

**City of Coral Gables
Virtual City Commission Meeting
July 14, 2020
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
Deputy Director Development Services, Devin Cejas
Development Services Director, Suramy Cabrera**

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Item F-1 [Start: 9:31 a.m.]

An Emergency Ordinance of the City Commission of Coral Gables, Florida, amending Division 21 “Temporary Uses” of the Zoning Code to create section 5-2111 “Covid-19 Emergency Business Recovery Use Permit,” to safely expand and create economic opportunities for businesses and certain flexibilities for civic uses in the City impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, providing for severability clause, repealer provision, codification, and providing for an effective date, and waiving the pre-publication requirement.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: F-1 – Emergency Ordinance.

City Attorney Ramos: F-1 is an Emergency Ordinance of the City Commission of Coral Gables, Florida, amending Division 21 “Temporary Uses” of the Zoning Code to create section 5-2111 “Covid-19 Emergency Business Recovery Use Permit,” to safely expand and create economic
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opportunities for businesses and certain flexibilities for civic uses in the City impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, providing for severability clause, repealer provision, codification, and providing for an effective date, and waiving the pre-publication requirement. I believe Mr. Cejas is on for this item. As a reminder, this is an Emergency Ordinance, it will not come back on Second Reading, accordingly it must be adopted by four-fifths vote.

Deputy Director Cejas: Good morning all, Devin Cejas, Deputy Director Development Services. In essence, this is an Emergency Ordinance that will allow certain flexibilities for economic opportunities for our existing businesses and also some flexibility for civic uses. Examples that we had been presented with are our educational facilities that may need to acquire trainers to respond to the social distances measures that are in place today, is one example and for businesses also allow flexibility for the opportunities for business to take place on private property, not necessarily directly in front of their establishment, but in your by arears. Do this through an expedited process to obtain this permit and I'm available for any questions.

City Attorney Ramos: Mayor this is a public hearing item.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Anybody who wishes to speak on behalf of the public? Alright, do I hear a motion?

Vice Mayor Lago: Mr. Cejas, just two quick questions. In regard to the actual permitting process. What do we expect in regard to the turnaround time? - and also when do these permits sunset? Thank you.

Deputy Director Cejas: The permits sunset in line with the emergency ordinance applied to Covid-19, or at any point the Manager deems is a concern with that permit. With regards to the permitting process, this is a little different than the...process as it may entail permitting for structures. With that said, we will expedite the process as a priority, but I think the time will depend on the nature of that permit.

City Attorney Ramos: Also, this section of the Zoning Code is expected to sunset in January.

Vice Mayor Lago: Yes, I just wanted to put that on the record. My understanding after speaking with the Manager that we were probably expecting 3 to 4-day turnaround time in regards to some of these permits which I think is very admirable, and I want to commend the City Manager, Mr. Cejas team and the City Attorney for ensuring that we do this as quickly as possible, because as Mr. Trowbridge said from the Chamber, we are experiencing this community, the restaurants are experiencing the most hard times that they've ever witnessed in their business career. So, anything that we can do to alleviate their current situation is greatly appreciated, so thank you again for your efforts.

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Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you.

Commissioner Mena: Mr. Mayor just briefly. I would just add, to Mr. Cejas and the whole department. Again, we talked about this a little bit before, but if you have a restaurant that given the circumstances is taking some sort of temporary measure, they set up some tables outside. Maybe they don't have a permit yet, maybe they've already applied and are waiting on approval. I just really want to encourage staff to be very flexible. I think, given the circumstances, these people are under really dire situation. Unless there is some sort of life safety issue that's evident from whatever it is, they are doing, they put a couple tables outside, please don't shut them down and wait for the approval of the permit. Let them have the couple tables outside, shepherd them through the process of getting the appropriate approval. If they have to make some adjustments, fine, walk them through that as well, but let's not just shut people down because they haven't got a permit yet. I know you guys are working hard to expedite it and that's fantastic. For the Vice Mayor's comments, but I just also want to encourage you if they are doing something relatively harmless let's not be technical about the fact that they don't have a temporary permit yet. Let's work with them on allowing them to do what they can to survive during this time.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: I would like to add that there are streets, special streets in Coral Gables that I'm thinking of Giralda west of Ponce, there are five restaurants there, if not six, and maybe we should help them by temporarily or at night or whatever, closing the street and allowing them to put tables outside. We have five, if not six restaurants in that street and we should help them with that, and that should be considered too.

Vice Mayor Lago: If I may, I just want to put on the record. I support Commissioner Mena's statement, along with the Mayor's statement, because this is the time to be as flexible as possible and ensuring that we make sure that as many of these restaurants survive, and I don't want to be too dire, but we've all seen the situation currently happening in our downtown. So, anything that we can do, please just for the record, I follow along with the Mayor's comments, along with Commissioner Mena's. Its important that we are as flexible as possible and do everything in our power to ensure viability. Thank you.

Deputy Director Cejas: Absolutely.

Commissioner Fors: Mayor, Mayor, I have a quick question for Mr. Cejas. Have you seen with the application of these permits any issue or burden as it relates to the approval, the type of furniture the restaurants proper proceeding?

Deputy Director Cejas: This is a different ordinance. The ordinance that I believe you allude to is the one that was passed several weeks ago and its already in process. With regards to the furniture, under that permit process, we are working with the business owners and we are extremely flexible. I believe our main concern with the City Manager is heel tip bottom to the chairs, so they don't
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damage our streetscape, but essentially, we are not applying our standard guidelines to outdoor seating to those permits. So, we are flexible with all...as to the temporary outdoor seating plans.

City Clerk Urquia: Mr. Mayor, we also have Suramy Cabrera who would like to make a couple comments.

Development Services Director Cabrera: Good morning, can everybody hear me?

Vice Mayor Lago: Yes.

Development Services Director Cabrera: Suramy Cabrera, Development Services Director and I think Devin addressed it pretty well. I just wanted to add to his response that with the outdoor seating, we have not shut down anybody that has put outdoor seating and perhaps hasn't completed the permitting process. We've also offered to sit with the applicants and I offered to personally go through the applications and help them respond to any comments that my staff may have had on those applications, in order to get them completed and approved as quickly as possible.

Vice Mayor Lago: Thank you Suramy.

Commissioner Mena: Mayor, I'm on board with what you were suggesting in terms of that specific scenario, but also if there are any others that are similar. I don't know how much coordination what needs to be involved there with the county of closing any roads, but I'm certainly open to that idea. There is a little less traffic now than there usually is, given how many places are closed, and to me, if its something that can assist several restaurants its worth exploring. So, I just don't want to have your comment past, I think that is something that I would encourage you and the Manager to explore, and if there is anything that we can do to support it, I'm absolutely on board.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Very, very good.

City Manager Iglesias: Please excuse me, I was muted and just unmuted right now. Mr. Mayor we are looking, the Public Works Department is working with Dade County to look at various streets...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Excuse me Peter, excuse me, but somebody needs to mute himself or herself, there is a lot of background noise here. Please be sensible or sensitive to the nature of this call, so please mute yourself if there is background noise. I'm sorry Peter, go ahead.

City Manager Iglesias: Yes Mayor – Economic Development is working with the Chief and various others to look at various streets so we can potentially close, and we are looking at that already, and so is the Public Works Department working with Dade County to look at various streets that we can close and maybe turn into some type of event there. Hence this issue about use.

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Just to clarify, it sunsets January 15th. There will be some structures permitted, but just to clarify they will be temporary permitted. To look at the seating, we currently have 13 applications for outside seating; six have been approved and seven pending. Those that are complete have been approved in two to three days. The issue about outside seating is simply safety. We want to make sure that ADA is maintained, and the safety is the biggest issue. We also have hydrants; we have a number of issues that we have to contend with when we deal with outside seating. We are looking at all those items and looking at them very, very quickly. So, I believe that these emergency ordinances that the Commission has passed has been very effective and hope they will continue to be effective during this pandemic. They all sunset January 15th, after the holidays.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you Peter. Mr. City Clerk anyone wishes to speak on this item?

City Clerk Urquia: No one has requested to speak on this item Mr. Mayor.

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

Vice Mayor Lago: So moved.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Second?

Commissioner Mena: Second.

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)