

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item E-8 and E-9 are related
July 22, 2014
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Jim Cason

Vice Mayor William H. Kerdyk, Jr.

Commissioner Pat Keon (Appeared by Skype)

Commissioner Vince Lago

Commissioner Frank Quesada

City Staff

Interim City Manager, Carmen Olazabal

City Attorney, Craig E. Leen

City Clerk, Walter J. Foeman

Deputy City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Assistant Director Development Services, Charles Wu

Public Speaker(s)

Robert Behar, Project Architect, Behar-Font Partners

Joe Wilbur, Gables Residential

Agenda Item E-8 and E-9 are related [Start: 3:39:04 p.m.]

E-8: Planned Area Development (“PAD”). An Ordinance of the City Commission of Coral Gables, Florida requesting review of a Planned Area Development (“PAD”) pursuant to Zoning Code Article 3, “Development Review”, Division 5, “Planned Area Development (“PAD”)”, for the construction of the second phase of the existing commercial project referred to as the “Columbus Center” on the property legally described as Lots 3-40 and portions of alleyway, Block 22, Section L (100 Alhambra Circle and 1 Alhambra Plaza), Coral Gables, Florida; including required conditions; providing for severability, repealer, codification and an effective date. (Legal description on file at the City).

E-9: Easement Amendment. An Ordinance of the City Commission of Coral Gables, Florida, amending Ordinance No. 2854, which vacated a portion of an

alley running north/south lying in Block 22 of the “Revised Plat of Coral Gables Section L” and provided for a substitute easement for alley purposes; and provided for severability, repealer, codification, and an effective date.

Mayor Cason: I think we have some experts here on E-8 and E-9, is that correct? E-8 and E-9.

Mr. Garcia-Serra: Good afternoon Mr. Mayor, indeed we do have some of our clients are here from out of town and we’d appreciate if we could bring up that item now.

Mayor Cason: They are both related they are ordinances on First Reading; City Manager would you please read the titles of E-8 and E-9 into the record.

Interim City Manager Olazabal: E-8: E-8: Planned Area Development (“PAD”). An Ordinance of the City Commission of Coral Gables, Florida requesting review of a Planned Area Development (“PAD”) pursuant to Zoning Code Article 3, “Development Review”, Division 5, “Planned Area Development (“PAD”)”, for the construction of the second phase of the existing commercial project referred to as the “Columbus Center” on the property legally described as Lots 3-40 and portions of alleyway, Block 22, Section L (100 Alhambra Circle and 1 Alhambra Plaza), Coral Gables, Florida; including required conditions; providing for severability, repealer, codification and an effective date. (Legal description on file at the City); and E-9: Easement Amendment. An Ordinance of the City Commission of Coral Gables, Florida, amending Ordinance No. 2854, which vacated a portion of an alley running north/south lying in Block 22 of the “Revised Plat of Coral Gables Section L” and provided for a substitute easement for alley purposes; and provided for severability, repealer, codification, and an effective date.

Mayor Cason: We have somebody from the City that’s going to make the presentation?

Mr. Wu: I think we lost a quorum.

Mayor Cason: No, we have Pat Keon’s here.

City Attorney Leen: Mr. Mayor we need three people in the room.

Mayor Cason: Alright – why don’t you grab...Alright you can begin.

Mr. Wu: Thank you. If we can pull up the slides, thank you. This is Columbus Center Phase 2; you have two applications before you and the third one, a resolution for discussion. The first one is a Planned Area Development called a “PAD”. For your information, the property is

highlighted here, from the south Alhambra Plaza, to the east Douglas Road, to the north Minorca Avenue, to the northwest Alhambra Circle and Galiano. There is a total between Phase 1 and Phase 2, a total of 3.3 acres. The reason we have a “PAD” request before you today are three-fold: one is to allow an encroachment on Phase 2 on the existing Columbus Center; the second one is to allow two buildings on one site, and the third reason is to allow transfer of unused building square footage from Phase 1 onto Phase 2. The second request before you is the Easement Amendment, it’s a housekeeping matter. In 1989 the Commission approved the easement of this location because the abandoning alley and result of that was an easement and the applicant would like to bring forth an amendment to that ordinance. We’ll get into that a little bit more detail; and the third request for consideration upon Second Reading you will have a resolution, it’s a mixed use site plan. Here’s an aerial view from north looking south to the west is Alhambra Hotel, La Palma Hotel, to the east of course is the City of Miami. Again, the property is located between Minorca and Alhambra Plaza and this is all within the CBD. Again, the area highlighted in yellow is the subject property. Here are some images of surrounding properties; Southern Bell is at the northwest, then Alhambra Condo, a 4-story condo complex to the north, Minorca condo to the north, of course to the south you have Hyatt Hotel. It’s a 12-story, and Alhambra Towers about 16-story to the west. Next image is the historic La Palma Hotel, which is not part of the property, but is immediately adjacent to it, and the remaining three images are the Phase 1 of Columbus Center today, which is about 161 feet tall, 14-stories in height.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: 161 feet high, is that what you are saying Charley, I’m sorry?

Mr. Wu: Yes.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: So there I think that’s a high-rise, isn’t it?- it could be 190 feet 5 inches, 190.5. OK, keep on going, I’m sorry.

Mr. Wu: The next slide shows the existing land use, which is compatible with the surrounding land uses in the area and the existing zoning. The area you see in white is really the abandoned easement, the abandoned alley. Today it’s the subject of an easement amendment. Project History – Columbus Center was approved in 1990, it was approved by right. It was built upon 2.6 acres, close to 250,000 square feet, all office, and today’s FAR is 2.2. As part of that request, the Commission did approve an alley vacation and as I said, subject to that, the subjected easement was provided and today the second request is to amend that because they would be building over the alley. The area highlighted in color is really Phase 2, and I will have a little more colored version of this. Again, this shows Phase 1, again 2.6 acres, 14-stories, little less than 250,000 square feet of office, about 859 parking spaces, FAR is 2.2. If you can see Phase 1, the next slide shows Phase 2, which is on 0.7 acres, it will be 18-stories, a little less than 233,000

square feet of all retail office and residential, which constitutes 220 units. They are proposing 387 parking spaces. Phase 2 itself has an FAR (Floor Area Ratio) of 7.2, and you want to transfer 140 square feet from Phase 1 to Phase 2, but today the “PAD” upon your approval will combine the two projects together. Combined – these are the numbers: 3.3 acres, a little bit over 480 square feet of again, office, retail, residential; the FAR is 3.3, a little bit less than the FAR the Mediterranean bonus of 3.5. Again, this scenario, all the units will account for the entire project would be 61 units per acre, and together we have about a little less than 1,300 parking spaces for Phase 1 and Phase 2 together. Again, you want to create some synergy between the projects, between shared common open space, etc. Just to give you an animation – this is the public plaza as you see today, and we showed you in the picture. There will be a paseo connecting with the public plaza, which is an urban amenity. There will be a public alley that will continue and then it will lead into the easement where we have shaded in red leading to Minorca circle. Vehicle access from the public alley under the structure as a drop-off space, and public access will be on the street on the north into the garage. The easement will be reduced from 19 feet clearance in the ordinance you approved in 1989 to 17 feet 4 inches, and that is your First Reading today. This is a rendering showing the elevation of the, a perspective; this is the elevation north, elevation south. As part of this request staff has to make findings of fact of the application. We find that Section 3-503 of the Code has been met for the “PAD”. Findings of fact for the mixed use site plan, staff finds that Section 4-201 has been met; and likewise for your resolution findings of fact for the site plan Section 3-408 has been satisfied as well. The Board of Architects reviewed this and gave its preliminary approval at its May 8th meeting, at its...there was a community meeting held for all beyond within 1,000 feet, 1,181 mailers went out, and the Planning and Zoning recommended unanimously at its June 11th meeting. That concludes staff’s presentation.

Mayor Cason: Is this going to be a LEED building?

Mr. Garcia-Serra: It’s going to be a LEED building.

Speaker:...Florida Green Consul Building – yes.

Mayor Cason: Mario.

Mr. Garcia-Serra: My presentation will be fast, faster than the last one at least. Mario Garcia-Serra, with offices at 600 Brickell Avenue, representing U.S.R.E. Holdings, the owner of the property at 100 Alhambra Circle and Gables Residential there selected joint venture partner for the development of this project. I’m joined today by Joe Wilber and Uri Man, both of Gables Residential, Robert Behar, our project architect, as well as Chris Heggen and Chris Falce, our project traffic engineer and civil engineer. U.S.R.E. Holdings is a subsidiary of USAA, the

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insurance company which is the owner of the Columbus Center office complex, located at 1 Alhambra Plaza; and what we are looking to do with this project is essentially have a second residential phase of the Columbus Center and what we are proposing in particular is an 18-story building, with ground floor retail space, and 200 apartment rental units. It is designed in the Coral Gables Mediterranean style of architecture and has obtained Mediterranean design and bonus approval from the Board of Architects. The ground floor has an arcade and two paseos so as to encourage pedestrian connectivity and we are proposing to incorporate our “Art in Public Places” contribution and to improving the plaza which is at the southwest corner of the site at the intersection of Galiano and Alhambra. We are seeking two different approvals today; one of them is the “PAD” approval planned development approval, which is on First Reading. The purpose of that is to approve a two-building site essentially, which will permit us to distribute FAR over the site, and to provide relief from tower setback requirements. Normally, 10 feet of setback are required between tower and pedestal and we are at somewhere around 9 ½ feet of setback. We also have on First Reading the ordinance amending the previous condition of the alley access easement so as to slightly change the reconfiguration and vertical clearance of that access, which we have a board we can show you in more detail; and we will continue to maintain the existing access point that is provided right now with just a slight reconfiguration. With that said I’ll ask Robert to just go through the project elevation and boards and give you more description.

Mr. Robert Behar: Good afternoon Mr. Mayor, Commissioners, Commissioner Keon, for the record Robert Behar, Behar-Font Partners, 135 San Lorenzo Avenue, Suite 610. Mr. Kerdyk just to emphasize on a topic you answered, this building the existing Columbus Center is 161 feet high, the projects, two are west are 190 feet. So we are within the contextual of the area, which is all the same. The project – what we’ve done is incorporating Phase 1 and Phase 2, this portion of the side is a semi curve, so what we’ve done is taking the building and created like a seductive curve on the building to bring down the massing of the building. What we’ve done is taking the mass and we chopped it down, we carved it out to create a more volumetric effect on the massing of the project. The project and I will point to this rendering...[off mic]...you have retail on the ground floor...parking, you’ve got a pool deck, elevated pool deck, and then you have the residential, which from this level to the residential we stepped it back and then at the...we stepped it back again creating the volume breaking the volume significantly. As you are aware, Gables Residential has done Gables Ponce Phase 1 and Phase 2 where the Epicure is, so you get that high quality of family rental product in the downtown core in CBD here, so we are very excited about the project. We think this is a very nice project and we are very pleased to be able to present it to you today. Thank you.

Commissioner Lago: Robert just so you made a brief comment about it and I just want to commend you and your staff on doing an incredible job in regards to the design and I like that

curvature something that's going to bring a little cache to the City, something different, it's very nice, it's something different...

Mayor Cason: It will go with our "Lovers Court".

Commissioner Lago: It's something different, it looks good, I like how the project sits on a pedestal, it's very nice, well done. Getting back to what we were discussing before. So the overall once the PAD is completed, is assembled, you are talking about a total FAR of about 3.3, correct?

Mr. Behar: That's correct – 3.3.

Commissioner Lago: Which is as per the Code?

Mr. Behar: 3.5 is allowed, so we are under the allowable. There is still some left over FAR that we are leaving there and I intend to use it.

Commissioner Lago: Congratulations again on the design – very well thought out and very well done.

Mr. Behar: Thank you.

Mayor Cason: Bill.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: Just a question. It's a very handsome building. The FAR – there is a piece of property, I stepped out for a second there, that was basically designated as a park, it never looked much like a park, but it's that open space there, you are taking FAR off of that and applying it to the PAD?

Mr. Garcia-Serra: Well that is part of the site.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: I know its part of the site.

Mr. Behar: That would be the art or the intent, and Gables Residential could elaborate more, that would be the intent to put Art in Public spaces and re-do that space, do something more useful than just an open space.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: But basically you are taking the FAR off that space, so if its 10,000 square feet that's over there, you are taking 35,000 square feet and putting it on your project.

Mr. Behar: Correct – and keep in mind that will always be an open space.

Mr. Garcia-Serra: It's on the southwest corner there....

Mr. Behar: That will always remain, so what we are going to do now is come back and make it nicer.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: OK. So the reason we are able to do the "PAD" of course is because USAA still owns a portion of the property, correct?

Mr. Garcia-Serra: Correct.

Mr. Behar: They own the entire property.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: They own the entire property, OK.

Mayor Cason: It's a great company.

Mr. Garcia-Serra: It will be unified of course by a covenant in lieu of unity of title to ensure that it's always considered one building site.

Commissioner Lago: Maybe a question for you Vice Mayor. That 10,000 square feet where you've transferred the FAR onto the building site, is that going to remain like a public park?

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: Yes.

Mr. Behar: Like a plaza.

Commissioner Lago: Like a plaza?

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: That has never been a successful plaza, I mean you are going to have to dial it up a little bit because it...

Mr. Garcia-Serra: That's the idea.

Mr. Behar: That's the intent, to bring an artist to work...

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: It's to your benefit to make to make it look really....

Commissioner Lago: Get some ground traffic; you are going to have that with that area especially with a rental community.

Mr. Behar: But that's the intent and Gables Residential has reached out to an artist to work specifically in that area, which is very exciting stuff, what I've seen so far is very exciting.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: So how is the relationship between Gables Residential and USAA, what type of relationship is that?- is that a – are you developing it for them or how is that relationship?- a partnership?- I don't quite understand that. Let me just ask one more question about the building itself. I assume, you said there is retail downstairs, how many square feet of retail downstairs?

Mr. Behar: It's about between 5 and 6,000 square feet.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: Oh, its small, it's small – OK, very good. Could you answer that question for me please Joe?

Mr. Joe Wilbur: Joe Wilbur with Gables Residential out of Atlanta, Georgia. We will be a joint venture partner with USAA Real Estate.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: OK.

Mr. Wilbur: This will be our seventh

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: Project with them.

Mr. Wilbur: Yes, our seventh project with them and we will act as a development manager, property manager, they are a silent partner essentially.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: The owner of the property?

Mr. Wilbur: Yes. We will own a percentage of it. We will put it into a joint-venture the Gables owns a percent, USAA owns a percent, and again we will be the development manager and the on-site manager and run it on a day-to-day basis.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: OK.

Mr. Behar: Commissioner Kerdyk this is number seven, they have multiple projects going, this is just the work here in the Gables, which happens to be a prime location.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: Right, no doubt. OK. I got you. Thanks Joe.

Mayor Cason: Thank you. Thank you. Commissioner Keon do you have any observations, anybody else?

Commissioner Keon: [Inaudible]

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: Don't understand.

Mayor Cason: You broke up.

Commissioner Keon:....developed under a prior Code, do they develop under...

Mr. Garcia-Serra: What I believe she is asking is does the "PAD" permit us to develop under a previous Code or under existing Code?- and no, we have to develop under existing Code. The project that Robert's proposed complies with all the mixed use district regulations that are applicable as well as some additional regulations that are applied because of the "PAD".

Commissioner Keon: OK....thank you.

Mayor Cason: This is a public hearing. I had one speaker card, David Guzman, 1127 Campo Sano Avenue asked to read into the record that he is fully in support and respectfully respects approval today of this "PAD". So we'll close the public hearing, anymore discussion? Do we have a motion?

Commissioner Quesada: So moved.

Mayor Cason: Commissioner Quesada makes the motion, the Vice Mayor seconds.

City Clerk

Commissioner Lago: Yes

Commissioner Quesada: Yes

Commissioner Keon: Yes

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: Yes

Mayor Cason: Yes

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(Vote: 5-0)

Mr. Garcia-Serra: Thank you very much; we'll see you on Second Reading.

City Attorney Leen: Has there been a vote on each of the two?

Mayor Cason: On the resolution?

Interim City Manager Olazabal: I read it into the record but I think we might have voted just the one.

City Clerk Foeman: We only voted on one.

City Attorney Leen: There were two ordinances on First Reading, right?

Mayor Cason: Yes and the second is E-9.

City Attorney Leen: Has it been presented yet?

Mr. Wu: I presented both.

City Attorney Leen: OK, so there should be a second vote.

Mayor Cason: OK. On E-9.

Commissioner Quesada: I'll make a motion on the second one.

Mayor Cason: Commissioner Quesada makes the motion, Vice Mayor seconds that as well.

City Clerk

Commissioner Quesada: Yes

Commissioner Keon: Yes

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: Yes

Commissioner Lago: Yes

Mayor Cason: Yes

(Vote: 5-0)

Mr. Garcia-Serra: Thanks again.

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Mayor Cason: Thank you very much.

[End: 4:00:29 p.m.]