

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item F-1
May 14, 2019
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Raul Valdes-Fauli
Vice Mayor Vince Lago
Commissioner Jorge Fors, Jr.
Commissioner Pat Keon
Commissioner Michael Mena

City Staff

City Manager, Peter Iglesias
City Attorney, Miriam Ramos
City Clerk, Billy Urquia
Planning and Zoning Director, Ramon Trias

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Items F-1 [9:57:53 a.m.]

An Ordinance of the City Commission of Coral Gables, Florida providing for text amendments to the City of Coral Gables Official Zoning Code, by amending Article 3, “Development Review,” Division 5, “Planned Area Development,” Section 3-502, “Standards and Criteria;” Article 4, “Zoning Districts,” Section 4-201, “Mixed Use District (MXD);” Article 5, “Development Standards,” Section 5-604, “Coral Gables Mediterranean Style Design Standards,” and Section 5-1105, “Landscape Requirements,” and Article 8, “Definitions,” to clarify what constitutes open space; providing for a severability clause, repealer provision; codification, and providing for an effective date. (Updating Zoning Code to clarify what constitutes as required open space) (Sponsored by Vice Mayor Lago)

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: We go to F-1, Ordinance on First Reading.

City Attorney Ramos: F-1 is an Ordinance of the City Commission of Coral Gables, Florida providing for text amendments to the City of Coral Gables Official Zoning Code, by amending

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Article 3, “Development Review,” Division 5, “Planned Area Development,” Section 3-502, “Standards and Criteria;” Article 4, “Zoning Districts,” Section 4-201, “Mixed Use District (MXD);” Article 5, “Development Standards,” Section 5-604, “Coral Gables Mediterranean Style Design Standards,” and Section 5-1105, “Landscape Requirements,” and Article 8, “Definitions,” to clarify what constitutes open space; providing for a severability clause, repealer provision; codification, and providing for an effective date. This is an ordinance on First Reading. It’s a public hearing item.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Mayor, I want to thank Vice Mayor Lago for his leadership and perseverance on this issue. The amendments have been discussed multiple times; however, the idea is very straightforward. We are changing open space to ground level. Ground level is being added in multiple places where its relevant; and we are also changing the definition of paseo, meaning to count as open space, it would need to be open to the sky. Those are the basic ideas. I think there is consensus that those are good ideas. And then maybe in the future as we proceed with the update for the Zoning Code, we may have some additional changes for you.

Vice Mayor Lago: Thank you Ramon. This is very simple, and it should just take a few seconds, unless you have some discussion that you want to have on this. We’ve been working on this for about two years and I think this has been a labor of love, because all of us on this Commission have an interest in really having developers and people who are coming to our community to build, bring forth a product that is exceptional, not a mediocre product that basically goes setback to setback. We want something that for the first time is at grade level. Where you have open space, it can either be green or it can be pavers, it can be an area where people can sit, people can enjoy themselves. You are not talking about a situation where somebody steps out of an office building or residential building and there isn’t an open area for them to at least enjoy themselves. And the goal would be...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Have a smoke.

Vice Mayor Lago: Have a smoke, have a coffee, have a donut, whatever that may be, but I think the opportunity here is when you have one building that abuts another and that development may take place two or three years after. But if you are able to have a little bit of an open space, it doesn’t have to be green, it can be paved with pavers, and those two buildings can join. You can have a significant opening which will allow for, my opinion, significant increases in quality of life. Right now, just so you are aware, why this was brought to my attention and why I’ve been working on this for the last two years with Ramon, Peter, Ed, all the staff, which has done a great job. Currently, when the calculations are done for open space on a project, on a commercial project, they are including stairwells, they are including mezzanines, they are including second floor pool decks,

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which again, are not open to the community. The community does not reap any benefit from those tabulations and those considerations. There are a few architects that I've spoken to. Everyone thinks it's a good idea, but there are some concerns and I'll be upfront with you. There are some concerns that how this will affect the footplate of the building, the turning and radius of the parking garage; and I think that's something that you'll probably hear from several architects who will call you and say, listen Vince's idea is great, but at the end of the day, how are we going to implement this?- and I think we can. We just have to be creative and we have to look at different alternatives and different options. Because the idea is, if you are on the first floor of a building, someone living in that building, we want them to be able to enjoy a moment and not have to walk blocks to a park or walk a few blocks to an open space. So, we are able to do this in communities and you are seeing that now more and more than ever, as projects are coming before us. We are getting 8, 10, 12,000 square foot little mini parks, which are going to pay dividends in the future. So, this is the purpose and the underlying reasoning behind the ordinance. You may be contacted between First and Second Reading and I want to continue having this discussion between First and Second Reading. Thank you.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you. This is an ordinance on First Reading, it's a public hearing. Anybody wishes to address the Commission? Alright. Do I hear a motion?

Vice Mayor Lago: So moved.

Commissioner Keon: Seconded.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Alright. 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)

Vice Mayor Lago: Thank you for your support.

[End: 10:02:24 a.m.]