 presentation --
22 MS. KAWALERSKI: That's fair.
23 MS. PARDO: -- your thoughts.
24 MS. KAWALERSKI: So it's just a matter of
25 deferring, then, I guess, on Chip's motion to

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1 defer.
2 THE SECRETARY: We still have one more
3 speaker. Sorry.
4 Mr. Portuondo.
5 MR. PORTUONDO: Well, I came today to speak
6 for it, because I believe in the whole process
7 that it's gone through, with the people that
8 have been involved with it, and I think it's
9 going to improve what the intent --
10 MR. COLLER: Can we get your name and
11 address, for the record?
12 MR. PORTUONDO: Rafael Portuondo, from
13 Portuondo Perotti Architects.
14 So I'm willing to defer, and, you know,
15 have the full Board, but I'm for the
16 Mediterranean Bonus.
17 MS. LONGO: Me, too.
18 THE SECRETARY: Excuse me. We also have
19 someone on Zoom that would like to speak on
20 this.
21 MR. SALMAN: All right. Can we link them
22 in.?
23 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Fadel, can you please
24 open your mic?
25 MR. COLLER: Again, because this is not

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1 quasi-judicial, we don't need to see his face,
2 we don't need to swear him in.
3 MR. FADEL: Can you hear me? Can you hear me?
4 THE SECRETARY: Yes.
5 MR. SALMAN: Yes.
6 MR. FADEL: I saw something on the agenda
7 the other day about eliminating this
8 Mediterranean Bonus. I think it's not a good
9 idea, but apparently it's not going to be
10 discussed because of a lack of -- sufficient
11 members on the Board today.
12 MR. COLLER: Can we get your name and
13 address, for the record, please?
14 MR. FADEL: My name is Joseph Fadel. I
15 live at 905 Sorolla Avenue, Coral Gables 33134.
16 MR. SALMAN: Mr. Fadel, we are currently
17 discussing a motion to defer and we would like
18 your comments, please, with regards to that
19 particular motion.
20 MR. FADEL: My comments are in favor of
21 revising the Mediterranean Bonus, so that it,
22 in fact, is a Mediterranean Revival Style
23 Bonus. That's a very thorough way of
24 putting -- answering your question.
25 MR. SALMAN: And the question was whether

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1 or not we defer it today. We're opening it up
2 to comment and we've decided not to have a
3 presentation. I don't know when you joined, so
4 I'm just filling you in on it.
5 MR. FADEL: Okay. Fine. I'm in favor of
6 deferring it.
7 MR. SALMAN: Perfect. Thank you very much.
8 Okay. I'd like to close the public
9 comments, and see if there's anybody there on
10 the phone?
11 THE SECRETARY: No one else has indicated.
12 MR. SALMAN: Okay. Very good.
13 Jill, can you take -- we have a motion. Do
14 we have a second?
15 MR. PARDO: Second.
16 MR. SALMAN: Okay. And we have a second.
17 MR. COLLER: With regard to the motion, are
18 we deferring it to the -- I don't know if we're
19 -- are we having an August meeting or are we
20 not having a meeting --
21 MR. SALMAN: We have here, next PZB meeting
22 is August 14th.
23 MR. COLLER: August 14th, okay.
24 MR. SALMAN: So we are deferring --
25 MR. COLLER: Just for anybody that's

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1 listening -- I don't know, are you going to be
 2 re-noticing it or -- you are going to re-notice
 3 it? Okay.
 4 MS. GARCIA: Yes.
 5 MR. COLLER: But everyone should know, it's
 6 August 14th, is when this be will be heard.
 7 MS. GARCIA: Yes. Same time, same place.
 8 MR. COLLER: Same station.
 9 MR. PARDO: Is that the only agenda item?
 10 MS. GARCIA: That I know of, yes.
 11 MR. SALMAN: All right. We have a first
 12 and a second.
 13 Jill, will you please call the roll?
 14 THE SECRETARY: I'm sorry, who's the
 15 second, Mr. Pardo?
 16 MR. SALMAN: Mr. Pardo, correct.
 17 THE SECRETARY: Okay.
 18 MR. PARDO: Yes.
 19 THE SECRETARY: Sue Kawalerski?
 20 MS. KAWALERSKI: Yes.
 21 THE SECRETARY: Felix Pardo?
 22 MR. PARDO: Yes.
 23 THE SECRETARY: Chip Withers?
 24 MR. WITHERS: Yes.
 25 THE SECRETARY: Julio Grabiell?

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1 MR. GRABIEL: Yes.
 2 THE SECRETARY: Javier Salman?
 3 MR. SALMAN: Yes.
 4 All right. Seeing no further items on the
 5 agenda, I would like to hear a motion to
 6 adjourn.
 7 MR. GRABIEL: I'll move.
 8 MR. SALMAN: Mr. Gabriel has moved it.
 9 MS. KAWALERSKI: Second.
 10 MR. SALMAN: Ms. Kawalerski has second.
 11 Jill, would you please call the roll?
 12 THE SECRETARY: Felix Pardo?
 13 MR. PARDO: Yes.
 14 THE SECRETARY: Chip Withers?
 15 MR. WITHERS: Yeah.
 16 THE SECRETARY: Julio Grabiell?
 17 MR. GRABIEL: Yes.
 18 THE SECRETARY: Sue Kawalerski?
 19 MS. KAWALERSKI: Yes.
 20 THE SECRETARY: Javier Salman?
 21 MR. SALMAN: Yes.
 22 And so ends the shortest Chairmanship on
 23 this Board.
 24 (Thereupon, the meeting was concluded t 6:20 p.m.)

C E R T I F I C A T E

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 2 STATE OF FLORIDA:
 3 SS.
 4 COUNTY OF MIAMI-DADE:
 5
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 7
 8 I, NIEVES SANCHEZ, Court Reporter, and a Notary
 9 Public for the State of Florida at Large, do hereby
 10 certify that I was authorized to and did
 11 stenographically report the foregoing proceedings and
 12 that the transcript is a true and complete record of my
 13 stenographic notes.
 14
 15 DATED this 16th day of July, 2024.

-----NIEVES SANCHEZ-----

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