

**City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item H-2
December 11, 2018
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL**

City Commission

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

City Staff

**City Manager, Peter Iglesias
Assistant City Manager, Ed Santamaria
City Attorney, Miriam Ramos
City Clerk, Walter J. Foeman
Deputy City Clerk, Billy Urquia**

Public Speaker(s)

**Albert Lazo
Monica Gordo**

Agenda Item H-2 [0:00:00 p.m.]
A discussion regarding artificial turf.
(Commissioner Quesada)

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Alright, H-2. I'm going to take it out of order. Commissioner Quesada.

Commissioner Quesada: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. I know we have some residents here that want to talk about it, so thank you for that. H-2 is related to artificial turf. I had placed it on the agenda. If you recall, we passed the artificial turf ordinance what, six months, eight months ago, definitely?

Commissioner Keon: No. It's more than that.

Commissioner Quesada: It's more than that?

Commissioner Keon: Yeah. It's a long time ago and it was very broad.

Commissioner Quesada: Fifteen years ago, we passed that.

Commissioner Keon: It was probably about four years ago.

Commissioner Quesada: It was?

City Attorney Ramos: Ramon's present too.

Commissioner Keon: Okay.

City Attorney Ramos: Ramon, can you speak to when the ordinance passed?

Commissioner Quesada: Well, it doesn't really matter. We've been -- we've had this ordinance for a little bit of time now. Originally, when we first drafted it -- yeah, Ramon should come up because we worked on this together. When we first drafted it up, I remember I had some concerns because I didn't want the Board of Architects to slow it down, so you tweaked it for us and we accepted those revisions, so thank you for that. I know we've had some growing pains because we had a front of a home and rear of the home, what can be seen on the street and what cannot be seen on the street. And if I remember, comically, we were going to visit Sunset Elementary and

we passed by some homes that had it around their pool and you could see it and it was before we passed it. So, I guess they were grandfathered in. So, the reason I bring it for you -- I bring it up again today is I received a number of different requests and I've seen it -- I've seen artificial turf popping up in places that were not anticipated or not approved by the way we had structured the legislation and that particularly is on sides of homes and in front of homes.

Commissioner Keon: And in the resident...

Commissioner Quesada: Now, there...

Commissioner Keon: And in the commercial areas of the city.

Commissioner Quesada: And in commercial areas. So, you're really seeing it pop up all over the place, which I think this Commission needs to -- we really need to think about some of these other variables that we did not anticipate earlier on. And again, earlier on, my thought was this was behind the home or where it wasn't seen by the street. But there's so many different exceptions to that. Most recently, I've spoken to you about a home with it inside of the house. And I know it's actually someone who serves on one of our boards and I think he spoke to all of us about this. You know what I'm talking about. I don't want to make him public, if he's not here. So -- and then we worked through that and he revised it and we came to a happy medium. The situation that I specifically want to talk about today and I want to talk about a few different examples -- one is commercial, which we didn't talk -- we didn't previously discuss, so I want to make sure that we just have a policy on commercial one way or the other and what do we want to do with it. So, that one, I want to send back to staff to think about and discuss and to come back with a recommendation on commercial. I think there's some circumstances that will make sense and some circumstances that won't. I also think in front of homes where there are gates that you can't see the grass or that turf is another unanticipated situation that is one that I never anticipated beforehand. If you recall, when we first brought this up and were discussing it, I think we were all in consensus -- we all preferred grass in all the situations. We prefer the natural aspects of

everything, and you brought it up and architecture and design. You want to, you know, promote the natural elements, which we're all in agreement with. However, we have a lot of trees, which is a blessing and for a small, limited circumstances can be a curse because you can't have grass grow and you end up spending a few thousand dollars a year and it lasts for about a month and then it dies. We've all experienced that. I currently experience that and I've experienced that in the past. So, the question that I put -- I want to put before the Commissioners and the Mayor today is, I am in favor of allowing the turf in situations in front of homes where there -- where it's enclosed. So, not that it's open so that it can be -- you know, there is no gate, there is no fence. It's situations where there is a gate and there's a fence. It's within that property line and you know, it's blocked by a wall or a fence or something of the like, where there is a situation where trees can't -- where grass can't grow. Because I think we all -- it's my preference is always to at least have something green rather than have dirt and mud rather -- you know, I prefer to have that situation. So, that's the situation that I've come across recently, and I'm really hearing it -- so, my children now go to St. Phillip's so I've gotten to know a lot of those homeowners in that area because a lot of them walk their children to school and a lot of those homes have a great tree canopy, but there's a lot of mud and there's a lot of dirt. Every day at drop-off, I get asked a different question of when we're going to allow or when we're going to tweak it. So, I've been wrestling myself with what I would like because, at the same time, we don't want to have a complete street full of artificial turf. That's not the goal either. The goal is to keep that greenery in those situations where the grass doesn't grow. Any thoughts so far?

Commissioner Keon: I am...

Commissioner Quesada: There are two residents here that want to discuss it, so...

Commissioner Keon: Okay. I met with Ramon and Gus in the beginning of November, I think -- end of October, beginning of November on the issue of artificial turf. And in particular when, you know, you start seeing it downtown...

Commissioner Quesada: Yeah.

Commissioner Keon: In the commercial areas and it's particularly egregious and then some issues came up within the residential neighborhoods and asked them to take a look at it because the existing ordinance is exceedingly broad and difficult to interpret. So, they are -- were supposed to come back in January with a new -- new legislation governing that. So, I know that they have been working on it and, you know, obviously, they need to talk to everyone as they draft this, but it was -- it's supposed to come back in January, isn't that right?

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yeah. We have a draft that I think addresses some of the issues that you mentioned. But at the end of the day, it's really a policy choice...

Commissioner Keon: Right.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: By the Commission, so some direction will be very helpful.

Commissioner Keon: Yes. So, I know it was scheduled to come back in January, so it's a good time to meet with each of the Commissioners and share what you are -- you know, where you are with that draft and...

Commissioner Mena: It should be...

Commissioner Keon: Ask them to react to it.

Commissioner Mena: It should be noted that we have artificial turf in some of our parks.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: We do. We...

Commissioner Mena: Visible from...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: We use them for playgrounds.

Commissioner Keon: Right.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: So, that is true.

Commissioner Quesada: Well, that's...

Commissioner Mena: Because grass doesn't grow because of the trees.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: And we recommended against it many times.

Commissioner Mena: Just pointing that out.

Commissioner Quesada: No. And I actually think the Coral Gables Youth Center, the soccer area there, I mean, that gets beat up and beat up and beat up and the areas that get a lot of high use in the parks, it makes sense to have artificial turf.

Commissioner Keon: Well, I think that they've had that discussion...

Commissioner Quesada: We've been having that discussion...

Commissioner Keon: A number of years...

Commissioner Quesada: For 15 years, yeah.

Commissioner Keon: At the Youth Center and still all of the information provided is that grass is -- there are fewer injuries on grass to children than on artificial turf. And you don't want to see

kids hurt their knees or hurt their elbow or their shoulders such that affects them the rest of their life when they're playing, you know, soccer. So, if we have to replace turf...

Commissioner Quesada: Yeah, you're right.

Commissioner Keon: We need to replace turf.

Commissioner Quesada: Yeah.

Commissioner Keon: But -- and I think, you know, in some of the parks, it's easier to clean and it can grow.

City Manager Iglesias: Absolutely. It's only on -- Commissioner, it's only on playgrounds and it's...

Commissioner Keon: Right.

City Manager Iglesias: Due to any number of issues. They put...

Commissioner Keon: That's right.

City Manager Iglesias: Padding below and it's going to be cleaned, and so there's a number of issues just in the playground area.

Commissioner Keon: Okay.

City Manager Iglesias: The rest of the park is all...

Commissioner Keon: Yeah, no.

City Manager Iglesias: Real grass.

Commissioner Keon: But I think the discussion with regard to the fields at the Youth Center and probably at Phillips Park and that -- I know that there has been discussion for years and years about, you know, moving to artificial turf as...

Commissioner Quesada: Let's do this...

Commissioner Keon: Opposed to grass. But I think it's -- the decision, I think, has always come back or we've always come back to because of the safety issues...

Commissioner Quesada: Yeah.

Commissioner Keon: With regard to children...

Commissioner Quesada: And that was...

Commissioner Keon: Is that we use...

Commissioner Quesada: Four -- that was four or five years ago, the last time we discussed that.

Commissioner Keon: Yes.

Commissioner Quesada: Maybe it's time to get reeducated on...

Commissioner Keon: No. With -- you know...

Commissioner Quesada: It. Maybe something's changed.

Commissioner Keon: To use -- you know, to use grass.

Commissioner Quesada: Yeah, I got you.

Commissioner Keon: You know, really the issue with the field is an entirely different issue and it really is a matter of who's using them, how they're using and how frequently they're using it and it's more a control of the play on those, which is a whole different...

Commissioner Quesada: Yeah, a whole different issue.

Commissioner Keon: A whole different issue.

Commissioner Quesada: And I think that's a conversation we need to have Fred and the Parks Department...

Commissioner Keon: We should...

Commissioner Quesada: Be there and I don't think...

Commissioner Keon: We should, but I think...

Commissioner Quesada: I don't want to have that...

Commissioner Keon: That's not for this.

Commissioner Quesada: Conversation today. Maybe...

Commissioner Keon: No, no, no.

Commissioner Quesada: Just make a note that we want to bring that back for a future meeting.

Commissioner Keon: But I think -- I know that Ramon has looked...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yes.

Commissioner Keon: At this issue of artificial turf and is coming back with legislation...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: What I...

Commissioner Keon: In January...

Commissioner Quesada: The specific issue I really want to focus on today...

Commissioner Keon: I'm sorry.

Commissioner Quesada: At least get some feedback from the rest of the Commission is...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: And we have some people out there that...

Commissioner Quesada: Yeah. So, the one specific issue I really want to talk about today to get everyone's feedback on is residential and situations where there's a fence or there's a gate in front of a home, where there is tree canopy that is showing a history that grass does not grow there, and whether we should allow it in those situations to expand the statute there. We have two residents that are currently living through it right now. They would like to speak if it's the right time now.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Shall I...

Commissioner Quesada: Yeah.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Albert Lazo, 2900 Columbus. Hello.

Albert Lazo: Hi. Good morning. My name is Albert Lazo, and this is my wife, Monica, and we want to -- we were here to speak about our home.

Monica Gordo: Good morning, Mr. Mayor...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Good morning.

Ms. Gordo: Mr. Vice Mayor.

Commissioner Quesada: Can you speak into the mike?

Ms. Gordo: Sure.

Commissioner Quesada: For the people on -- watching at home.

Ms. Gordo: Sorry about that. Good morning Mr. Mayor and Mr. Vice Mayor, Madam City Attorney and the Commissioners. My name is Monica. I have been one of you residents and one of your voters for 15 years. We moved to the Gables as pretty much a young, married couple because we wanted to raise our family here. We fell in love with this property that we bought 15 years ago, and we've been committed to improve it, to raise our family there and to try to live our lives there. It's been a very difficult property. It's a very unique property. The property is a corner lot. It is near St. Phillip's. It is 52 feet wide by 120 feet long. The front of the property faces Columbus, and I'll leave it at that just because I'm also an elected official and I'd rather not place all of my address on the record.

Commissioner Quesada: I just want to be clear, pursuant to County Code, it's purposely stricken from the record, so...

Ms. Gordo: Okay.

Commissioner Quesada: I want to be clear.

Ms. Gordo: So, there's a banyan tree in front of our home, and our home is a two-story property, so it's almost like a little brownstone, if you can envision it. The banyan tree towers over the home. For 15 years, three and four times a year, I have put grass on my front yard. It cannot grow. I always try to plant it two weeks before Thanksgiving because Thanksgiving's a very special time and I host my family and I have pictures of Thanksgiving and Christmas every year where it's already full of mud. I put the most expensive grass. As a young family, we can only afford to do it maybe two or three times a year, and it's always dead by January and it's mostly dead by Thanksgiving, and you know, almost gone by Christmas. Our home effectively ends up being a mud pie. While trying to renovate, we were -- I mean, we've gone -- we've never been before the Commission to ask for any kind of variance or anything, but while trying to renovate, we've been trying to make the home safe and updated, and we haven't worried so much about the prettiness of the home so much as trying to restore the original important things of the home. We've kept the original wood on the inside. We did a brand-new roof. When we went to update our plumbing, we did a new drain field and the drain field had to be moved to the front of the property, which it used to be in the side yard. So, this has become a hygiene issue. I have two boys. My oldest boy, who's going to be 16, has never played in that yard. We have a pool. My kids have been in it three times. Because of the confusion of the ordinance, we really didn't understand -- and I sent somebody to the -- here to find out and we looked online and saw that it said that landscaping materials were artificial grass. And because of the ambiguity, we thought it was okay. We effectively spent the money and put the most updated turf that there could be, you know, during our construction while people were coming for zoning, so obviously, with no intent to do anything wrong. In the middle of, you know, the floor being half-done, somebody came and told us, hey,

you need a special something for this. So, we've actually spent the money as a young family putting this in. But this has been the first time in the last three weeks that my kids have ever played outside in my house. During the summer, my kids are barred from being outside because basically it's completely muddy and the parts of the septic tank are, you know, coming up on the mud and it's full of mosquitoes. The banyan tree, additionally, even when we put the palmetto palm sod, drops, as you know, the berries and the berries create mold on any part of the grass that does take. But effectively, what I've been told by every landscaper is that you need a minimum of two hours of sunlight on the front of your property daily and that because of the way that my house is oriented and the tree is in front of it, that's never going to happen. We don't want -- we love real grass. I would much rather real grass. I bought my home in the Gables because I love the banyan tree and I love the historic preservation of the Gables. Spending the amount of money we did to put the highest and that looks the most real artificial turf and make it clean so that the property looks upkept and is usable was very difficult for us. That's why we've lived 15 years fighting it. I implore you to think about the affects it has on the people that really love our City, your taxpayers, your people who are living here day to day that are part of, you know, making the City great. I am a big fan of your policy that we keep the City as natural and historic and preserved, but I think in cases where you have a situation where the idea is either mud or encourage your constituents to put walks or a concrete jungle, which I do not want to do, if there's an alternative to a very high-end turf that's not visible from the street, that might be a nice alternative. In my case, we also have a six-foot wall, so it's not visible from the street. There is two parts of the property because of the zoning that we were compliant with where the front door is and where the garage is, where just for viewing, the gate goes down to four feet because that's required, but this is the nicest my property has ever looked despite that I prefer real grass because there's actually, you know, a green look to it. And of course, we tried to plant landscaping around the area to make it look even better. But I really ask you, if there is an exception to be made, we think our property's the house for an exception. And I know that in the situation where -- I'm very big "follow the law" person. I would never, ever put something down thinking that we were violating something. I sent someone out, you know, to double check and maybe we were mistaken, but I would never do that and then come ask for any sort of special treatment. I just ask you, in your thoughts about these cases -- and I

know when you're a City Commission, you have to think about the issue of, well, if we make an exception here, when do we make it there. I would ask you to think about just real situations where people can prove to you, like in my situation, that there is no alternative. I've been fighting with this for 15 years because I didn't want to put artificial turf. But I wish I could show you a picture I have of my ten-year-old son making his first grass angels.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: You've made the point. You really have made the point. And thank you and we will discuss...

Ms. Gordo: Thank you for your time.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: And take that into consideration, of course.

Ms. Gordo: Thank you for your time.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you.

Ms. Gordo: I very much appreciate it.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you very much.

Vice Mayor Lago: I appreciate it.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yeah, thank you.

Commissioner Keon: I do think that...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: There is another -- somebody else coming to -- anybody else wish to speak?

Commissioner Quesada: No.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: No? Okay, thank you.

Commissioner Keon: I do think that you need to give some discretion to whoever oversees landscaping in the City. I mean, I don't know that that's -- I don't know if it's Public Works. I don't know if it's Planning. I mean, I think you have to decide that there are -- there will always be an exception.

Commissioner Quesada: So, do you think we should involve...

Commissioner Keon: There needs to be an opportunity -- I think you have -- you know, you have general policies and legislation that covers 90 percent of, you know, what happens in a city, but there's always going to be an exception and there should be some opportunity for discretion by -- not a lower-level personnel, but high-level personnel that, you know, have the experience and the authority to be able to make that decision. And I don't ever have a problem with that.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Well...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Mayor...

City Manager Iglesias: Commissioner, I think that our Board of Architects really prefers natural materials and that's what...

Commissioner Keon: Yes.

City Manager Iglesias: I think we would prefer natural material.

Commissioner Keon: Yes.

City Manager Iglesias: But we do have two very qualified landscape architects...

Commissioner Keon: Okay.

City Manager Iglesias: That work for Public Works.

Commissioner Keon: Okay.

City Manager Iglesias: And maybe we can look at this and have exceptions that they can actually look at and determine there's nothing that can grow there, but...

Commissioner Keon: Yeah. Well, so, I...

City Manager Iglesias: From a policy perspective, we probably should go with a natural material.

Commissioner Keon: Yes, we should. I think, in general, it should be that we would do natural materials. But in every -- oftentimes, you're going to find an exception.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yeah.

Commissioner Keon: You're going to find something where it just doesn't work. And as long as we have -- can give that discussion to someone at a higher level that has knowledge of that field, I will never have a problem in allowing that discretion.

City Manager Iglesias: We will bring this back and we will take a look at that and having that very specific review and very specific exception. It should have a wall and...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yeah. And Mayor, the...

Commissioner Keon: That's the implementing and the administrative order that accompanies legislation.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: The current process is designed to allow the Board of Architects or the City architects -- sometimes I review it personally -- to look at the exceptions and the specifics.

Commissioner Quesada: Alright.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: The problem is that this case didn't go through the process.

Commissioner Quesada: So...

Commissioner Keon: I think they weren't aware of it because of the way that...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Right, right, by mistake and...

Commissioner Keon: The language of the ordinance is written, it makes it...

Vice Mayor Lago: And I...

Commissioner Keon: You know, so it needs to be clearer, cleaner legislation with some implementing...

Vice Mayor Lago: And let me just...

Commissioner Keon: Documents.

Vice Mayor Lago: Add a few points, Mayor, if I may. And I just want to agree with Vice Mayor Quesada's comments and with Commissioner Keon's comments that I think we have to have a little bit of leeway here, you know. And I think this Commission, as a whole, is always in favor of having as much green space with pushing that -- and you know, open space, green space and we want natural materials. But this is like the third or fourth time that I've run into somebody who has an issue, which in my opinion, is justified. Especially in this street, and I'll tell you why in this street. There's other people...

Commissioner Quesada: Yeah.

Vice Mayor Lago: That are having this issue in the street because of the banyan trees. And I drive by there all the time...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: And they're beautiful.

Vice Mayor Lago: On the way to City Hall and the issue there is it's a giant mud pit both on the swale and on the front of the properties.

Commissioner Quesada: Yeah.

Vice Mayor Lago: But this is a concern. But I'm also -- I've run into one for sure, maybe two, where the family has a disabled child and the disabled child cannot play in their yard as a result of the fact that there's no grass, there's no barrier for them. It's just basically either rocks or some sort of vegetation, like I planted on the swale, which wasn't growing any grass. There's no opportunity for that disabled child to be able to go outside and enjoy themselves or just the family sit down together and have a moment. I agree that, a hundred percent, as long as you can't see it from the street, I don't have any issues with it. What we need to do is be very careful and we need to make sure, just like when people come to the City to pull a permit, that we notify them of certain rules and regulations. Case in point, you cannot do exterior construction on a Saturday. It's stated.

The contractor understands it. We need to go and tell the architects and we need to go and tell the contractors, you are not allowed to install artificial turf unless you follow the following criteria and go and see Zoning, go and see Historic, go and see the BOA. I don't want to use the BOA as an excuse, and I'll tell you why. Because I like modern design. I like contemporary design. I think it's great. But I'm not in favor of those giant boxes that are being put throughout the City of Coral Gables. And I've sat down and talked to our esteemed City architect, who I have a lot of respect for, who says, listen, Vincent, you know, the Board approves it. That's what's coming down the line. We're getting more and more houses being knocked down -- and I know when I discuss them now and these modern boxes which are going setback to setback, taking advantage of every square inch and we're getting away from the classic Coral Gables look. So, we're allowing that, but we're not allowing a person who -- I know which house -- and I'm not going to talk about the house as a result of, like Vice Mayor Quesada mentioned, you know, certain things that we want to keep private, but this house has -- there's no possible way for this house to grow grass. And about a block away, there's a certain individual that's in the same boat, and I've been to that person's house. It's a mud pit. So I think we need to find some sort of common ground...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: And the...

Vice Mayor Lago: Where it's not a free-for-all, where people now start, you know...

Commissioner Quesada: And we don't want that there.

Vice Mayor Lago: Installing artificial turf.

Commissioner Quesada: It's still got to stay strict.

Vice Mayor Lago: Like at my house, for example, where there's no wall in the front.

Commissioner Quesada: What if we work into the BOA, if there is anyone that's going to be seeking artificial turf, we have Brooke Dannemiller or someone with that landscaping knowledge...

Commissioner Keon: But they have landscaping knowledge.

Commissioner Quesada: To say, yes, it is true grass can't grow there so that..

Vice Mayor Lago: Yes.

Commissioner Quesada: Maybe add an additional -- maybe that makes it more difficult, but I'm fearful -- I want to keep this strict because we don't want to open up the floodgates...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Right.

Commissioner Quesada: Because then, all of a sudden, the whole -- you know, everything looks fake...

Vice Mayor Lago: I agree.

Commissioner Quesada: In the city.

Vice Mayor Lago: I agree.

Commissioner Keon: Right. But Commissioner Quesada, there are instances when it's like -- you know, they've already done their work on their house. They do whatever. They planted grass; it doesn't grow. They've already gone through Board of Architects, whatever...

Commissioner Quesada: Yeah, of course.

Commissioner Keon: And then they decide that they want to -- they have no choice but an artificial product if they're going to have anything really, you know, resembling grass. So, it's already gone through -- and there's -- bringing it back to the BOA is there's a fee to come back to the BOA, which I don't think you should have to do.

Commissioner Quesada: Then maybe...

Vice Mayor Lago: To waive it.

Commissioner Keon: You know, so I mean -- but I think...

Commissioner Quesada: Then maybe just go through landscaping.

Commissioner Keon: I think if we can -- but I think that, you know, that exemption could be, you know, that artificial turf in general is not approved for use in the City without -- I mean, they can draft the language.

Vice Mayor Lago: Without historic...

Commissioner Keon: You know, without...

Commissioner Quesada: There's a common theme -- I would tell you...

Commissioner Keon: Right.

Commissioner Quesada: There's a common theme with every person that puts in artificial turf...

Commissioner Keon: Yes.

Commissioner Quesada: When you speak to them who say the grass doesn't grow there. I mean, that's 95 percent of the time.

Commissioner Keon: Right. So all they have to do is...

Commissioner Quesada: I've wanted to and it doesn't work.

Commissioner Keon: That's right.

Commissioner Quesada: Maybe instead of...

Commissioner Keon: So, maybe make an exception.

Commissioner Quesada: The BOA, like you're saying, instead of BOA, you create a new process that goes through landscaping.

Commissioner Keon: Well, that's right.

Commissioner Quesada: And what's going to happen is...

City Manager Iglesias: Commissioner...

Commissioner Keon: Like I said, landscaping will do it.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Well, why don't you come with a recommendation for the next time so that, you know, we send it to...

Commissioner Keon: Yeah, I mean...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: The BOA...

Commissioner Keon: Just let them do it.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: And have sympathy for...

Commissioner Keon: As an exception through the Manager's Office.

City Manager Iglesias: Those two landscape architects can go ahead...

Commissioner Keon: Right.

City Manager Iglesias: And visit the area.

Commissioner Keon: Right.

City Manager Iglesias: And say this is...

Commissioner Quesada: And they could start there.

City Manager Iglesias: It starts there.

Commissioner Quesada: And say, you know, something, try this grass and maybe it'll resolve the problem and the resident is happier.

City Manager Iglesias: But if it doesn't, they have the ability to give that exception without...

Commissioner Keon: Right. To allow...

City Manager Iglesias: Going to the Board of Architects.

Commissioner Keon: You know, and then you're permitted.

City Manager Iglesias: We have two City -- we have two landscape architects that are excellent landscape architects in Public Works.

Commissioner Quesada: Okay. So, then can staff work on a draft...

City Manager Iglesias: We will work on it.

Commissioner Keon: We're going to bring it back...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yeah.

Commissioner Keon: In January.

Vice Mayor Lago: Because I want to make sure that Historic has a bite at the apple.

City Manager Iglesias: Historic also, Vice Mayor.

Vice Mayor Lago: And in reference to the two individuals that came before us, I don't know if they have like a running clock in regards to a fine or warning.

City Attorney Ramos: There is currently a Code Enforcement citation.

Vice Mayor Lago: Okay.

City Attorney Ramos: It's been extended through the end of January. We can extend it further...

Vice Mayor Lago: For February.

City Attorney Ramos: Pending the discussion.

City Manager Iglesias: We can.

Commissioner Keon: Yeah.

Vice Mayor Lago: Can we extend it to February of next year so that we can...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: I...

Vice Mayor Lago: Obviously resolve this issue.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Vice Mayor, I visited the house and I can describe it to you. If you're driving, you don't see it because there's a wall to the perimeter. The wall is four feet of the wall, plus the two feet for the -- it follows the Code. It's not a six-foot concrete wall. The thing is that if you are a pedestrian walking by, you would see it. I mean, that's really the issue. That's the only concern.

Commissioner Mena: But can I -- and this is sort of maybe a little bit controversial on this topic but let me just address it. We keep talking about this wall situation, and I understand the logic. But I'm going to be honest with you. The same exact house that she just described to us, let's say it didn't have a wall, is the mud and the rocks really a preferable aesthetic at that point?

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: No, no, no. All I'm saying is if we get clear direction from the Commission, we can implement whatever your choice is.

Commissioner Mena: I mean, I'm not going to ask people...

Commissioner Quesada: Yeah.

Commissioner Mena: To build a wall if they want to install this.

Commissioner Quesada: Well, maybe the landscaping...

Vice Mayor Lago: Well, I was...

Commissioner Quesada: Process is the answer.

Vice Mayor Lago: By the way, if you want to go down that road, I was asked -- I was forced to build a wall, (INAUDIBLE) Commissioner, I was forced to build a wall to hide my pool when I could have built a picket fence. My house is not historic and I look at Dona. Hey, I could have built a picket fence, which is beautiful, and they forced me to build a wall with a foundation four feet that now is covered by an eight-foot clusia tree, okay. That was -- that's in the Code. Twenty thousand dollars, okay, I was forced to do that.

Commissioner Mena: Right.

Vice Mayor Lago: And I replaced the sidewalk. So, we have certain things that, in my opinion, are a little antiquated that -- and this is -- and the point that you're making about what if the wall is not there, would you rather see a mud pit? No, I wouldn't rather see a mud pit.

Commissioner Mena: Right.

Vice Mayor Lago: I want to do exactly what you mentioned and that Commissioner Quesada mentioned. That is we need to make sure if someone's going to embark on asking for this type of product to be installed in the front of their home where it would be potentially visible from the street, they need to make -- it needs to be ironclad that it doesn't -- that normal grass doesn't work.

Commissioner Mena: Including, you know -- in certain -- you know, I know this is an exceptional situation, but there's other situations where maybe there's an oak tree or something. It's not as big as a banyan tree, where trimming the tree a bit helps the grass. You know, it's not just go cut right to the artificial turf.

Vice Mayor Lago: Yes, a hundred percent.

Commissioner Mena: And that is where the landscape person can be beneficial...

Commissioner Quesada: Yeah.

Commissioner Keon: That's right.

Commissioner Mena: To the process.

Vice Mayor Lago: They can document the fact that, hey, you know, for example, maybe certain people don't have the adequate irrigation system to -- when they lay that sod down and that's why it dies. Or -- I'm not a professional when it comes to landscaping. They have to go through a rigorous, you know, review and they have to install landscaping. Maybe they're doing the wrong grass. Maybe that's -- or they can find a sod that's a little bit -- you know, require less light. I don't know.

Commissioner Quesada: Alright. So, to wrap this up...

Vice Mayor Lago: Yes.

Commissioner Quesada: Can we have staff come back with a procedure based on what you've heard today. I think we're pretty much in agreement.

Commissioner Keon: They're going to amend the ordinance with regard to artificial turf and bring it back...

Commissioner Mena: It's not a Board of Architects issue.

Commissioner Keon: No, and bring it back in January.

Commissioner Mena: At that level.

Commissioner Keon: They were planning to anyway, so I think having your additional input is very helpful.

Commissioner Quesada: I think a landscape review...

Commissioner Keon: Yeah.

Commissioner Quesada: Expert process...

Commissioner Keon: Yeah.

Commissioner Quesada: I think makes sense.

Commissioner Keon: Yes.

Commissioner Quesada: I think we're all in agreement.

City Manager Iglesias: That is correct.

Vice Mayor Lago: And I want to see a document like we have when somebody comes to pull a permit to do construction in their house that says they're not allowed to do exterior work on a Saturday. I want people to be aware that if you install this product in your house and you have not received the proper review and approvals from the City, you know, you're going to be first to take it off.

Commissioner Quesada: So, I move for a resolution to have staff -- I don't want to finalize it, but to have staff move forward with creating a landscape review process consistent with what we've discussed here today related to artificial turf and that for there to be a...

Commissioner Keon: That should be amending the ordinance...

Commissioner Quesada: Temporary moratorium...

Commissioner Keon: The existing...

Commissioner Quesada: Between now and let's just say March on any fines or violations that have been issued because I think we've got to be fair to everyone. We have to be. I know that there's a unique situation. I've seen that location, but whatever we do has got to have uniform application all the way across. And there's a temporary for all those that are in that process right now, either violations are going through the process until we have a procedure set up with the landscaper or other staff members, as staff comes back to us with and then those that have violations will still have to go through that process. But I don't want to make it too definite because we haven't really worked out the details yet. I think if you come back to us with the details, then we could tweak it from there.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Are you interested in making the distinction between single family and commercial, meaning...

Commissioner Keon: Yes.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Not allowing commercial, only allow...

Commissioner Quesada: Yes.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: For single family?

Commissioner Keon: Yes.

Commissioner Quesada: That's my motion.

Vice Mayor Lago: Second.

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

Commissioner Quesada: Yes.

Commissioner Keon: Yes.

Vice Mayor Lago: Yes.

Commissioner Mena: Yes.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yes.

(Vote: 5-0)

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you very much. Thank you.

City Attorney Ramos: Based on the resolution, we'll administratively postpone any further action on the pending citation until the end of March.

Vice Mayor Lago: Thank you.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Great. Thank you.