

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item F-4
December 5, 2017
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Raul Valdes-Fauli
Vice Mayor Pat Keon
Commissioner Vince Lago
Commissioner Frank Quesada
Commissioner Michael Mena

City Staff

City Manager, Cathy Swanson-Rivenbark
Assistant City Manager, Peter Iglesias
City Attorney, Miriam Ramos
City Clerk, Walter J. Foeman
Deputy City Clerk, Billy Urquia
Planning and Zoning Director, Ramon Trias

Public Speaker(s)

Jorge Kuperman
Venny Torre

Agenda Item F-4 [0:00:00 p.m.]

An Ordinance of the City Commission of Coral Gables, Florida providing for text amendments to the City of Coral Gables Official Zoning Code, by amending Article 4, "Zoning Districts," adding Section 4-207, "Giralda Plaza Overlay" to modify and supplement the existing Commercial District standards and criteria to allow appropriate infill and redevelopment that enhances the character of Restaurant Row; providing for a repealer provision, providing for a severability clause, codification, and providing for an effective date. (On 11.08.17 PZB recommended approval with modifications, including raising the maximum height

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from three (3) stories or forty-five (45) feet to four (4) stories or fifty (50) feet, Vote: 7-0. Staff incorporated all other modifications into the proposed text, however Staff recommends the maximum height for parking exemption to be three (3) stories and forty-five (45) feet, because three stories is less of an impact on the downtown public parking supply.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: F-4, the Giralda Plaza overlay.

City Attorney Ramos: An Ordinance of the City Commission of Coral Gables, Florida providing for text amendments to the City of Coral Gables Official Zoning Code, by amending Article 4, "Zoning Districts," adding Section 4-207, "Giralda Plaza Overlay" to modify and supplement the existing Commercial District standards and criteria to allow appropriate infill and redevelopment that enhances the character of Restaurant Row; providing for a repealer provision, providing for a severability clause, codification, and providing for an effective date. This is also a public hearing item.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: May I have the PowerPoint, please. Mayor and Commissioners, the issue of what to do in terms of development for Giralda has been debated for quite a long time and it's finally before you. It dates back probably 2015, and there's been a lot of discussion with the Planning and Zoning Board, with the BID, with the property owners, et cetera. And, I think that at this point what we have is a very good solution that deals with the opportunities that we have to do small-scale development that is within the proportions and the right massing and so on for Giralda. These are the dates of the different public notifications we had. Planning and Zoning Board was in October. We posted the proposed changes several times. And finally, it's on first reading today. Now, the area affected by this optional overlay is one block, and it's the block that has been redesigned as a plaza. The block that you all know very well in Giralda. Most of the parcels are small. Most of the parcels are small. Most of the parcels have been the same for quite a long time. Most of them predate parking requirements of the City, meaning they're pre-1964, so they didn't have to have large parking areas and so on. So, those are the existing conditions. The zoning is commercial, as it is all throughout

downtown. And the future land use is low-rise, which is one of the few areas where that applies. Low-rise means up to 77 feet in height. That's basically the main significance of that. FAR is 3.5 FAR maximum, just like any other parcel in the commercial area in the downtown. Now, the purpose, of course, is to take advantage or to fulfill the potential of the investment that the City has made in the public space, which is beautiful, one of the nicest places anywhere in South Florida. And, the scale that we were looking at -- the model, for lack of a better word, that we used is a project you may know, which is in Naples, Naples 5th Street (sic), the main street of Naples, which is three stories, pretty much the same width as we're talking about. Not as nice, clearly, in terms of the public space, not comparable.

Commissioner Quesada: That's the same width of our space?

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: It's very comparable. I'm not...

Commissioner Quesada: Do you have more pictures of the area?

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yeah, I have another one.

Commissioner Quesada: Because that doesn't look the same to me.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Well, that's one side. I mean, the other side isn't...

Commissioner Quesada: Okay.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: In the photograph. So, what the purpose of the street -- the purpose of the photographs is to show you what a three-story building looks like that has a setback at the first story. Okay, as you can see, there's...

Commissioner Quesada: But, the overlay calls for four stories and 50 feet.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: No.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: No, no.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: The recommendation from the Planning and Zoning Board and the Business Improvement District was four stories. We stand by our original...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Right.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Recommendation of three stories.

Commissioner Quesada: So, we're looking at three stories and 50 feet, with a setback of ten feet off the...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yes.

Commissioner Quesada: First floor and an additional five off the second floor?

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Correct, correct, yes. And that is very similar, very similar to this image that I'm showing you up here from Naples, very similar. Now, the -- what Commissioner Quesada has described is shown here in the section. As you can see the front setback ten feet at the first level, and then five feet furthermore. And, the idea for that is to create some terraces, some second-story activation and activity and so on, which really, I think there's some good potential for the small parcels. Now, the main changes that we have proposed here is if you do this, you don't have to provide parking, as required by Code, so it gives you a break on parking. And secondly, it allows for residential and hotel uses in the upper stories. As you know, we typically like to think that we have mixed use in the downtown, but we only have mixed use for the very large projects, projects that are over 20,000 square feet. This would allow

the mixed-use, meaning residential, in the upper stories in the small projects. So, those are the big changes and I think the significant changes that we have. And the proposed regulations, again, are relatively minor and the changes -- the additional uses -- there is no change of the FAR. So, all those general conditions still apply. And the setbacks and so on at the ground level continue to be very much of a street face design. No setback at the ground level. And then the provision of the on-street parking is really significant. So, staff has reviewed the Zoning Code and we believe that all of the criteria are satisfied and that the proposed changes are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and recommend approval. As you have seen, as was discussed, there was some discussion at the Planning and Zoning about the number of stories and so on. Staff continues to recommend three stories, and that's based on the available supply of parking -- public parking in the area. We believe that what we have, the three-story scenario, works very well. Anything beyond that really probably wouldn't work as well.

Commissioner Quesada: Why do you -- let me -- in your opinion, Ramon, why do we need this now?

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Because the only -- what we have in the Code right now is if you have 20,000 square feet -- if you have a parcel that's 20,000, you can do a lot of things. But if you don't, you really cannot do that much. And, the reason is that because of the parking requirements, basically, the best use of a one-story building from the '50s or '60s is a one-story building from the '50s or '60s. If you were to change that in a small parcel, you just couldn't make it work and so on. And in our view, there's been such a great investment in terms of the quality of the public space that some additional development, you know, within reason, would be very beneficial for that area and would really optimize the investment of the City.

Commissioner Quesada: So, my concern is -- look, typically, in downtown areas, I'm very, I guess, in favor of incentivizing to do developments. But I'll be honest with you, at first blush, I don't see it here. I don't see what the need is at this time. My biggest concern is that we have a developer come in and buy up half a block on Giralda and then we just get one cookie-cutter

building all the way across, you know. That's my fear of maybe incentivizing too much. I think the aesthetic that's pleasing is the different buildings, the older buildings, some newer buildings, that it's not exact uniformity on it, which I think is -- it makes it nice. I mean, you see that on Lincoln Road. You see that on Giralda. You see it on Miracle Mile. My concern is if we allow too much height there -- and this is really my biggest issue. Then I spoke to Venny Torre about this last night. But, my biggest concern is too much height there might change the feeling of the locale. And then also, the setback -- I believe currently the setback now, what I read in the documentation, is 15 feet off the first floor and then it's ten -- and the proposal is to go to 10 feet setback from the first floor to the second floor. So, that additional five feet I think is going to make the buildings feel more like it's on top of you. So, I need to be convinced a little. I'm not set in stone either way, but I need to be convinced if I'm going to change my position, because I just see that we've put such a big investment. There's been a lot of movement. I think we're getting a lot more foot traffic. I think it's achieving the goal -- at least in the short term which it was designed for -- at least all our intent was behind it. I don't know if -- I just don't know if we need this right now.

Commissioner Lago: So, what do you want to do, Commissioner? Do you want to...?

Commissioner Quesada: I don't know if we need to do anything right...

Commissioner Lago: You want to take this...

Commissioner Quesada: Look, I'm open. I can be convinced.

Commissioner Lago: No, but I'm saying, do...

Commissioner Quesada: I'm just saying, at first blush, I don't think we need to do anything at all right now. That's my initial feeling. Does that answer your question?

Commissioner Lago: No, I mean, my -- no, not really. I'm saying we could take it a step further. We could maybe ask for, you know, a session where we could sit down and discuss and look at what other cities are doing. For example, like what Naples is doing.

Commissioner Quesada: Oh, absolutely.

Commissioner Lago: We could get -- we could have...

Commissioner Quesada: I just don't know enough. I've seen two or three pictures. I just don't know enough about Naples.

Commissioner Lago: I'm saying, maybe we could have staff prepare, you know, in the next -- for our next Commission meeting, a more in-depth -- and we could have a workshop for about an hour or two and have a discussion in reference to what other options exist currently and what can we do.

Commissioner Quesada: You know what I want to hear? And I was going through the Planning and Zoning minutes of their meeting is what's our goal for Giralda. What do we want Giralda to look like?

Commissioner Lago: And, that was another question I was going to bring up later, because that's something that...

Commissioner Quesada: I think that's the biggest issue. What do we want to see there?

Commissioner Lago: (INAUDIBLE) theme.

Commissioner Quesada: I think right now there's -- the nice part about Giralda is when you're in that area, you feel like you're in a...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yeah.

Commissioner Quesada: Small European time with the small buildings. If we go too much height, you're going to lose that character, which I don't want to lose.

Commissioner Lago: And, I think we have that same issue on Miracle Mile. We need to find out what is our theme; what are we going to do. How are we going to push -- now that we've done all the work, how are we going to program it so that it, you know, stays and continues...

Commissioner Quesada: Yeah, of course.

Commissioner Lago: To work properly. This same issue that we're having here -- and I've had this discussion with Ramon and with three other property owners is happening in the MXD area, just so you know.

Vice Mayor Keon: Is happening where?

Commissioner Lago: In the MXD area...

Vice Mayor Keon: Oh, okay.

Commissioner Lago: Around Merrick Park.

Commissioner Quesada: Oh, yeah, okay.

Commissioner Lago: You have several, you know, smaller parcels, very small; 5 -- 7,500 square feet that, again, we're caught in the middle and they really can't be redeveloped. So, I was looking at this as -- again, if we don't use it on Giralda, as a potential opportunity to really put

some good product out there in the MXD area. And, I wanted to have this Commission provide Ramon with some guidance, so that we have him look at that as a potential alternate.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay.

Commissioner Lago: And I recommend that you drive -- and you'll see buildings that, again, a little parcel that's not sold and it's stuck between two buildings.

Commissioner Quesada: Of course.

Commissioner Lago: And then, again, it doesn't make sense. So, you know, Ramon, if you could maybe, for the next Commission meeting...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Sure.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: We have -- I'm sorry.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yeah, just one issue. This only applies to parcels that are less than 10,000 square feet, so it addresses some of your concern about assembling a very large parcel and then taking advantage of this. That was the idea, just to have...

Commissioner Quesada: So, if I'm a developer and I come in and I want to buy 50,000 square feet of storefront on Giralda, north or south side -- it doesn't matter -- I would not be able to make one long building...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Right.

Commissioner Quesada: And then create storefronts?

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Right.

Commissioner Quesada: I would not be allowed to.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Right. This would not apply.

Vice Mayor Keon: How does...

Commissioner Quesada: This would not apply.

Vice Mayor Keon: But what would apply?

Commissioner Quesada: So, let's -- give me -- what's the practical impact?

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Well, the practical impact is that it breaks down the design of the street into many multiple small buildings.

Commissioner Quesada: So, if I buy 50,000 square feet of frontage on Miracle Mile -- I mean, not on Miracle Mile, on Giralda, north or south...

Commissioner Lago: It will be treated...

Commissioner Quesada: I can't make...

Commissioner Lago: As five separate projects.

Commissioner Quesada: Five separate projects.

Commissioner Lago: Five separate projects.

Commissioner Quesada: Okay.

Commissioner Lago: That's why -- and again...

Commissioner Quesada: Okay, that's good.

Commissioner Lago: And, that's why I brought up the issue of the MXD, because we're having that same situation because what's left there -- and I'm -- you know, it's very small...

Commissioner Quesada: Because it'd...

Commissioner Lago: Small outparcels.

Commissioner Quesada: It'd be a shame -- I'm glad you clarified that...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yeah.

Commissioner Quesada: For me because it would be a shame to have one big cookie-cutter storefront, which is exactly what I don't -- at least me.

Commissioner Lago: No, I agree with you.

Commissioner Quesada: I don't want that.

Commissioner Lago: I agree with you.

Vice Mayor Keon: It's -- that's what happened, I think, on parts of Lincoln Road, the part that's up near the theater and that -- where Pottery Barn came in...

Commissioner Quesada: Exactly.

Vice Mayor Keon: And Williams Sonoma came in...

Commissioner Quesada: I think we want to try...

Vice Mayor Keon: And GAP came in and they, you know, developed those big, long storefronts that look like any mall. And I think what you'd like to continue to achieve are those, you know, separate and distinct small parcels. I like what you've done. I mean, I like it and I like the fact that it steps back. There are very few of the buildings there that are -- other than what used to be the Church of Scientology, when they go back and start peeling that back, I think underneath is a very attractive building.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yes.

Vice Mayor Keon: And a very attractive storefront that it -- I mean, a front...

Commissioner Quesada: Oh, yeah.

Vice Mayor Keon: That is there...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yeah.

Commissioner Quesada: It's unique.

Vice Mayor Keon: It's unique. But, I don't think there's much unique about any of the other buildings that are along there. They're kind of square, flat, not particularly interesting product. So, I think incentivizing or giving someone that little extra height allows them to pay what the

rate is, the market rate for properties along there and allows them to redevelop. Because sometimes there's just no -- you know, when the cost in those -- and you can't do anything else, but replace exactly what's there and it is pretty small. There isn't a reason to come along and do it. And I do think that maybe it'll bring in even some better restaurants, so you'll have a mix of product there. I mean, right now there isn't -- there are a lot of -- there's a lot of stuff that is about of the same quality and the same -- attracts maybe the same clientele. Well, it would be nice if there was some variety that would have a variety of different levels of attraction to the space. I don't -- what I don't see is -- in this is how this expressively prohibits what the concern that Commissioner Quesada has brought up, because I want to make sure that it's never open to question.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: The size of the project?

Vice Mayor Keon: Right, that these are -- you know, that you can't do that.

Commissioner Mena: It can't be...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Well...

Commissioner Mena: More than 10,000 square feet, so that's what...

Vice Mayor Keon: Okay.

Commissioner Mena: Controls that.

Vice Mayor Keon: But it...

Commissioner Quesada: Yeah, but what prevents them from just getting the same building and copying and paste in 10,000 foot blocks.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Board of Architects review. I mean, there's many other things that would take place in terms of design of a project.

Commissioner Quesada: I think -- I read the draft ordinance.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yeah.

Commissioner Quesada: And I didn't see...

Vice Mayor Keon: Yeah.

Commissioner Quesada: I guess I wasn't satisfied with -- I guess, if it gets past first reading, I'd like to be -- see it expanded upon little bit more explicitly, or maybe you and I can sit down, because...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Absolutely, yeah.

Commissioner Quesada: I read it once as a non -- I'm not a developer, so I don't know what the...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: I mean, right now it's simply...

Commissioner Quesada: The tricks to weave through it. But, I just want to make sure it's a little bit more explicit.

Vice Mayor Keon: I would also like to see that it explicitly prevents that...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Okay.

Vice Mayor Keon: Because, we know and we have seen throughout the Code that if someone comes in -- a developer or architect, whatever -- and interprets it in a particular way, then if we don't allow -- then it -- you know, we move toward this issue of takings and not allowing whatever. So, I want it to not -- I'd like it to be some bright lines.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Sure.

Commissioner Quesada: Yeah. I want it to be a bit more specific, Ramon. Section 4-207(b)(1)...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Right.

Commissioner Quesada: The regulation just said maximum side area, 10,000 square feet.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Right.

Commissioner Quesada: So, it's just giving you sort of the minimum terms, the minimum requirements that you've outlined, but it doesn't address explicitly, you know, neighboring properties have to be of a different character or something along those lines.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: We...

Commissioner Quesada: Again, I have zero experience writing code.

Commissioner Lago: And, character can't be just a different paint color. You know, it's got to be...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: We...

Commissioner Lago: A different design.

Commissioner Quesada: Think about it. Just think about it...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yeah. We can elaborate...

Commissioner Quesada: And how to rewrite it or...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yeah, we can...

Commissioner Quesada: Again, if it passes today on first reading, that's something I...

Commissioner Lago: Do you still want -- you want to have that workshop next month?

Commissioner Mena: I'd like to -- I would...

Commissioner Lago: I...

Commissioner Mena: For me, it would be helpful to maybe even see like a rendering or something of what we think this will look like...

Commissioner Lago: Or what other cities have done -- what other cities have done.

Commissioner Mena: Or at least something comparable. I mean, those pictures were helpful as far as seeing what...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yeah.

Commissioner Mena: The setback looks like, but I have the...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Why don't we...

Commissioner Mena: Same reaction he did that it seemed like a broader street to me, but maybe it's not.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: This is a public hearing and we have two people that want to speak. Why don't we hear from them and then continue our discussion. Jorge Kuperman, 137 Giralda Plaza. Good morning.

Jorge Kuperman: Good morning, Mr. Mayor, Commissioners, Madam Manager. Jorge Kuperman, 137 Giralda Avenue. I run my practice there, JSK Architecture Group. And actually, Commissioner Quesada presented another challenge of what I was thinking on speaking to you about. And, I think I do have a better answer for you, Commissioner. There is this discipline called the history of urban planning...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: The what?

Mr. Kuperman: The history of urban planning. It's a discipline historians have researched. And research shows that cities, urban areas, do get a daytime life and a nighttime life. If you do walk Giralda Avenue now -- and sometimes I leave my office at 8 o'clock most of the days -- you will see what's going on, the lack of pedestrian activity. It's almost dead, even though it's beautiful. Then it comes back at noontime, all the restaurants, people walking, morning and doing the events. So, the idea of this overlay is to incentivize small developments, so we get residential use is the key as a result of this research of the history of urban planning. It's demonstrated that every city that has livable apartment units upstairs do create pedestrian life. I believe that in that sense, this overlay is perfect. And, I believe that this overlay is a historical opportunity for you guys to do what probably Sunset Harbour has done in Miami Beach with the Sunset Harbour

garage. They completely revised the FAR. They removed parking. Boom, in three years, the area is incredible. It's almost a new hype South Beach. I hope you had an opportunity to be there. I just...

Commissioner Quesada: Sunset Harbour. That's where the...

Mr. Kuperman: Sunset Harbour is...

Commissioner Quesada: There's a condo and there's a marina and there's...

Mr. Kuperman: Correct.

Commissioner Quesada: A Publix.

Mr. Kuperman: It's the towing -- it used to be an industrial area.

Commissioner Quesada: Yeah, yeah.

Mr. Kuperman: And it's been trans...

Commissioner Quesada: Oh, yeah. I'm familiar with the area.

Mr. Kuperman: Getting transformed over the last five to six years. And, then the city built this parking garage. They revised the zoning, and now -- they incentivized the FAR, parking zero for every possible use in there. I think that's the model. But, if you don't want to go local and you're looking to what's going on in the cities of Europe, you have Amsterdam. You don't get a car in Amsterdam. They have a centralized parking garage. And in that sense, I could speak about other cities that possibly you've had an opportunity to tour and present to you another issue. What's going on with Parking Garage 6 overnight? I'll tell you what's going on. It's

probably empty 90 percent. And, I'm only curious to know how come the City doesn't take advantage of the overnight for residential use that would require parking otherwise. I know it. I leave my office many times late. Granted, weekends gets busier, but during the week, that garage is beautiful to rollerblade from the top all the way to the bottom, which was one of my fantasies when I was younger. Anyhow, I was prepared to -- for different reasons to suggest to go back to the twice unanimously recommended version of the overlay. And, I wanted to go to a little bit of statistics on why do I think that this is perfect for this block. As per Miami-Dade County, there are a total of 18 parcels; 7 parcels along the north side and 11 along the south. Eighteen of those parcels -- excuse me, fifteen of those parcels are considered small, between 2,500 to 6,000 square feet, and they represent 83 percent of the block. So, 83 percent of those parcels are small, including mine, 2,500 square feet. So, in that sense, this overlay is perfect to incentivize small development and prevent people to start joining other parcels. Going back to the revised version of the overlay, it allows by law to do 3.0 or 3.5 with the Mediterranean. In my parcel, I can't do that. I can only do 2.75. I will need another story. I need the original version that was approved twice by specialists, including three architects on the Planning and Zoning Board that's been appointed by you guys. They are the ones that know this. They recommended twice. They're the ones that know what's going on in urban planning. Of course, this recommendation, you don't have to go by it, but I was going to suggest to re-study that version when the time comes, whether it's during the second reading. And once again, I think that this is a historical opportunity. Don't let it go. Coral Gables can make history, as other cities. Please do revise, go back to the version recommended to you by Planning and Zoning Board. Thank you so much.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you.

Commissioner Lago: Thank you, Jorge.

Commissioner Quesada: Thank you.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: The second person is Venny Torre, Giralda overlay. Hi, good morning.

Venny Torre: Good morning, Mayor, Commissioners, Madam Manager. For the record, Venny Torre, 208 (INAUDIBLE), representing the BID this morning. So, I wanted to first of all answer Mr. Quesada's questions as why -- in why we're starting in Giralda. The history goes back to the BID's role in trying to really...

Commissioner Quesada: Venny, you're not a shy guy. Speak up a little bit.

Mr. Torre: I'm sorry.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yeah, get close to the mike.

Mr. Torre: One of the BID's primary goal -- and we've noticed -- and we've realized this is really important, because we need to get residents to downtown for the reason that Mr. Kuperman explained. We need more of a 24-hour city. We need to be more progressive about the situation. We've been after this for now a few years. The process started with the downtown overlay that was previously visited by staff. And, it was whittled down -- or I should say it was brought back to Giralda for reasons I can't answer, as a test place -- as a pilot. I don't know the answer to that. The reality is we would wish that this applied to all of the CBD for the following reasons. You need it to have more residents occupying downtown. The problem that we have is that the only people that can come in here and develop are the big boys, big developers. The small parcels are basically at a disadvantage, at a great disadvantage and that's because the Zoning Code doesn't allow us to have the ability to do much. The 1.45 parking requirements are just too tough for small buildings. So, we're starting on Giralda, but one point about Giralda. The buildings on Giralda -- and this is on your packet -- on the north side, 1939 to 1979, basically stopped at that point; south side, 1922 to 1955. The most recent building on the south side is 1955. There's nothing going on there. There will not be anything going on. There's no incentive to do anything. Where do we start? The process has taken two, maybe three years to

get to this review at this point with you all, and we can't seem to get it further along in regards to the residential portion of our downtown. And this is a big, big item for the BID. We've been at this. We've been talking about this. We really would like to get it started. This is where we begin. So, in terms of Giralda, the proposal, yes, was approved twice by P&Z. The last review - - I thought it was very smartly done. I think the recommendations were extremely well presented. We had wanted three and a half, 3.5, which is what the Code says for mixed-use buildings. They brought it back to three. But, then when you step it back twice -- or three times, you get down to 2.7. That's what you get, 2.7, 2.7 FAR. When you put elevators, stairs, hallways, the building's way too small. You'll never get anybody to do anything with this proposal. I'm telling you as a developer. I'm telling you as a business owner. I'm telling you as a person who studied this from the numbers. You will not get anything. So, it's a starting point for you all. It's something to look at, but we really should get the process started.

Commissioner Quesada: So, you're saying, assuming we did want to incentivize to redevelop a portion of Giralda -- that portion of Giralda, in your opinion, what is the -- what are the magic incentives?

Mr. Torre: No parking.

Commissioner Quesada: No parking requirement at all.

Mr. Torre: For small buildings. And again...

Commissioner Quesada: What's a -- define a small building.

Mr. Torre: This is geared to a building no bigger than 50 foot wide by 100, 5,000 square foot lots. That's it.

Commissioner Quesada: So, four-story building, no parking.

Mr. Torre: Here's why it's four. The original proposal and the proposal that's in the mixed-use commercial now says 3.0 FAR. That's what it says -- 0.5 for Mediterranean bonuses, which is being applied -- saying you've got to use the Mediterranean bonus. Okay, good. I want to use the 3.5. Three point five means a half a floor on top of three. You can't put three and a half on three. You can't. The five goes on four. There's a fourth floor.

Commissioner Lago: How much FAR is eaten up by common areas, for example, would you say?

Mr. Torre: I'm going to say, in a small building, 35, 40 percent.

Commissioner Lago: You think that much?

Mr. Torre: I think so. In a small building, yes.

Commissioner Lago: You know, this is where I have an issue, because you start talking about four floors versus three. I don't want to lose sight of what Giralda is, you know. It's a small area. You want to have a very big impact, but I think that the higher we go; I think we're taking away from the street.

Commissioner Quesada: What about what Mr. Kuperman said earlier about bringing residents -- you know, living, habitable areas to...

Commissioner Lago: I think it's great.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: It would be wonderful.

Commissioner Quesada: Giralda. So...

Commissioner Lago: I'm in favor of that.

Commissioner Quesada: Aren't we -- so am I, which is the same reason why I think we were all in favor of an apartment building and the parking garages right off of Miracle Mile, because we want foot traffic in the downtown. I hadn't thought about that, so I'm glad he brought that up. But then, how -- then aren't we handcuffing a potential redevelopment if we don't give that fourth floor to allow residential living?

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: And, I think with the fourth floor -- I agree with you.

Commissioner Quesada: Well, I'm not saying I agree. I'm putting the question out there because I'm stuck -- I am stuck on deciding whether I want the additional height, because I don't want to feel like you're walking through a valley when you're on Giralda. I think that would kill the character of that street, you know, for all the money that we've invested in it. But at the same time, I understand the benefit of having residential apartments or condos there. I think that makes a lot of sense as well.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: It makes a heck of a lot of sense, yeah.

Commissioner Quesada: So, I guess I'm bound -- I'm struggling with that.

Commissioner Mena: The other thing that kills character, though, is when it's dead.

Commissioner Quesada: Of course.

Commissioner Mena: When you go on a Tuesday night and there's nobody there. And so, that's where bringing in residential helps with that. And, all the studies that I think the BID has done

and that have been done over the years show that we need more residential in the area, so that you have foot traffic day and night.

Commissioner Lago: But Frank, I mean...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: And that creates...

Commissioner Lago: You're not going to have...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: A livelier city.

Commissioner Lago: You're not going to have -- you're not going to solve the problem with just Giralda. It's going to have to be dealt with with Andalusia in regards to the two parking garages.

Commissioner Quesada: Oh, yeah, of course.

Commissioner Lago: It's going to have to be dealt with, you know, on other forthcoming projects that, again, have not been built, because there isn't the density or there isn't...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yeah, but...

Commissioner Lago: The height that's...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Giralda is a very special project. I mean, don't compare it to Andalusia or whatever. Giralda is pedestrian. Giralda is our signature experiment, I guess.

Vice Mayor Keon: Our plaza.

Commissioner Lago: No, no, no. But I mean...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yeah, Giralda is unique in that respect.

Commissioner Lago: Again, I understand. But, you're talking about less than a block away we're proposing to have two parking garages with some sort of mixed-use component to it. Again, we're just having a discussion for -- that is going to come before us again, the issue of the two parking garages. Are we moving more towards commercial or are we going to move more towards residential where we can have those people in our downtown area?

Commissioner Mena: I...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: What is your recommendations?

Mr. Torre: So, there's a distinction between Giralda...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: No, but specific to your...

Mr. Torre: And a broader goal that we have. Our broad goal is for you to really take the notion that we would want you all to move forward on this across the CBD. That's the first -- we really want this to go forward. It's a process that's taken a long time.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: But Giralda...

Mr. Torre: Giralda -- the issue of scale is the primary issue and I believe that's the primary issue for me anyway; how it feels, how you perceive that street. Is it quaint and so forth? I think if you take -- and you step it back twice and you put the fourth floor way back, which is what it's doing already, you will not see the fourth floor.

Commissioner Quesada: Yeah, but then do you have enough depth in the lots to be able to do anything on the fourth floor?

Mr. Torre: Yes, yes.

Vice Mayor Keon: How wide are those parcels?

Mr. Torre: The minimum is 25. You can go up to 50, which...

Vice Mayor Keon: I'm sorry. How deep are those parcels?

Mr. Torre: They're 100.

Vice Mayor Keon: They're a hundred-foot deep.

Mr. Torre: Yes.

Vice Mayor Keon: Okay.

Mr. Torre: So...

Commissioner Lago: So, you're set back -- you're stepping back, the first one, you said five, right?

Mr. Torre: There's ten...

Commissioner Lago: Ten then fifteen?

Vice Mayor Keon: Ten and five.

Mr. Torre: Ten and five.

Commissioner Lago: Okay, so it's...

Mr. Torre: Well, there's a big step -- two steps.

Vice Mayor Keon: Right.

Mr. Torre: So, the third floor -- or fourth floor should be really, really far back. The second point is, how many folks are going to take this initiative and really run with it is the question. I mean, in the long run, possibly. In the short run, we have to see, so there's plenty of time to adapt. This has got to get off zero and that's the point. So, we feel that the Planning and Zoning twice has voted 7-0. They've studied the scale. They've studied this in many different ways. Parking has been discussed, and I think that the realization is that this is the best solution. And we started to back the 3.0, because we thought it was a flat front originally. So, that 3.0 meant 3.0, three times the same size, but it's not. When you start taking it back, you don't get to 3. You don't get -- you get to 2.7. 2.7 will not make a dent. You will not get anybody to do anything.

Vice Mayor Keon: So, you need the fourth floor to get the density -- to get the FAR higher.

Mr. Torre: I would propose that you go to what's permitted, 3.0, 3.5, which was the original proposal, which is what's on the underlying zoning now for commercial use. The only difference is you're removing the parking restrictions or the parking requirements. That's the only difference, and then you have the step back to help with the urban character of the street.

Commissioner Mena: I think we need to -- Commissioner Lago, to your point, I think we need to look at this further.

Vice Mayor Keon: Well...

Commissioner Mena: I think we need to maybe have somebody from Planning and Zoning, you know, meet with us at a workshop or something to really discuss this because it sounds to me, from the questions we're getting, that everybody's not totally comfortable with it.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Will you make a motion to defer this until next...

Commissioner Lago: (INAUDIBLE).

Vice Mayor Keon: Could we -- I'd like some more...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yeah, but let's...

Vice Mayor Keon: Questions too, though.

Commissioner Lago: I mean, I'm ready to move forward today on this issue at three floors and I will entertain a fourth floor, but I need to have that workshop in between first and second reading.

Commissioner Quesada: So...

Commissioner Lago: But, I -- and the reason why -- let me just say one thing and I'm done on this issue. The reason why is because, to Venny's point, okay, I've had I don't know how many meetings with Venny already and I met with Jorge. You know, this has been an issue that needs to be dealt with, just like Giralda, just like Miracle Mile. We need to move forward on this issue

one way or another. We need to vote on it, either it be in the next month or two months, but we need to come to some sort of consensus and push.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Will you make a motion that we approve this on first reading...

Commissioner Lago: I think...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: And...

Commissioner Mena: Some questions.

Vice Mayor Keon: Yeah.

Commissioner Lago: I think the Vice Mayor had...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yeah.

Commissioner Lago: Some questions.

Vice Mayor Keon: Yeah.

Commissioner Lago: I just want to...

Vice Mayor Keon: I have one question. When you're talking about a four-story building, what are you talk -- in height, that's what, 54 feet?

Mr. Torre: Fifty feet.

Vice Mayor Keon: Oh, 54.

Mr. Torre: The 45, which was the zoning in place, was changed...

Vice Mayor Keon: Is three...

Mr. Torre: Or it was proposed by P&Z to go to five feet, so we can get the very big, tall first floor.

Vice Mayor Keon: Okay, so...

Mr. Torre: First floor.

Vice Mayor Keon: We're talking about a 54...

Mr. Torre: No, 50. We got the 50.

Vice Mayor Keon: A 50-foot building.

Mr. Torre: We got the 50.

Commissioner Lago: If I could just...

Vice Mayor Keon: Which is what...?

Commissioner Lago: If you go to...

Vice Mayor Keon: The height of -- what's the height from the ground level to...

Commissioner Lago: That's what...

Vice Mayor Keon: The top here -- to City Hall?

Mr. Torre: Forty-five.

Vice Mayor Keon: How tall is...

Mr. Torre: Forty-five.

Vice Mayor Keon: It's 45. So, what you're looking at is a building the size of City Hall.

Commissioner Lago: The importance of having those additional five feet are critical. I'll tell you why. Because when you go from -- if we decide to go to four floors, from 45 to 50 allows you to have a slab to slab height of how much?

Mr. Torre: Well, the first floor...

Commissioner Lago: Would you say...

Mr. Torre: Which is the restaurant, you want 15 feet.

Commissioner Lago: Okay, so that will allow you to have great restaurants, potentially art galleries that wouldn't come to the City, because they require slab to slab heights that are not currently existing. And I know that because I have a client of mine that's looking for...

Mr. Torre: That makes sense.

Commissioner Lago: A piece of property and they can't find an existing property that has...

Vice Mayor Keon: That's right.

Commissioner Lago: Sufficient slab to slab height.

Vice Mayor Keon: You need the volume.

Commissioner Lago: Yeah.

Commissioner Mena: Another question I had when Mr. Torre was speaking -- and maybe this is a question for Ramon -- but you know, we're talk -- they're getting to these heights by getting the Med bonus, right?

Mr. Torre: The 3.5 is with the bonus.

Commissioner Mena: Right. And my...

Mr. Torre: As we're proposing.

Commissioner Mena: Question is to your earlier point about the uniformity of the street. If you're saying that for these buildings to be able to do this they have to get the Med bonus and now everybody's doing Mediterranean style, how different are these units really going to be? And, is it not just going to be...

Commissioner Lago: That's a good point.

Commissioner Mena: Slapping a different color of paint on it.

Commissioner Lago: Or doing some faux coquina stone, which we've had multiple discussions on that. Does that represent Mediterranean?

Commissioner Mena: Right.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Commissioner, I would remind you...

Commissioner Lago: That's a very good point.

Commissioner Quesada: That's a whole other conversation though.

Commissioner Lago: But it's a good point.

Commissioner Quesada: That's what should we be allowing.

Vice Mayor Keon: Well, I think that maybe you can also -- you can just not have Med bonuses there. You can take them out of the redevelopment for that particular site. So, what you're just incentivizing is development and you're not having people, you know, move to a certain design in order to be able to maximize what it is. Because, I personally like the look of a variety of different styles of architecture, as long as it's just good architecture.

Commissioner Lago: But I like -- but with that being said -- and I agree with you. I still would want to promote Mediterranean style because, again, that's what the...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: But then what's Mediterranean style?

Commissioner Lago: City of Coral Gables -- I want to have different...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: I don't want 17 Cordova mosques or Cordova cathedrals in Coral Gables. I don't want one.

Commissioner Lago: Want a different...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: And that's Mediterranean.

Commissioner Quesada: I'm going to second Commissioner Lago's motion to approve it on first reading at the three stories. I would like to see -- I don't think we need a workshop. What I would like to see...

Commissioner Lago: I would.

Commissioner Quesada: Because, here's what I -- you know what I don't like what happens a lot of times is we defer things and do a workshop, and then it takes eight months to come back. I think we just need to move forward on whatever the decision is.

Commissioner Mena: The problem is we're approving it at three stories and we have...

Mr. Torre: The problem is...

Commissioner Mena: Business owners here telling you that doesn't solve...

Mr. Torre: The problem is 2.7 FAR...

Commissioner Mena: Yeah.

Mr. Torre: Because of the setback.

Commissioner Lago: The reason I wanted the workshop is -- I want a workshop. And again, you're entitled to come if you'd like to come. And the importance of it is we can have, you

know, an open discussion. We can have owners. We can have people who are renting or leasing on the Mile -- excuse me, on Giralda.

Commissioner Quesada: Okay, but my point is I just want to keep it moving. So, I want to approve it on first reading...

Commissioner Lago: That's why I'm pushing forward. I'm moving it on first reading.

Commissioner Quesada: It doesn't mean I'm going to vote for it on second -- on the final reading. It doesn't mean I'm going to agree with three or four or five.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yeah, but you second the motion.

Commissioner Quesada: Yeah, so...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Let's call the roll.

Commissioner Lago: We may even amend it.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: First reading.

Commissioner Quesada: Exactly.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Will you call the roll, please?

Commissioner Lago: Yes.

Commissioner Mena: Yes.

Commissioner Quesada: Yes.

Vice Mayor Keon: Yes.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yes.

(Vote: 5-0)

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you very much.

Vice Mayor Keon: Could I ask -- could we ask a question of Ramon? Why are you recommending three stories as opposed to the four stories?

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Well, that issue has to do with the recommendation of the Parking Director in terms of the parking availability. Since the main benefit here is no parking requirements, we do expect that the public parking garages are going to be used and there's going to be a limit to that, so that was the analysis. Now, what Venny -- Venny's point is very good in the sense that the moment we started setting back the buildings, then the maximum FAR that fits within the three stories is less.

Vice Mayor Keon: Okay.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Now, originally, we didn't have as many setbacks and so on. This has changed significantly through the process. It's a very good discussion that you're having, but I think that there are two basic discussions. One is the aesthetics -- the aesthetic impact of the front, and the second one is how much FAR -- how much ultimate bulk and massing do you want to have in those buildings. And, that is related to the fact that we do have a limited amount of public parking. We don't anticipate any huge parking supply being provided by the private sector. Obviously, we're breaking -- we're providing a break for the parking. Now, if somebody wants to develop a large building, over 20,000 square feet, they have to buy parking...

Vice Mayor Keon: Right.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: So, that would be the only time where that would take place.

Vice Mayor Keon: Where that may be some extra parking. So, between the first and second reading, you all will sit down. You'll have a discussion with all of these people. I tend to agree with Ramon only because of the parking issue, but...

Commissioner Lago: I'd like to do a workshop.

Commissioner Quesada: Yeah, yeah.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay. Let's...

Commissioner Quesada: That's fine.

Commissioner Lago: Again, I just want -- I want -- with my colleagues' consent, I just want to ask, through the Manager, that she direct staff to look into the MXD, because we're going to deal with this same issue pretty soon. I have three owners -- I think there's probably like six pieces of property left around Merrick Park that are very small, in the same vein as Giralda, 5,000 square feet, and they want to do some very interesting storefront, you know, really nice, with maybe two floors and they're being held back because, as we had talked about Ramon, these buildings are from the 1950s. They can't do anything. They have to leave them in place, correct?

Commissioner Quesada: Yeah, we should encourage it.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yeah. The key date is 1964. Any building before 1964 didn't have parking requirements. After '64, we have parking requirements. So, every building you see that is one story and small tends to be prior to '64.

Commissioner Lago: So, with my colleagues' consent, I'd like the Manager to engage with Mr. Trias in looking at the MXD and kind of pushing this forward and hopefully bringing it to P&Z.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Alright.

Mr. Torre: Can I make one last comment? I know you were done. The other issue that's important is affordability. To provide affordability, we have to remove the parking. When you start putting parking, the price of these buildings get up through the roof.

Commissioner Quesada: During the workshop, we'll undergo a detailed analysis on your point.

Vice Mayor Keon: Now, I understand your issue with parking. I only have -- it's something that, you know, is of a scale and a size that will make -- will allow people to take a second look at those buildings and maybe -- and redevelop them. But...

Commissioner Lago: And also...

Vice Mayor Keon: In the parking, I'm not concerned about the parking either.

Commissioner Lago: And also, in the cost of the construction, as you know -- because this is what we do for a living -- it's going to skyrocket in reference to the street because of the location. I mean, you can't be doing construction on Giralda. You have to do it through the alley, so you know that cost is going to go up significantly. So, alright, thank you.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Alright, thank you very much.