

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Items E-8 and E-9 are related
October 28, 2025
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Vince Lago
Vice Mayor Rhonda Anderson
Commissioner Melissa Castro
Commissioner Ariel Fernandez
Commissioner Richard D. Lara

City Staff

City Attorney, Cristina Suárez
City Manager, Peter Iglesias
City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Public Speaker(s)

Maria Cruz
Roberta Neway
Lisa DeTournay

Agenda Item E-8 and E-9 are related [Start: 3:10 p.m.]

E-8: An Ordinance of the City Commission amending the Future Land Use Map and Mixed-Use Overlay Districts Map of the City of Coral Gables Comprehensive Plan pursuant to Zoning Code Article 14, “Process,” Section 14-213, “Comprehensive Plan Text and Map Amendments,” and Small Scale amendment procedures (ss. 163.3187, Florida Statutes), from “Commercial Low-Rise Intensity” to “Commercial High-Rise Intensity” and to create the “University Station Rapid Transit District Overlay” for Blocks 155 and 156, Coral Gables Riviera Section Part 8, Tract “A,” Replat of Coral Gables Riviera Section Part 8, which are the properties bounded by South Dixie Highway, Caballero Boulevard, Madruga, and Turin Street (1150, 1190, 1250, 1320, and 1350 South Dixie Highway); providing for a repealer provision, severability clause, and providing for an effective date. (07 02 2025 PZB recommended approval, Vote: 5:1)

E-9: An Ordinance of the City Commission providing for map and text amendments to the City of Coral Gables Official Zoning Code pursuant to Zoning Code Article 14, “Process,” Section 14-212, “Zoning Code Text and Map Amendments,” by 1) amending Article 2, “Zoning Districts,” to create Section 2-408,

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“University Station Rapid Transit District Overlay” for promoting the use of mass transit facilities and pedestrian activities along transit corridors and near multimodal stations; 2) amending Appendix A, “Site Specific Zoning Regulations,” to remove inconsistent Site Specifics; 3) amending Article 14, “Process,” Section 14-204, “Transfer of Development Rights,” to expand Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs) receiving sites to the “University Station Rapid Transit District Overlay,” and 4) making Zoning District boundary changes from “Mixed-Use 1 (MX1)” to “Mixed-Use 3 (MX3)” and including within the “University Station Rapid Transit District Overlay” boundary for Blocks 155 and 156, Coral Gables Riviera Section Part 8, and Tract “A,” Replat of Coral Gables Riviera Section Part 8, which are the properties bounded by South Dixie Highway, Caballero Boulevard, Madruga, and Turin Street (1150, 1190, 1250, 1320, and 1350 South Dixie Highway), and to create the “University Station Rapid Transit District,” providing for repealer provision, severability clause, codification, and providing for an effective date. (07 02 2025 PZB recommended approval, Vote: 5:1)

Mayor Lago: We're going to go to E-8 and E-9. Mr. Clerk, are we ready?

City Clerk Urquia: Yes, Mr. Mayor, we are. All right.

City Attorney Suarez: E-8 is an ordinance of the City Commission amending the future land use map and mixed use overlay district's map of the City of Coral Gables Comprehensive Plan pursuant to Zoning Code Article 14 process section 14-213 Comprehensive Plan Text Map Amendments and small scale amendment procedures from commercial low rise intensity to commercial high rise intensity and to create the University Station Rapid Transit District Overlay for Blocks 155 and 156. Coral Gables Riviera Section Part 8, which are the properties bounded by South Dixie Highway, Caballero Boulevard, Madruga and Turin Street providing for repeater provisions of ability clause and providing for an effective date. E-9 is an ordinance of the City Commission providing for Map and Text Amendments to the Official Zoning Code pursuant to Zoning Code Article 14 “Process” Section 14-212 Zoning Code Text and Map Amendments by amending Article 2 Zoning Districts to create Section 2-408 University Station Rapid Transit District Overlay for promoting the use of mass transit facilities and pedestrian activities along transit corridors and near multimodal stations, amending appendix A site specific zoning regulations to remove inconsistent site specifics, amending Article 14 process section 14-204 transfer of development rights to expand transfer receiving sites to the University Station Rapid Transit District Overlay and making zoning district boundary changes for mixed use to mixed use 1 to mixed use 3 and including within the University Station Rapid Transit District Overlay boundary for Blocks 155 and 156, Coral Gables Riviera Section part 8, which are the properties bounded by South Dixie highway, Caballero Boulevard, Madruga and Turin Street and to create the University Station Rapid Transit District providing for repeater provisions of ability clause and providing for an effective date. This is a quasi-judicial item, so I ask that we consolidate for purposes of the public hearing and that anyone who will be testifying today be sworn in by the City Clerk, please.

City Clerk Urquia: Those who will be testifying on this item please stand and raise your right hand. These were affirmed testimony you'll provide today will be the truth and nothing but truth. Thank you.

Planning and Zoning Director: Thank you. Good afternoon, Jennifer Garcia Planning and Zoning Director. So, what's before you right now is a city-initiated overlay district and I'll go through that right now. As you know, the county did approve of their expansion of the rapid transit zone for the county on September 3rd and they created in effect the Coral Gables and Universities Sub-Zone. So, the RTZ expansion as they've approved legislation right now is as each property is added to the RTZ sub-zone it goes through a very streamlined process. Those are the pre-application conference which two staff people from the City Coral Gables can attend and then it would go to their Rapid Transit Development Impact Committee, the RTDIC, along with two individuals from the City Coral Gables staff and then go to their BCC, their Board of County Commissioners for adoption. This RTZ expansion for the county did grant them regulatory jurisdiction over properties as they add into their sub zones. Right now, there's only one property that's in their sub zone, that's a property that we know as the University Shopping Center. So as a result, the city started in June, I believe, to look at this area holistically and not property by property and we're looking at the area between Caballero and Turin facing US-1. So, you can see here the area highlighted in yellow is the study area between Caballero and Turin facing US-1 directly across the street from the University of Miami and of course abutting multifamily to the south or to the east. This is the area you can see, it's mostly two blocks, two mega blocks; Track A and then Block 155. So, the Future Land Use Map shows this area is a variety of land use designations, but it's mostly commercial low-rise intensity with such a mixed-use for the Paseo project which is down by Caballero and the Zoning Map shows that it's mostly MX1, which is our lowest mixed use of the nation with MX3 being for the Paseo project. The request right now for the city is we're requesting it to change Comprehensive Plan for the Future Land Use Map, as well as a Mixed-Use Map, as well as our Zoning Map changes and then the Zoning Code Text Amendments and I'll get to each of those right now. The Future Land Use Map right now as I said is, commercial low-rise intensity, and that is proposed to be changed to commercial high-rise intensity to be more compatible with the mixed use of the Paseo as well as the existing high rise that's on the Gables 1 Tower right now. The other map to be amended with the comprehensive plan would be the Mixed-Use Overlay District Map and I'll be adding a new overlay district for mixed use in the same area between Caballero and Turin facing US-1. The Zoning Map Amendment would consist of changing those zoning designations from MX1 to be MX3 for those four properties there. And this is showing a graphic of the existing zoning and land use on the upper part of the slide and that's showing that that low rise intensity as well as MX1, and then the second the bottom part of the slide is showing the proposed, which would be high rise intensity of a maximum height of 120 feet. So, as you know, this is a reaction to the county's RTZ sub zone, so this is a table comparing our current regulations on the left side, the county's RTZ as adopted in the middle, and then the proposed city

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overlay district is on the green on the right side. So as proposed the review would be very limited as far as internal staff review and then before the City Commission as a resolution site plan approval. The height would be 120 feet with additional allowance for up to 147 feet, if they provided an additional 5 percent public open space. The density would remain the same to be 125 units an acre. The FAR would be 3.0 with an option to have Med Bonus to allow for 3.5 FAR total, and then allowing TDRs to be a receipt in this area for a maximum of 4.375 FAR. The setbacks would be the same as we are today with 20 feet off the front facing US-1, as well as 25 feet in the rear for those larger deeper properties. And the open space remains the same to be 10 percent on the ground level, which also includes the setback areas. And the setbacks would be up to the City Architect based on whatever makes sense for the size of the property and to be more compatible with the adjacent residential districts in the back. The parking would be required for residential although not required residential for the county. We would require that except for a 50 percent reduction as well as a 25 percent parking reduction if they have a parking plan and it would make sense as far as being compatible with the area. So, this is showing the review processes compared to the county RTZ sub-zone on the right side, sorry on the left side, and the city's overlay process on the right side. So, the county as you know, when they adopt legislation, they adopt property to be added in each property at a time. So once that property is being added in, they go through what they call their site plan approval for a special exception approval. So, they do the pre-application conference, the Rapid Transit Development Impacts Committee review and then their Board of County Commissioners then adopt the site plan. What's proposed for you today is not our usual process but actually a very streamlined process of internal review by staff, provide comments and recommendations to the Commission and the Commission would then adopt or would review and adopt the site plan. So, this was reviewed by the Planning and Zoning Board in July of this year, and here we are for first reading. We did send out mail notice within 1,500 feet of the proposed overlay district as required by code and that was sent out twice, once for the PZB meeting in July, and also for today's meeting. The property was posted as well. The website was posted. There's a newspaper advertisement in July and we even had an informational video that was made by our Communications Staff. I think broadcasted but shared with ENEWS a couple of times, as well as on our website. Staff does determine that this to be consistent with the Comp Plan. As the Comp Plan does say we want to encourage development and intensity near our transit areas and transit corridors, and it does comply with findings of fact and satisfies it. Thank you. That's it.

Mayor Lago: Thank you so much. Mr. Manager.

City Manager Iglesias: Yes, Mayor. This is a proposal to try to work through the RTZ process. The RTZ sub-zone was created at the University of Miami. It does encompass the MARK Project. It does encompass for various other projects. We will be looking at -- this is an MX proposal. We will be looking at an MF proposal that would expand this later. The idea is to try to bring this project back under city review, which I think we are much better off than under county review.

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We would lose permit fees, potential impact fees and potential control of the project from a use perspective, from a CU perspective and even from a signage perspective.

Mayor Lago: So let me ask you a few questions just to put it on the record. I think it's important. So, we understand that certain behaviors have consequences. On the Planning and Zoning Board, when the MARK went, the project was presented in the Planning and Zoning Board. What was the height that was being proposed?

City Manager Iglesias: It was about eight stories.

Mayor Lago: And what did the code allow?

City Manager Iglesias: It was two stories over code.

Mayor Lago: Okay. Now, as a result of it was denied at RTZ, maybe we could have negotiated out to seven. We could have done some different things. As a result of the treatment in the Planning and Zoning Board, now they're going the RTZ route, correct? The county route.

City Manager Iglesias: Which could be Mayor, up to...

Mayor Lago: They're circumventing the city completely. We lose all power. And now they're going the RTZ route.

City Manager Iglesias: That is correct, Mayor, which they have no limit in FAR and have 150 feet.

Mayor Lago: 150 feet. How many stories is that?

City Manager Iglesias: That's anywhere from 14 to 15 stories.

Mayor Lago: Okay. So, let's put this on the record because I know that nobody wants to talk about it because it's just not a good thing to talk about. Nobody wants to deal with that, you know, the results of this blow. The two biggest proponents in opposition of the MARK were Felix Pardo and Sue. They were denied the approval, not even left to negotiate. I've been dealing with the MARK now with you for the past three months. Next week I'm going to meet with them, with the Manager, in an effort to see if we can scale back and bring this back into the city in one form or another. I'm not happy about the design. I've already had conversations with the MARK's representatives. They're coming to negotiate on multiple different fronts and hopefully mitigate some of the RTZ. What do I mean by that? I mean that we're losing millions of dollars by them going the route of the RTZ in regard to impact fees. And now instead of having a project that could have been seven stories, maybe one floor outside of the zoning code, now it could be 14 or 15. Signage we have no control over and usages we have no control over. And the design today looks nothing like the one

they were proffering to the City of Coral Gables. Did I say anything that's not in line with what you agree with?

City Manager Iglesias: What you said is correct, Mayor.

Mayor Lago: So now we have to agree, now we have, now we're going to negotiate from a position of complete and utter weakness. And the purpose of the RTZ overlay that we're doing here is to offer, proffer developers something that says the city, you can go to the RTZ, but don't go to the RTZ, go to the City of Coral Gables RTZ. It's not as lucrative as the County RTZ, but we'll expedite your permits, we'll try to do things. You're going to develop the project anyways, but let's try to stay within our standards so that we can control the beauty and the breadth of the project. So, these are examples. We had two major examples of the Planning and Zoning Board. We had an encounter with Commissioner Raquel Regalado from District 7 and then we also had the encounter with the MARK. So, there are ramifications for our behavior, especially on the Planning and Zoning Board. So again, it's not me talking about it, you can watch it on video. I've watched it multiple times on video, and it's been played for me. So, I'm going to be meeting with the MARK representatives next week. They're going to fly into town with the Manager in hopes that we can come to an agreement to present to the Commission so that you don't see a 150-foot building there. So maybe you see a building that may be lower in scope and in scale. And I also want to negotiate in regard to the impact fees. If you go the RTZ route, we lose millions of dollars of impact fees. So, we want to promote other projects that are already going to be redeveloped anyways. For example, the project at the three-acre site for the University of Miami adjacent to the MARK to come through our RTZ, not the county. Let us keep the impact fees. Let us use that for good things in the neighborhood. Let us do great things with that money. Also consider our design standards, our signage standards, things that are emblematic of the City Beautiful. Not go outside and follow the county's RTZ. So, this is a Hail Mary. Don't think that I'm -- it's a Hail Mary. Hail Mary. But by the way, we had the project approved at eight stories. They came here with eight stories. The code allowed six. It had the setbacks. It had the Mediterranean design. It had everything. Now they don't have to adhere to any of that if they go the RTZ county. So, we're in a very tough position. I will do my best and hopefully we'll be able to bring something back. Madam Vice Mayor.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Yeah, we have some tough choices to make and I'm just going to, you know, for the purposes of some folks that don't know what we're referring to by impact fees. These are park impact fees. These are the fees that we can use to, you know, develop new parks. We have Phillips Park. We have potentially new parks coming in. Lots of money for our community is being ripped away and put into the county's hands. On top of that, you have the permitting fees and next to zero in a way of architectural review. No quality architects there. No quality, you know, they don't have the staff that we do in a way of engineering and so forth to be able to take care of this. Setbacks along US-1 are horrible. No one's going to want to walk along there. I mean, between a

10-foot sidewalk and an arcade underneath 20 feet being pushed back to the minimum, you know, with 10 feet of planted area, that's a hedge. So, lots of difficult choices we've been left with. I've encouraged residents to embrace development, that is, you know, I understand you don't want it, that is reasonable because if you allow reasonable development then you avoid this type of scenario like we have on the MARK. I know when their minds were changed, and it was after that Planning and Zoning Board meeting and they were done with us. They said I'm not going to go to the Commission. They're not going to go to another Planning and Zoning Board meeting and be treated the way that they were treated in that meeting, not before the Planning and Zoning Board or have an extended process back then the way the Commission was at that time. When I came on and I was elected, there was no Live Local Act. The RTZ zone for the county had not been yet adopted. I know that it was a much more expansive RTZ that was proposed after I got elected. You know, many people along Ponce were extremely nervous about it going up the rest of Ponce. The MARK folio was brought in as a, you know, a direct and proximate result of the treatment that folks received at this Planning and Zoning Board meeting and unfortunately it wasn't enough to cause particular members to adjust their behavior accordingly and the same bad treatment was given to the Commissioner when she came to speak to the Board to explain why, you know, Coral Gables needed to embrace a rapid transit zone adjacent to the rail. This is not, as some people have written an opinion piece on is going to bleed into the residential neighborhood. That is not what this is about. This is not what this is for. This is to be the lesser of two other evils, the Live Local or the county RTZ where you have zero control, zero ability to control the uses of the property. So, we have three choices. The first is, do you want to see Live Local projects next to your home? Would you rather have a county RTZ project next to your zone or would you like to have this Commission, and our staff have the best possible option for you available? I'm in favor of this because it gives us the control. We have on these particular lots, they're what, 325 feet deep, roughly what, 25 feet I think it is in the rear to create a planted buffer. Is that the right number, Mr. Manager?

City Manager Iglesias: That's about the right number, Vice Mayor.

Vice Mayor Anderson: And in that 25 feet, which is a full depth of a handsome front yard in most of our homes, you can have an amazing, planted buffer, not a 10-foot hedge. So, these are the types of things and choices that we can make to make our city better. To be able to control the signage and where it goes and the type of uses that go into those properties. We really have no other choice right now. We don't. So, I'm in favor of this.

Mayor Lago: Yes, sir.

Commissioner Fernandez: So, I think the Mayor phrased it perfectly with the phrase this is a Hail Mary. This is our way of trying to retake control over this project. And I think every Commission meeting we have the conversation five or six times about the preemptions that we're getting from outside. Somebody doesn't get what they want from the city, they're going to go to the county or

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to the state. That's the reality that we're facing. It's always going to the other parent to figure out if they can get from the other parent what they can't get from this one. This presents us with an opportunity to try to bring it back, give us some say in the matter, because right now we really don't have a say in these projects. Basically, go through the county and the county makes a decision and completely out of Coral Gables hands. So, I think this is a solution that makes sense right now. It will present not just the funding component but also the opportunity to have a sit down like the Mayor is going to have with the developer to try to find solutions on projects which we've been able to successfully get on other projects. We've had numerous projects that have been considering Live Local and through sit downs and getting resident engagement, they've scaled their projects down and made them something that has worked for residents. I think this is the opportunity that we have. It's really, I think, the only one we have at the moment. So, I'll be voting in favor of this just to make sure that we are able to bring this back, give ourselves an opportunity to bring those impact fees back and give the city a bit of a say while still having a project there that doesn't have as big of an impact on the residents who live close to it.

Commissioner Lara: Through the Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Yes.

Commissioner Lara: So, this is not politicking, but I think it's a lesson to learn so we're not going to be doomed to making the same mistakes again and again and again. I think that the Planning and Zoning Board appointees are critical. These are not positions to be taken lightly and one really needs to understand the person's qualifications, their background and more importantly their vision for the city with a very important position they hold with the P&Z. And I believe that while there may be blame to go around because the process has taken too long, when they are in front of the P&Z, we must accelerate the process, the review process. We need to be much more of an efficient body at the P&Z in order to strategically solicit and obtain the best outcomes for the City of Coral Gables rather than what the past has shown. And with respect to Felix Pardo and Sue Kawalerski in particular, I think there was a lack of strategic vision, a lack of understanding in the worst of scenarios of what exactly delay, kicking the can down the road at best, and insulting a Commissioner from the County coming to visit to help explain to the city how the RTZ works and what they would be willing to do to assist us. It was short-sighted and destructive and incredibly counterintuitive to what it is that the small but vocal group that are anti-development in every sense of that misnomer, against development, which I've said many, many times, what exactly are you saying when you say you're against development? You're not saying really anything other than exhibiting some profound level of ignorance. Obviously, development can and should be a good thing when done responsibly and intelligently rather than condemn the word as being a pejorative, just the word development. So, in this case, Mr. Mayor, when you were recounting the history, Vice Mayor, where we had it within our grasp, a proposal of eight stories, you understand, that's a

starting point. You could have negotiated that down to seven. But looking back on it all, you never pass up a good deal looking for the best deal. Because if all you can do in your life is say, geez, all I've done are good deals, well, God bless you, okay? But in this instant, it's turned out to be a really, really, really bad deal and counterintuitive and counterproductive to what the vocal group will say they want no development of any kind. Now you're getting development off the scale, right? When we really had that mismanaged. So, when you say you've got a Hail Mary to throw, Mayor, you know, you've got a Hail Mary in another stadium that you've got to be able to land in the end zone. Because we really have it stacked up against us, but not only with respect to the MARK, but I fear the domino effect going down the line. So, we have got to think outside the box, we have got to be proactive, we've got to be strategic in everything we do, because the folks all the way up in Tallahassee, those in the county are going to out game us. Because in the end, with the power of the pen, and the legislation that grows more and more encroaching onto us, where Home Rule and home decision erodes every single day, we've got to be smarter than the way this game has been played. So, when we make appointments to the P&Z, when we make appointments to the special boards, we better be sure about what we're doing, because the impact and the repercussions are material, and they're long lasting.

Commissioner Fernandez: I think, Commissioner, one of the things that we as a Commission decided to take an initiative on this is informing residents about the RTZ, informing residents about Live Local, because I think a lot of members of our community weren't really aware of what it was and how it worked. I remember when we were discussing the Almeria project, a lot of the residents who were opposing the project originally were just saying, well, you know, we'll fight the project in Tallahassee. Well, that's not how Live Local works. And we had to go through a process of explaining how Live Local works. And, you know, like the Vice Mayor was saying, two years ago, or three years ago now, when she was elected, Live Local wasn't even a thing. The whole conversation of development has changed over the last three years because of the fact that now we have state and county who are now saying, you know what, we can make decisions for you.

Mayor Lago: Commissioner, but it's even gotten worse than that. And this is what I tried to state at the beginning of the meeting today with the issue that we dealt with historic preservation. When would you have ever thought a home of the magnitude that was demolished in Gables Estates by such an exceptional, all our architects here are amazing, you know, Fink, Paste, all of them are amazing. But you're talking about a world-renowned architect. They just bulldozed the house, not because it had structural issues, not because the law has changed, we're preempted, and it was in a flood area, potential flood area. So, they can change the laws for one minute. When would you have ever believed that somebody would tell you that a resident could cut their tree down, an oak tree, a perfectly fine oak tree, because on their property. Now that type of preemption exists as a result of Tallahassee. Again, you know, I try to limit what I say about Tallahassee because at the end of the day, we have to go up there and advocate, and I have the utmost respect for our Senators,

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our State Reps, and our Governor. But we have to be very thoughtful, very thoughtful, be very careful, because nobody would have said, and this RTZ was going to come down the pipe, nobody would have thought Live Local would have come down the pipe, and now we find ourselves in a position where we have to be careful and we have to negotiate, negotiate on deals. Like Commissioner Lara said, let's get a good deal. It may not be a great deal, but it's a good deal. And, you know, when you're talking about an eight-story building, when the court allows six, okay, well, let's negotiate. Expedited permits, maybe we'll give you seven stories, we'll give you a little additional intensity outside of the code, but we limit the height of the building. We've been able to do that before. We've done that before for green space. We've done that for other things. But here now, we don't even have any power whatsoever. Now we're even losing revenue, impact fees. So, it's only going to get more complicated. Yes, Commissioner.

Commissioner Castro: Yeah, through the Mayor. Okay, so number one, I want to congratulate the City Manager for putting this together. Number two, I want to stand by Felix Pardo and Sue. I know everybody here has been talking about them. They're not really present, but I'll go ahead and speak on their behalf. They were there to represent the Planning and Zoning Board, and I think what residents expect is for us to not just rubber stamp things and to fight for what we know the community wants. And I believe that's what they were doing. I'm going to go ahead and defend them. That's my position. Number two, I'm not ready to take this vote. I do think it's in the best interest of the city, but I'm not ready to take this vote because I believe I need to reach out as Commissioner, as myself, to the community, maybe do a Town Hall, because the residents that have reached out to me do not understand. And I have referenced them back to that video that we proposed that's out there with the Live Local and the RTZ, but I will not be supporting this. I do not feel comfortable. And yes, the Vice Mayor said it doesn't really encroach in the residential zone homes, it actually does, because most of the residents that have reached out to me are basically in South Gables. They're right next to that Rapid Zone, that Rapid, the RTZ. So, I do, I thank you. I think we're on the right track, but today I'm not ready to make this vote.

Commissioner Lara: Through the Mayor.

Mayor Lago: But if I may first, just to put a little clarity into regards to Commissioner Castro's comments, let me read between the lines so I can tell all the residents. Number one, I will not be voting on this so that I can later say that I didn't vote on this. Remember, a developer can say, I don't want to use the Coral Gables zoning code. I just go RTZ. This is like RTZ light. Please pray to God that you do it. Please. There's no reason why not to support this. This is, again, and I want to put on the record, this is a clip for social media. This is a clip for media, for a future campaign ad. We have our hands tied. We have to support this. There's no other choice. We want developers to accept this. That's number one. Number two, in regard to Felix Pardo. Felix Pardo, it's inexcusable. He's an architect. He knows very well what he was doing. He knew where the RTZ

was. He did not catch him off guard. He knew exactly what he did when he grandstands along with Sue. Sue works for the county. She's well aware of what's happening and what was coming down the pipe, and it had already been approved by the county. Yes or no, Mr. Manager?

City Manager Iglesias: Yes, Mayor.

Mayor Lago: They knew. What we were there to do was to hold hands with the developer and say, please, let's negotiate so you can come our way, not go towards the RTZ. And what we did, we missed an opportunity, and we decided to grandstand and just push back the developer along with Commissioner Raquel Regalado. So, at the end of the day, it was a foolish mistake, and we're paying the consequences for it.

City Manager Iglesias: Through the Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Yes, sir.

City Manager Iglesias: Thank you, Mayor. The project that was presented, the original project, was the MARK. That area is MX1. It came as MX2, 97 feet. The county now is MX3 with 150 feet. It was two buildings with a 50-foot linear plaza, which was quite nice. This current project has nothing like that. This current project is one box compared to two buildings which are architecturally much, much better than what is proposed now. So, in hindsight, we went from MX2 to MX3 from a beautiful project. Really, compared to this, it's not comparable to what the proposal is. So, this is critical that we accept this now and give us a fighting chance to get this project back, which is the intent of what we're trying to do.

Mayor Lago: Commissioner.

Commissioner Lara: Mr. Mayor, yes. So, Commissioner Castro, I would urge you to vote and not punt. What we need, and I think it's crystal clear and I think it's self-evident, but I'm trying to convince you not only to vote, but to vote for it. This should be unanimous from this dais. The ship has sailed. We're trying to turn the rudder hard and see if we can point it in the 180-degree different direction. You want more resident input is what I understood, right? Because you want a Town Hall to discuss this in support of you deferring voting on this item. Am I right?

Commissioner Castro: Correct.

Commissioner Lara: Okay. Unlike your proposal for guidance for the sidewalks, you know, where you're looking for something to be superior to resident preference, right? Now you're urging resident preference. It's hard to keep track of where you really place resident preferences. But this has been timely noticed over many, many months. I don't believe this is a situation where the residents are unaware. Sue Kawalerski on the record said, I was unaware. The residents are unaware. Well, that's just a bald-faced lie. Incorrect statement of facts. The truth of the matter is

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that she was wrong when she said that before we and the Commission voted her off that board. What we need to do is try to focus on the problem at hand. And one of the things I mentioned when I thought we had a problem was delay. The P&Z delayed. And if you are going to be deferring your vote on this, at best, you're delaying. At worst, you're abdicating your obligation as an elected official to vote. I would urge you not only to vote, but to vote in favor of it. Because as much as I have all the faith in the world in our Mayor to be able to negotiate, it is he's going to be blindfolded, too, when you throw it. It's just going to be a real shot in the dark.

Mayor Lago: And I'm not Doug Flutie.

Commissioner Lara: But it's the only -- but it's the only option. And I like to think outside the box, but I can't think of another way to go. We need to also provide the Mayor with the ability to go and negotiate knowing that he has the five votes in support. Unity on this is important. Much more important than a soundbite.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Through the Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Madam Vice Mayor.

Vice Mayor Anderson: So, what got us here is exactly what you're doing. Trying to punt. You're trying to delay. The delay that the Planning and Zoning Board did. The first time around when they had the opportunity to salvage the MARK project was a delay. The decision was made to go to the county RTZ. We have additional projects coming down the pike that can make that same choice, too. So, if what you're voting for is you're voting in favor of more projects to go to the county RTZ by failing to vote on this or voting against it, just remember that's what your vote is going to be for. Bigger, uglier, with less setbacks and less resident input. What I expect out of my Planning and Zoning Board members is not what happened on the MARK project. I expect constructive discourse, suggestions for improvements, not stonewalling a project to make sure that it supposedly doesn't get built because you did exactly the opposite. And that was patently obvious that Mr. Pardo understood the consequences of his action when Commissioner Regalado came and supported this very ordinance that he voted in favor of. He voted in favor of this. And after this, through the Gables Good Government, Director Garcia, myself, and two others had a symposium where we explained to people the law. What does the Live Local Act allow? What does the RTZ zone allow? And what our options are. It was eye-opening for everybody in the room at the Coral Gables Museum.

Mayor Lago: Madam Vice Mayor, I was there.

Vice Mayor Anderson: You were there.

Mayor Lago: And it was a packed house.

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Vice Mayor Anderson: It was a packed house. And it was very eye-opening. Many people thought we could preempt the state or preempt the county. We have zero ability to preempt anybody. What we can do is, we can offer them options. And that's what we're going to be able to do. What we can do with these options is try to discourage our County Commissioner from bringing additional folios into the county RTZ. And if you fail to do that, you will be encouraging her because we're stonewalling once again to bring additional folios into the RTZ, you will cause the same result. And history will repeat itself if you stonewall.

Commissioner Castro: Through the Mayor.

Vice Mayor Anderson: This needs to have a vote today.

Commissioner Castro: Through the Mayor. You know what? I'm very surprised on how passionate my colleagues talk to me. It's fascinating. But that's totally okay. Everybody here, this is such a great Commission. You know why? Because we all have different ways of thinking. And I think that has to be respected, number one. Number two, no, residents are not aware of what is happening. We've tried to advocate a little. We've tried to put out information out there. But they are not -- not a lot of them are aware of what is happening. So, no, I'm not going to defer this item because I would have to motion to defer and I'm not going to have the support. So, yes, it is my duty to vote on this item. And I will tell you one thing. I will not vote to upzone to MX3 at no circumstance without reaching out to the people I represent to the people that I promised I would never do this. So, no, my vote would be definitely not -- I will not support this. But there's no worry, guys, because I'm pretty sure -- I'm pretty sure we have all the votes here. So, you don't have to convince me to vote yes. My vote will be no. This will not be deferred. I don't have the support to defer this. And that's that.

Mayor Lago: If I may. Sorry. I'm just so frustrated. I apologize. I know that Marmot at the Coral Gables Gazette is chomping at the bit to include that sound bite. But I want to reiterate this, so everybody understands because they understand it. Everybody doesn't understand how you don't understand it. You come in as a developer. Let me give you an example. The three-acre parcel next door which the University of Miami owns and is right now selling, they're going to sell that. It's going to be a huge number. The new owner of that project is going to come and have two options. Option A would be using the Coral Gables zoning code or option B, go to the RTZ. That's what's available -- that's what's available right now. The RTZ or the Coral Gables zoning code or Live Local. Those are your three options. Two out of the three are not in benefit of the City of Coral Gables for multiple reasons. We lose signage rights, usage rights. We lose millions in impact fees. We lose our design control of the exterior facade of the building. It doesn't have to be Mediterranean, and we lose control of the zoning. At least before when you gave somebody a benefit, you could say, okay, let's negotiate. You want an additional 17 feet like Codina and Cadre wanted? Perfect. We would like to see a beautiful park contribution. We would like to see traffic

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calming. We would like to see lighting in the neighborhood. We would like to see sidewalks. We would like to see trees in the neighborhoods. We've done it. We did it with Agave. We did it with the Plaza. Even when I voted against the project, we got trolleys. We did a bunch of things. Now we cannot negotiate. The purpose of this is to plead and beg through this legislation that the developers will use this vehicle to achieve their goal at a much lesser scale because we're offering them different opportunities to reach their end goal at a much faster opportunity. So, at the end of the day, it's not about resident input. Residents know this. We're trying to avoid a catastrophe where you have a project that is, and I see how the residents were in the room. They shake their heads because they're agreeing with it. You're trying to save development sites that hopefully would be lesser in scale and in mass by using E-8 and E-9. If not, why would I leave you with this? Just think about this. If you're a developer and you own and you just bought the three-acre site from the University of Miami, why would you use the City of Coral Gables zoning code when you just go to the RTZ? Save yourself money. Save yourself time. Not have to meet our zoning requirements. Not have to meet our design standards, which are a lot more expensive when you build. If I may, Madam Zoning Director, may I ask you a quick question through the Manager? Is it more expensive to build, would you say, Mediterranean? Yes or no?

Planning and Zoning Director: Yes.

Mayor Lago: Okay. So, these are all reasons why a developer would say no to the Coral Gables zoning code and yes to the RTZ from the county. Commissioner Lara.

Commissioner Lara: Briefly. So, Commissioner Castro, I know you are saying that you're surprised, but I speak with the same passion towards you and towards any other of my fellow colleagues in the Commission because I'm very passionate about us being up here and doing what we're doing which is such a privilege to do for the residents of Coral Gables. And your voice matters. That's why I'm spending, I would assume we have sufficient votes to pass it. But your vote and your voice matters to me. That's why I've been spending this time trying to see if I understand you so that I can better convince you. When you say that you will never vote for MX3, do you understand you're not voting on whether this goes to MX3? I hope you're not proceeding from the false premise that the RTZ is going to go away or that this is already MX3. I mean do we can we you and I agree on that that it's already MX3?

Mayor Lago: Why because of the RTZ?

Commissioner Castro: Do you want me to answer you?

Mayor Lago: Through the Mayor, please.

Commissioner Lara: Well, I'm almost done. I think it's rhetorical, but we do agree that whether you vote or not it's RTZ is deemed MX3 already. I mean, can we agree on that?

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Commissioner Castro: No.

Commissioner Lara: Okay well then.

Commissioner Castro: I have a different opinion.

Commissioner Lara: Understood but today my, it's not just my opinion. Okay it's a fact. Okay is that it is MX3 and what the Mayor and I hope a unanimous vote from us and the Commission are going to hope to do is to control that process so that we can do it through this overlay. Which by the way was voted five to one in favor of it by the P&Z. Okay. So I don't understand how anybody can be against it if what you want to do is bring back to Coral Gables some say, some control, something that we have influence over because to vote either against this ordinance or to not vote at all on it is to literally hand it to the county and that I am against and I'm urging you to reconsider and vote for it.

Commissioner Castro: Through the Mayor. What I said is that I'm not going to vote to upzone to MX3. I will be responsible with that vote without going to a Town Hall and without letting people know from my side of the story how this benefits the city. I haven't gotten the chance to do that so if I would have gotten the chance and I'm pretty sure they would understand it, I would feel more comfortable saying, you know, this is something that I promised I would never do. Okay and my name would not be on this right now without people understanding why I'm doing it. So, no. I appreciate you trying to convince me it's not going to happen, but guys don't worry you have the votes just go ahead and vote that's it what's the problem why are you trying to convince me so bad.

Mayor Lago: So, two quick things. Number one, I agree don't try to convince her. I'm sorry. Mr. Clerk.

City Clerk Urquia: Yes Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Will you make a public record of a request and send it to my colleagues in the Commission how we voted on the last, I think the last projects over the last two years. I already made that, I think it's we've all been in unanimous except for one where Commissioner Castro voted against, by the way, all those projects required a zoning change just so you're aware. So, you have voted against projects that do not conform with the zoning code, and we've done it because this is the betterment of the city, parks, and different things that are appropriate. So, you have voted against. You have not been a strict adherent to the zoning code. I just want to put that on the record. I know I won't make the Gazette or Political Cortadito, but I still got to put it on the record. We got to move forward. We got a long agenda today, okay. This makes more sense and I'm tired of explaining it and I think Commissioner Lara put it best. This is not MX2. This is MX3 already. It's already done. Nobody in their right mind as a developer would pay tens of millions of dollars, 80, 90 million dollars for a property say, you know what, I'm going to, I'm going to accept less. I don't

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want to build more. I want to - I want to design a Mediterranean because I want to spend a ton more money. I don't want to have control over signage. I want to pay more impact fees. If you don't see that, then you're just being disingenuous, at the end of the day, playing politics. This is an effort to throw a Hail Mary and negotiate, which I will do, God willing, we have the approval today. Commissioner Fernandez.

Commissioner Fernandez: I just wanted to echo the words of Commissioner Lara. I respect your opinion, and I think you should be allowed to vote however you want. This doesn't have to be a unanimous vote, but I do see it as upholding the code that's already there because the county has already changed our code for us. This just gives us the ability to have a say in the matter. It gives us an ability to bring the impact fees back and that's the way I look at it. Perhaps a suggestion is hold a Town Hall between first and second reading, so that you can get their input and maybe we can make a unanimous vote in November or December, whenever it comes up for second reading, but for me I'll make the motion.

Mayor Lago: And by the way, another thing too, Commissioner, I think is we have to point out again, you could have held a Town Hall meeting July, August, September, October. This has been going on since July. We've had multiple discussions, multiple meetings on the dais. We've discussed it at multiple different levels here in the city. At the end of the day, I hold two Town Hall meetings a year to have the residents. We can put together a Town Hall within a week. Why would you wait to make a statement about putting a Town Hall the day of the vote, it just it just seems like political posturing in my opinion. We have a motion and a second

Vice Mayor Anderson: I'll second it and reiterate, you know for folks that want to learn more about any issue there's many times that the Gables Good Government does these types of informational sessions. We had a packed house, people learned a lot, we all learned a lot during the process and thank you Ms. Garcia for participating in that. It was very informative I think for everyone. We need to move forward.

Mayor Lago: Yep.

Commissioner Lara: That was, if I could say, that was a packed GGG meeting, packed with you and Jennifer, as well attended. We had a developer there. We had somebody from the city. We had the most learning room only, most learned people coming from different angles to do what I felt was the big takeaway. The big takeaway for me was, must think outside the box.

Mayor Lago: Negotiate.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Right, right.

Commissioner Lara: That was a big takeaway.

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Vice Mayor Anderson: And Commissioner Regalado's Chief of Staff was there

Mayor Lago: Yep. Negotiate.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Many, many people that didn't understand the true power and impact of the RTZ zone in our city and they understand that we must take action if we don't want our zoning code taken over.

Mayor Lago: All right we have a motion a second. Do we have any public comment?

City Clerk Urquia: Yes, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Go ahead.

City Clerk Urquia: First speaker Mrs. Maria Cruz.

Mrs. Cruz: Mrs. Maria Cruz. It is Mrs. I will refuse to answer to anything but Mrs., whether the Mayor wants it or not. Very happy 55 years of marriage, no fooling around, no affairs. I refuse to be disrespected. If he cannot find a way to call me by my real name, then you know what, I will call you by a nickname instead of Mayor. Here we go again. This all could have been avoided had this city, this administration taken the time to do what they did after the fact. This is what happens very, very often. I thought we were over that because in the past it happened, but now we're back at it. People need to know. We talk about transparency. Most residents in this city did not know the options. Nobody took the time to tell them. I think I come to Commission. I think I hear. I had no idea what was going to Planning and Zoning that day, because Planning and Zoning people heard it at the last minute that this was coming up. Okay. This is what happened. You all decided that you knew best, and you were going to cut deals with the county without letting the people know. And let me tell you something before I get cut off, because I know somebody had a minute over, but I won't get it. You're talking about the Mayor is going to go negotiate, there's five of you. In order for the Mayor to go negotiate because he's not a strong Mayor. He's one voice of five. You all need to ask him, and you need to move it, and you need to give him permission to do it in your name. You cannot just say, he cannot stand here and say, "I am going to do. I will do. No. You need the consent of the other people in order to do it, because you're not a strong Mayor, sorry, you're one of five. And I didn't see on the things that the Mayor can do, negotiate for the city without getting somebody to nominate him and vote for it. That is what's wrong. People need to know. I am telling you that if the residents do then what they know now, there would have been no issue, but this administration chose to get together with the county, decide with the county, tell the county how much we could do before they talk to the people, and that is what's wrong. The people in the city want to know and I'm running because I know I'm not going to get any more time and the bell is going to ring, because you know what, Nick Cabrera could come up and talk

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without even being called, the other man spoke for a minute something, but Maria Cruz has to go by the rules. Okay.

City Clerk Urquia: Roberta Neway.

Mayor Lago: Hold on. Wait, wait, wait. As I read at the beginning of the meeting. As a reminder, these comments, public comments are limited to those items on the agenda or within the scope of the city's Commission jurisdiction. Half of the items at the beginning of Mrs. Maria Cruz's comments are not items on the agenda. That is your first and only warning. Next time you make an accusation, or you make statements like that, you will not be allowed back in the Commission Agenda. You will not be allowed back in here. That is the end. Okay. You're not going to disrespect me and you're not going to disrespect this Commission. Yes, I don't want to hear about your wedding. I don't want to hear about affairs and all kinds of stuff. It comes to an end. That's the 10th, 8th, 9th time you've done it here, right. If anybody would like to contest it, you can contest the Commissioner. Now in reference to...

Commissioner Castro: Through the Mayor.

Mayor Lago: I'm not done yet. I'm not done.

Commissioner Castro: Okay. I'm glad you're not done. You just addressed me and I'm going to talk.

Mayor Lago: Let me finish. Let me finish.

Commissioner Castro: No, you're not going to finish. City Attorney, can you please clarify on the things that the Mayor was talking about.

City Attorney Suarez: So do you want me to clarify his ability to remind speakers to stick to the agenda item. He can. So, when public speakers are coming up during public comment, you're supposed to limit your comments to the item that's being discussed.

Commissioner Castro: Okay. So, if he's addressing a resident...

Mayor Lago: I'm done.

Commissioner Castro: Oh, Lord. Oh, Lord. So, if he is addressing a resident in a unpolite, disrespectful way, suggesting that you know she's not married anymore when we know very well her husband has just passed. You're trying to tell me it is inappropriate for her to go ahead and address that.

Mayor Lago: Commissioner, you can play the game all you want.

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Commissioner Castro: That's disrespect.

Mayor Lago: Again listen, you got one warning. The next one you're out of you're out of the halls. Okay. You will respect the Commission; you will respect the City of Coral Gables bottom line. Let's do this, because I would like to make it formal. I was doing the city a favor and meeting with the developer and the Manager and his team to have a conversation on how we can bring back millions of dollars of impact fees. Just if I may, just if I may. We did this game before in Tallahassee when Melissa Castro went up to Tallahassee.

Commissioner Castro: Commissioner, sir. Commissioner. Respect.

Mayor Lago: And they came back with zero dollars after the year before the Vice Mayor and I had gone up there and got over three million dollars when we didn't go up there. So, if you don't want me to be the person that negotiates this deal, let the Commission have somebody else. I have no problems with that. I was just trying to help out and try to build some consensus after the disaster that was created at the Planning and Zoning Board. So does the Commission want to take a position on me representing them having a meeting, which has not been set yet, by the way, we've been in conversations.

Commissioner Lara: I'll move that the Mayor conduct the negotiations.

Vice Mayor Anderson: I'll second.

City Attorney Suarez: Mayor, if I may.

Mayor Lago: Yes.

City Attorney Suarez: I just want to clarify. Section 2-28 of the code says that among the Mayor's duties include, to represent the City Commission in negotiations, meetings, and functions. So obviously those negotiations are subject to Commission review and approval. It doesn't mean that you know, you sign at the bottom line.

Mayor Lago: I understand that but, it's the constant contempt, it's the constant effort to undermine me. This was commonplace under Amos Rojas. It's not commonplace here. We're running a real meeting here, so at the end of the day you may not like the fact that you don't have control and you can do as you please, fire and hire, and bring incompetent people here to run this place like a clown show. At the end of the day, we're going to run it the right way. I want to even have more authority from my colleagues, from my colleagues where they have the faith and trust that I'm going to do everything I possibly can, like I've done what I've negotiated FPL deals, when I've done other things here, when I negotiated the Merrick Manor deal years ago, in an effort to bring it to a close. We have a motion, and we have a second from the Vice Mayor in regard to me leading the effort to try to correct this disastrous situation created by Melissa Castro's appointment.

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City Clerk Urquia: I have another motion on the floor before.

Mayor Lago: That's fine. Let's hear mine first.

Commissioner Fernandez: We would have to withdraw the other motion.

Mayor Lago: Withdraw the other one. Let's go. We can do it. I don't ask for much.

City Clerk Urquia: Do you still want to continue the public comment before you vote on this.

Mayor Lago: Look, we don't want to do -- we're going to do it after. Let's finish the public comment here and then we'll come back, but I want to be sure we address it because I'm tired of the undermining effort that we have here going on here.

City Clerk Urquia: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. Next speaker, Roberta Neway.

Ms. Neway: Hello, Roberta Neway, 1236 South Alhambra Circle 33146. I'm a half mile from the proposed overlay, so it definitely affects me and to me, this overlay is the best way to ensure that the development harmonizes with the established neighborhoods, and it's also the best way to ensure that impact fees are used in such a way that we, the residents, benefit from the development. And that's it. I could go off topic, but I won't. Thank you for your time.

Mayor Lago: Thank you. May I ask you a question, Roberta. May I because you're pretty well connected amongst residents and different organizations. Do you think the residents are starting to understand a little bit more about the RTZ and the impacts of the RTZ.

Ms. Neway: I think the people in my neighborhood do, the ones that pay attention, yes. Definitely.

Mayor Lago: Thank you. Thank you very much.

City Clerk Urquia: Mr. Mayor, I'm going to go to Zoom next. The speaker is Lisa DeTournay

Mayor Lago: Lisa, the floor is yours.

Ms. DeTournay: Hi, can you hear me?

Mayor Lago: Yes, ma'am, we can.

Ms. DeTournay: Okay. Lisa DeTournay, 10 Aragon Avenue. You saw me earlier this morning.

Mayor Lago: Yes.

Ms. DeTournay: I have a property in that area and my house used to be in that immediate area as well. So, I'm pretty familiar with the residents the locale, but what I want to say is there were so many resident meetings with the developers about this project being held from May 2023 through

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February 2024, at least five of which I attended; and the room was packed with residents every time. I don't recall any Coral Gables City Commissioners attending any of those meetings to express opposition, but the residents were heard, at least we thought so. We had concerns as to the height, the density, the parking, and the traffic, because after the Thesis was built that neighborhood has been inundated with horrible traffic trying to get out especially in the mornings get out on US-1. So, I even remember seeing the property owner roll his eyes as he walked out of the meeting, because he was so fed up with the residents' concerns. After that the meeting stopped. One time they brought up Live Local like everybody's threatening Live Local, but I don't think they would have qualified since they're primarily aimed at students going to U of M. Anyway, let's go to the July 2025, when Commissioner Raquel Regalado attended the City Commission meeting to announce that the developers had decided to pursue and had been granted the RTZ status in Miami. The Planning and Zoning meeting came after that, so please stop blaming Sue Kawalewski for what was happening already before that meeting came, and as well, it's a shame that none of you were being more proactive two years prior to when all of this was starting. We were very civil, we residents. We asked them for a simple decrease of one floor. Everybody was very congenial, and we thought that that was the end of it. So anyway, that's where we are right now, and I just have to make another comment. Mr. Lara, you weren't there during this period of time, so there's nothing to say about you, but I really, I am hurt by the way that you speak down to toward residents being ignorant or not informed of so many things. I'm a doctor, I show a lot of respect and concern about what's happening in my community. I've lived in Coral Gables for 35 years, and I just think that people deserve more respect than you're giving them. And Mr. Lago, Mayor Lago, I'm sorry, you may not raise your voice, but you did campaign on bringing back decorum and civility to these meetings. You don't raise your voice, but your comments are hurtful toward people and sarcastic toward Commissioner Castro. I just like to see, I would like to see all of you working together rather than fighting, especially when somebody comes up with proposals that are supposed to be for the betterment of the residents. Anyway, well thank you for listening to me.

Mayor Lago: May I respond to you; may I respond to you.

Ms. DeTournay: Of course. Of course.

Mayor Lago: I just want to put on the record. Were you at the meeting at the public meeting that I held in your neighborhood at that residence house on the water.

Ms. DeTournay: No. I was not at that meeting. However, wait, the one – yeah, but that was the Mahi Canal. You're talking about before the election. Yes, I was at that meeting.

Mayor Lago: I was invited by one of the residents to go speak about the issue of the RTZ. The reason why I bring that up is because, a lot of residents in that meeting I was able to explain to them the what the forthcoming RTZ and what was happening. We did have a meeting; there were

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many other residents in that area who were involved. In regard to being collegial and respectful. I'm more than willing to listen. I'm willing to engage, but at the end of the day, I have a difference of opinion than Commissioner Castro, at the end of the day. I don't believe, like for example, raising my salary 101 percent is appropriate, giving myself a car allowance, you know hiring Amos Rojas. I mean you asked me questions; you know 20-million-dollar COLA, you know indebting the city. Doing a lot of these things that are just inappropriate, in my opinion. So yes, if having a difference of opinion in regard to Commissioner Castro and being vocal about it makes me wrong, then I'm fine being wrong, but at the end of the day, I have always done my best to serve this city. Yeah, I'm vocal, yeah, I'm outspoken, but at the end of the day, I think that's what people want. I don't think people want individuals who aren't going to do the right thing and they're going to serve this community and I've done my best over the last 13 years. Madam Vice Mayor.

Vice Mayor Anderson: So doctor, I just wanted to add because I know a lot of time has passed and you know memories fade that the meeting that I was referencing in which it was punted or stonewalled by the Planning and Zoning Board preceded this matter going to the RTZ, preceded the encounter with Commissioner Regalado, and at that meeting Ms. Kawalowski referred to the potential residents of the MARK as locusts and it was a very contentious meeting and because of the manner in which they were, the applicant was treated and the extending delays, they made the choice to go to the county and have this RTZ zone put upon us it was because of that. And I can't turn back time, none of us can turn back time. Those choices were made, those words were stated, and they proceeded, and they expanded the RTZ zone to where now we have a county RTZ zone in our area. What was then just a possibility is now a reality and now we have to deal with it.

Mayor Lago: And I think that Vice Mayor, I think I'm very happy you stated that because people want to forget that fact. People want to forget that we were negotiating using our zoning code and that the RTZ was used in an effort to get an upper hand and move on. Nobody wants to face the fact of what happened at the Planning and Zoning Board meeting. It was very clear. I've watched it multiple times, the way that the Commissioner was treated in the County, along with the applicant. So, we can blame other people, if you want, it's perfectly fine, but we're facing the fact that we don't have control and we're trying to get some control back, just trying to see what we can put at our side; control the design, control the signage, maybe get some money back for the impact fees. So, we're just trying to do the best that we can and not antagonize the county because you know, we don't really win when we do that. Yes Commissioner.

Commissioner Lara: Briefly. Is the doctor still on the line?

City Clerk Urquia: Yes, she is.

Commissioner Lara: Okay. Doctor, pleased to meet you over the Zoom. I invite you to meet with me for a cup of coffee. I have office hours every single Monday here at City Hall or I will be happy

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to meet you wherever you like at a time it's mutually convenient. I try my very best to be respectful of all the people that I speak with. In fact, I spent quite a bit of time earlier in this meeting emphasizing the importance of residents being heard and preference with respect to a prior proposed ordinance and I spent a lot of time during this particular discussion item to convince one of my colleagues respectfully, Commissioner Castro, referring to her as a voice that's important because it is, and a voice that matters, because it does. So, if you know, if I wasn't an elected official when all of this began, I certainly am aware of what's going on, and as an elected official I brought it up what occurred during the PNZ meetings with those two individuals in particular, and I stated it and I repeat it because we got to be sure we don't make mistakes again. And here we have a unique opportunity, however long shot it may be, however difficult and steep the hill is to climb, that we should embrace because it's our only opportunity to try and take back what we, in my view, squandered away.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Clerk, anybody else.

City Clerk Urquia: That's it, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Okay, so close that. To not be to not face the fact that we are facing an RTZ and the other option is our zoning code is reckless. Looking for other options it's just facing reality. To not face reality is reckless. Sir, we have a motion and a second.

City Clerk Urquia: Mr. Mayor, just to be clear, we're voting right now on appointing you to negotiate on behalf of the city.

Mayor Lago: Well, I said first let's take let's take the one that was on first and then we'll come back, and we'll do that after E-9.

City Clerk Urquia: Understood. Thank you, sir.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Yes.

Commissioner Castro: Number one, Mayor Lago, I'm not your friend. So, I'm going to ask for some respect and you call me Commissioner Castro, and number two, I'm going to be gracious enough, gracious enough to not move to censure you. You will not continue to disrespect residents, okay, nor will you continue to call to say I'm incompetent and that you've lost 50 brain cells by listening to me. So, I'm going to ask you for a little respect and to really think a little before you talk. Right now, I'm going to be gracious, I will not be moving to censure you but consider this a warning. My vote is no.

Commissioner Fernandez: Yes.

Commissioner Lara: Yes.

City Commission Meeting

Mayor Lago: Just want to make sure censure or censured, just want to make sure we're on the record.

Commissioner Castro: Censure.

Mayor Lago: Oh, okay.

Commissioner Castro: Censure. I know you're having a hard time listening.

Mayor Lago: No, that was actually I took that off your Instagram.

Commissioner Castro: Yeah. It's called -- that I know you're looking at my Instagram like you're obsessed with me. You know you stopped following me, but you look at every story I post how does that make sense, how does that make sense, like stop it. Worry about your family.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Make a motion to approve E-9.

Commissioner Fernandez: Second.

Commissioner Castro: Yes.

Commissioner Fernandez: Yes.

Commissioner Lara: Yes.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Yes.

Mayor Lago: Yes.

Mayor Lago: I'd like to be appointed even though as the City Attorney said it's not required. I'd like to make sure that we make a statement as a Commission

Commissioner Fernandez: I'll move it.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Second.

Mayor Lago: Thank you.

Commissioner Fernandez: yes.

Commissioner Lara: Just a comment. You know, I think this is well within your purview.

Mayor Lago: I know but we need to do it anyways.

Commissioner Lara: It is well within your purview and here we go again through unnecessary motion and vote.

City Commission Meeting

Mayor Lago: Let's do it.

Commissioner Lara: But while we're at it, you have my confidence and you have my vote is yes, but if you need any help or just let me know, let any of us on the dais know, we can help you with that as well.

Mayor Lago: Yeah. Thank you.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Yes.

Commissioner Castro: Before I vote on this, I thought we were voting on this one my previous vote is no.

City Attorney Suarez: So, I think she means on E-9, she wants to record her vote is no.

City Clerk Urquia: Okay.

Commissioner Castro: Okay. I'm sorry, I know you guys almost caught me there I'm sorry. It's no, on this one is a yes.

Mayor Lago: I know I just want to let I want to let her have her moment so we can enjoy it.

Commissioner Castro: I'm enjoying it too.

Mayor Lago: Yes. I want to ask my colleagues please, we're probably going to meet next week. We just got a schedule for them to fly down; they're flying down to meet. I want to make sure that I have all your input. Please send it through the Manager, if you have any guidance, any input that you'd like to address. Are there any questions, any statements, anything that you feel is pertinent and important moving forward on this issue, any items of negotiation that maybe we haven't talked about today, please bring it forward to the Manager, so I can make sure I address it all.

Commissioner Fernandez: If the Manager, would it be possible to set up a short meeting just to go over things before your meeting, I'd appreciate it.

Mayor Lago: Okay. Perfect. Thank you.