

**City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting**  
**Agenda Item G-7**  
**March 29, 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**

**Commissioner Kirk Menendez**

**City Staff**

**City Manager, Peter Iglesias**

**City Attorney, Miriam Ramos**

**City Clerk, Billy Urquia**

**Public Speaker(s)**

**Maria Cruz**

**Jackson Rip Holmes**

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Agenda Item G-7 [Start: 4:24 p.m.]

Discussion regarding metal roofs  
(Sponsored by Mayor Lago)

Mayor Lago: G-7, discussion regarding metal roofs. This has been a hot topic and I'm happy to see it come back again, even though I had to put it on the agenda. And I'll like for my colleagues to consider the opportunity of having a discussion on either having a referendum or having it done via an ordinance here in the city, and I'd like to acknowledge what is the appetite of the Commission in regard to allowing for metal roofs in either the entire city or portions of the city as long as the structural integrity of a home is not compromised.

Vice Mayor Mena: What did we decide when we talked about it recently?

Mayor Lago: Well, we talked about existing homes.

Vice Mayor Mena: Like a zone that we talked about.  
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Mayor Lago: There was a zone, and then I got from certain residents that said, you know why not our area. They were upset about that. We were talking about south of U.S.-1. I got certain residents who called me, and I understand their concerns and why they would want it. And I also made it very clear that, again, I don't have an issue if its done throughout the city, as long as its not done in historic homes and that if somebody wants to embark on a metal roof, that they meet the requirements in regards to not compromising the integrity of the structure, because as the Manager will tell you, once you remove 30-40,000 pounds of tiles, either they be clay or concrete off a building, you are affecting the ballast of the structure. And again, the last thing I want to do is pass a piece of legislation that when a hurricane 1 or 2 comes, you could potentially have a roof loss, instead of that being a normal occurrence here in the city where a 1 or 2 category storm comes and with a 30,000-pound roof pressing down on the property, excuse me, on the home, it will be sturdy and safe. So those are my concerns, but I wanted to kind of gauge staff's interest or appetite and what their opinion was on this matter.

City Manager Iglesias: The frame construction roofs are much more susceptible to that, but I just met with one of our residents showing them a roof that was done under the 94 South Florida Building Code, which you remember Mayor, had...on it, and even then there were issues with it, and we've always allowed that reduction in the uplift requirements, because we've never allowed shingle roofs or metal roofs, and so, we've always allowed that because its hard not to allow it when you have the roofing protocols of Dade County which are quite good and more than likely will maintain that roof on until the end, or at very high level. So, we couldn't really justify saying no, you can't use it, even though you are using a roofing based on today's protocols. So, we've allowed that in new roofs and old roofs simply because we do a lot of shingle, we never allowed metal roofs. We did a lot of copper roofs, we do a lot of copper roofs, that's a very, very expensive alternate, so it's very seldom done, and the few homes that we have copper roofs have been designed for the copper roof without that reduction. There is nothing in the Building Code that prevents us that would prevent that roof from being applied to any structure right now.

Mayor Lago: So, what is the appetite of the Commission, and I don't want to bring this up again if there is no appetite. Is there an appetite on the Commission for us to move forward in allowing a certain part of the city or allowing the entire city, as long as they meet certain protocols, obviously it's not historic, the property is not historic, they upgrade the existing structure of the building or structure? What is the appetite of the Commission?

Commissioner Anderson: This was an issue that we had worked on long before I ever ran for office and looking at the benefits of metal roofing, we allow copper everywhere, with some exceptions on historic type structures. So really it gets down to the type of material. If the structural integrity of the roof can take the absence of ballast on there and the homeowner is informed of what they need to do in order to meet those requirements, I have no problem with having metal roofs installed because of all the benefits there are. Copper not only is expensive, but environmentally its not the smart thing to be doing, so should we be promoting copper or should we promote something that's more environmentally sensitive.

City Manager Iglesias: Copper has been so expensive Commissioner that its hardly ever used anyway. Copper has become really a non-issue. The issue is determining that and looking at, this week looking at a truss plan for a resident, we took that consideration off, because we don't allow it.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Manager and Commissioner Anderson, and Mr. Trias, what do you think about, this is the last thing I have to say about this. Trying to find a road to see if there is support for this. Do you think there is a discussion that could be had with the BOA members? What do you think?

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yes. And what I would recommend is to have some guidelines. For example, standing metal roof only, as opposed to some other designs. Only gray and white. Believe me, I have worked in other places where the colors have been quite amazing.

City Manager Iglesias: Mayor, we could go with the corrugated which is not the same thing as a standing seam is what we are talking about.

Vice Mayor Mena: Do we have restrictions like that for like barrel tile roofs now?

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: We do have aesthetic recommendations, yes, and the three inches.

Vice Mayor Mena: Delineated instructions or is it just something that BOA will opine on?

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Typically, BOA opines on that, but I think from a practical point of view, its very difficult. When a property wants to do certain things, to say no, that's not appropriate for aesthetic reasons. Its easier if we have some guidelines. What happens with the metal also is that people may do, let's say, barrel tile as metal, imitating some other material and that's really not something that I would recommend.

Commissioner Anderson: So, I'll bring up the fact that I'm the one that came in with the ruling part of the imitation barrel tile, and also photos of it on homes. But when you look at soft clay tile up on a building 9 stories tall, you can't really tell that its meal tile that's shaped like barrels or not. So, clay tiles are very soft in a hurricane, rips up pretty readily and the metal doesn't. I don't want to necessarily exclude it only to flat type of metal roofs. If we have something that's more durable and from a distance of 9 stories, you can't tell the difference, we shouldn't foreclose it. Aesthetically it's the same; same color, same appearance, from that distance.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Commissioner, but its not the same. That is the reason why I can tell you it is not the same.

Commissioner Anderson: Well, from a distance of 9 stories, it is, and I have photos. I have photos. No one could tell the difference.

Vice Mayor Mena: Are we talking – I mean.

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Planning and Zoning Director Trias: What happens is, and one of the things I regret, many years ago, I did a fire station that had barrel tile out of metal – big mistake. And the reason was that it just looks exactly one color, exactly perfect, completely fake.

Commissioner Anderson: You need to look at some of the newer stuff that's out, they've come a long way. Just like metal doors when they first came out. They rusted, they dented. They have some really nice ones now. So, I don't think we need to foreclose it, especially when you're talking about clay tile tearing off during a windstorm and landing on the vehicles below and stuff like that, that we shouldn't foreclose the discussion.

City Manager Iglesias: I think that, actually I've been involved in the metal roof business for a long time. I've done high-rise buildings and heavy industrial buildings, I've done hundreds of thousands of square feet and been involved in that, and the metal roofs are actually quite poor at that time, they had a UL90 rating, and they failed miserably during Hurricane Andrew. What happened was that after Hurricane Andrew, we had the roofing protocols of Dade County which took care of the metal roof problem and also took care of failure problem that we had in regular roofing. The regular roofing requirements are quite good. They are tested, they are aged, they are tested in a wind tunnel, not the regular wind tunnel but special wind tunnel for material testing. So, it's come a long way, but actually back then, it only had a UL90 rating which was hard to get insurance. It would be like a sardine can at the end, it was called a delta wing effect and it would curl up like a sardine can. And so, due to the protocols after Andrew, it took care of both roofs. It took care of the metal roof, and it took care of the regular roof. Right now, roofs are the way the base coat, Mayor, as you know, you know how maintain caps are used now, the way its actually adhered and the fact that they use foam. If you fail that roof you are probably going to fail the roof.

Mayor Lago: Didn't they also add more gauge to the roof?

City Manager Iglesias: They added more and now all the materials are ASTM.

Mayor Lago: Okay.

City Manager Iglesias: That's why they are... They are actually ASTM, and they can't be fake. We have a lot of roofs that were coming from different countries sub steel, remember that did not meet ASTM requirements and they lasted ten years. So now everything is ASTM, everything is tested, everything is actually load tested and it resolved the problem in not only roofing, but also in the metal roofing problem. So that's the history of that.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: They have a minimum of 24 gauge, for example, in the regulations. In terms of aesthetics, I think one of the most important things, you don't want materials trying to look like other materials. Authenticity is what Coral Gables is about and if we start doing that, frankly, might as well not even do aesthetic review.

Commissioner Anderson: I could share with you all the pictures that I took of actual homes with installations, they are down in Pinecrest, some of them are in Fort Lauderdale, expensive waterway homes. This did not look fake.

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Vice Mayor Mena: Look, this part of the conversation, to me though, should not be the focus of the conversation. I think if the goal is to have metal roofs of some kind and take a step forward on that front, it should be effectively what you describe, so no historic homes, obviously you are not compromising the integrity of the home, etc.

Mayor Lago: Certain style of home.

Vice Mayor Mena: And then maybe, Ramon, you can work on certain recommendations that you think would make sense with Board of Architects to maybe get behind whether it's a color scheme or whether it's a specific type of metal roof. Why don't we start with that and then we can continue the discussion?

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: For new construction only, for example, yes. Certainly, with some regulation. We can come up with some language.

Mayor Lago: And by the way, let's not forget, there are two types of metal roofs that already exist here in the city. There are copper metal roofs which are incredibly expensive, that already exist in the city, and it's existed for 100 years almost, it's almost our centennial; and the second, are the groups of, I think about 15 to 20 roofs that were approved maybe a decade and-a-half ago, in a small window where metal roofs were allowed in a certain portion of the city. And then you also have metal roofs, third set of metal roofs that are allowed in areas that were annexed.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yes.

Mayor Lago: So, metal roofs exist in three different parts of the city.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: And George Merrick allowed them in the industrial district.

Mayor Lago: Yes. So that's the fourth opportunity where metal roofs exist. So, I would like for you, if possible, Mr. Trias, through the Manager, for you to give us your candid opinion in regard to where, like the Vice Mayor said, style, new versus old, additions, what type of metal roofs you would recommend be considered. And then, I would like the Commission to make a decision on whether we vote on this, we put it up for a referendum, like we did when I was on the P&Z and we had that most ridiculous vote in regards to trucks, and we see where the chips fall, because I've been having this conversation for a long time, and I think its time for us to make a decision and I don't want to keep bringing this up over and over again.

Vice Mayor Mena: I'm comfortable proceeding with it at the Commission level.

Mayor Lago: Me too.

Vice Mayor Mena: And I don't think I would limit it to a geographic zone as we discussed. I don't see the benefit of that. I think if you put the type of restrictions we are talking about, in terms of the types of homes and the aesthetic of the type of material, etc., then I think it will be okay.

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Planning and Zoning Director Trias: We would recommend new construction most likely only, in terms of a new house located somewhere in the city, and that historic...

Vice Mayor Mena: Is the presumption there that an existing home, if you were to try to go to metal that you have those integrity issues for sure, every time?

Mayor Lago: I think so.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yes. Personally, I would defer to our structural engineer.

Vice Mayor Mena: Because if that's the case, forget it, to me there is no real. If I'm told that it could have an impact on the integrity of the structure then that's a non-starter, obviously.

City Manager Iglesias: We have traditionally allowed that reduction because of the fact that we've never had metal, technically metal or shingle; those few homes that have copper have not taken that reduction that were new.

Mayor Lago: So, we could bring it back maybe in May?

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yes. Yes. We have some ideas already.

Mayor Lago: Okay. Mr. Clerk.

City Clerk Urquia: We do have a member of the public requesting to speak.

Mayor Lago: Okay.

City Clerk Urquia: It is Ms. Maria Cruz.

Mayor Lago: Ms. Cruz the floor is yours.

Ms. Cruz: Okay. I'm here.

Mayor Lago: Ms. Cruz the floor is yours.

Ms. Cruz: I'm here. Listen, first of all, I wanted to make sure you saw that I was still on. Second of all, I'm glad that you are going to revisit the issue, because the rule has to be made considering everything, not just what we think, but facts. And there are a lot of people that are waiting, so please next time you bring it up, I hope you have the right, you have done all the research and we can give people the answer that is really the answer, not I think, I believe, maybe, you know the real answer. Alright. Thank you. Have a wonderful day.

Mayor Lago: Thank you for the guidance. Mr. Clerk.

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City Clerk Urquia: Mr. Mayor, Mr. Rip Holmes also would like to address the Commission.

Mayor Lago: Alright. Then let's close the public comment after Mr. Holmes. Mr. Holmes the floor is yours, my friend.

Mr. Holmes: Thank you all very much. I am very grateful that we have a really great city, you know. We are talking now about metal roofs. I remember how long ago, was it about 2006 maybe, 7, that we had one proponent, a different Commissioner Anderson, Maria Anderson who was in favor of it, and the whole discussion went into a freefall dive. I think there were like – she was the only one in favor, yet I'm hearing today a consensus of yes, let's try to expand these possibilities. I don't mean to bring up something that's so depressing, but we have a state legislature that is hostile to these kinds of considerations and that's why I'm so happy to live in Coral Gables with your great leadership. Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Thank you sir. So, what is the first meeting in May?

City Clerk Urquia: May 10<sup>th</sup>.

Mayor Lago: How about the second one?

City Clerk Urquia: May 31<sup>st</sup>.

Mayor Lago: Let's put it on the May 31<sup>st</sup>.

City Clerk Urquia: Okay.

Mayor Lago: That should give staff enough time to really work on this. I don't want to rush this and put together a comprehensive plan and analysis to really provide the necessary guidance to make a decision at the Commission level.