

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item F-1
December 7, 2021
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Vince Lago

Vice Mayor Michael Mena

Commissioner Rhonda Anderson

Commissioner Jorge Fors

Commissioner Kirk Menendez

City Staff

City Manager, Peter Iglesias

City Attorney, Miriam Ramos

City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Item F-1 [Start: 12:40 p.m.]

An Ordinance of the City Commission granting approval of a Planned Area Development (PAD) pursuant to Zoning Code Article 14, "Process," Section 14-206, "General Procedures for Planned Area Development" for a proposed multi-family project referred to as "Gables Village" on the property legally described as Lots 1 through 22, Block 28, "Coral Gables Biltmore Section" (504, 516, 522, 530, and 536 Malaga; 503, 511, 515, 535, 529, 525, and 521 Santander; and 3109 Segovia), Coral Gables, Florida; including required conditions; providing for a repealer provision, severability clause, and providing for an effective date.

Mayor Lago: So, moving on, F-1, Ramon, please, I want to be as quick as possible on this issue.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Mayor, no changes.

City Attorney Ramos: Just a second Ramon, I need to read it into the record, its an ordinance. An Ordinance of the City Commission granting approval of a Planned Area Development (PAD)

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Agenda Item F-1 – Ordinance granting approval of a PAD pursuant to Zoning Code Article 14 – Process – "Gables Village"

[Date]

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pursuant to Zoning Code Article 14, “Process,” Section 14-206, “General Procedures for Planned Area Development” for a proposed multi-family project referred to as “Gables Village” on the property legally described as Lots 1 through 22, Block 28, “Coral Gables Biltmore Section” (504, 516, 522, 530, and 536 Malaga; 503, 511, 515, 535, 529, 525, and 521 Santander; and 3109 Segovia), Coral Gables, Florida; including required conditions; providing for a repealer provision, severability clause, and providing for an effective date. Mr. Clerk you need to swear anybody in who is speaking on this item. It is a public hearing.

City Clerk Urquia: Mr. Trias please raise your right hand, anyone else? Do you swear or affirm that the testimony you will offer today is the truth and nothing but the truth?

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: I do. Mayor there are no changes. The applicant is here in case you have any questions.

Mayor Lago: Are there any public comment?

City Clerk Urquia: No public comment. I did receive an e-mail for the record.

Mayor Lago: Okay.

City Clerk Urquia: It’s from Mr. Brett Gillis. “Hello, I would like my comment read for this item. A time certain was not set for this item, so I believe this suppresses resident input. I’ve asked staff several times, but never got an answer as to how the proposed PAD satisfies the legal criteria. I do not see how you can approve this when it does not meet the criteria. Section 2-500 of the Zoning Code states that the purpose of the planned area development provides substantial additional public benefit, encourage enhancement and preservation of lands, enforce and maintain neighborhood and community identity, preservation of natural features, scenic areas, reduce land utilization for roads. This PAD does not comply with any of these. How has staff reached its recommendation. These are not my rules, these are the city’s rules. The proposed architectural is beautiful, but this is not the location for this PAD. Also, I believe an application for historic preservation was submitted and the community has not been given the chance to present before the Historic Preservation Board yet. So, I don’t even see how this item could be moved forward today. Thank you, Brett Gillis.”

Mayor Lago: Two quick things. Madam City Attorney can you address both comments.

City Attorney Ramos: I’ll defer to Ramon on whether all the requirements are met. I haven’t reviewed the project to that level of depth. As far as the historic preservation comment, I believe the director received a request yesterday for this neighborhood to be looked at, and this has already been adopted on first reading. You certainly have the right to defer it, you can also move forward.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Mayor this project complies with all the PAD goals. In fact, its one of the best design projects I had a chance to review.

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Mayor Lago: That's all I need to hear.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: I don't need to say anything else.

Mayor Lago: Perfect. Thank you. Mr. Adams, in regard to historic, please give us your guidance.

Historic Preservation Officer Adams: Any time there is an application to demolish a property in the city, it requires review by my office. There are 13 properties on this block. Last November, over a year ago, a request was made to demolish, or a request for historic significance for 11 of these properties was requested. They were granted. There were two properties left outstanding. We received the requests for the determination of eligibility for designation, and four or five months ago, I made the determination that on their own these properties did not stack up individually for designation. After that, an attempt was made to submit a designation application for 503 Santander. If we accepted this request for designation, it would defeat the purpose of issuing these letters in the first place, because what made the determination, they are not eligible to move forward to the board. Last night an application was submitted to designate the entire block as a small district. I believe I had said in the past that if I had been involved maybe two years ago, it may have been eligible. But the problem is, if this was eligible to be a district, this request should have been submitted over a year ago when the initial 11 were submitted. The fact that 11 had already been signed off on, means that this is no longer eligible to be classed as a district. Unfortunately, this looks like the request to designate 503 Santander as an individual site doesn't stack up, so let's try and ask for it to be made a district. There are only so many requests that can be made and only so many times that we can say, in our opinion, individually these properties don't stack up. So, I did refer it to the City Attorney's office for a legal opinion as to whether this request is warranted or legal or not, and that was only done this morning, so I haven't had a response.

Mayor Lago: Thank you for writing for that clarity. We'll move forward. Does anybody in the Commission has any comments?

Vice Mayor Mena: I'll make a motion to approve.

Commissioner Menendez: Second.

Commissioner Anderson: I just have one question for the architect. During the process of the evolution of this project, how many iterations did you go through? – venture a guess.

Maria de la Guardia: Well, its still ongoing. Even after we submitted this, we've tweaked it and improved a lot of aspects of it, but we probably went through 20 schematic site designs to arrive at this which we thought was the right one.

Commissioner Anderson: It's a beautiful design and I commend you on it.

Maria de la Guardia: Thank you.

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Commissioner Anderson: We have a second already.

Mayor Lago: Thank you very much, by the way. Quick question. In regard to your concept, the aesthetic concept, did that change significantly, or did you have a vision from the beginning that you didn't deviate that much to the end. Did you know what you wanted?

Maria de la Guardia: We always wanted to create a village and a series of common interconnected public spaces, and it was always about finding the right combination of masses of solids and voids, in order to achieve that.

Mayor Lago: But your overall theme was always going to be Mediterranean, correct, and you are going to move in a direction of Mediterranean.

Maria de la Guardia: We are traditional, classical architects and that's what we love to do.

Mayor Lago: It's a beautiful building, by the way, with less density, you are proposing less density that is currently there, so I commend you. Its going to hide the parking. Its going to be a beautiful enclave for people to enjoy. Thank you. With that being said, we have a motion and a second.

Vice Mayor Mena: Yes

Commissioner Menendez: Yes

Commissioner Anderson: Yes

Commissioner Fors: Yes

Mayor Lago: Yes

(Vote: 5-0)

Mr. Garcia-Serra: Thank you very much Mr. Mayor and Commissioners.