

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item G-19
August 24, 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, Jr.

Commissioner Kirk Menendez

City Staff

City Manager, Peter Iglesias

Assistant City Manager, Ed Santamaria

City Attorney, Miriam Ramos

City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Deputy City Attorney, Cristina Suarez

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Item G-19

A Resolution of the City Commission directing staff to implement a process to allow the public to provide written input on projects during an established comment period prior to Development Review Committee and Board of Architects meetings.
(Sponsored by Commissioner Anderson)

Mayor Lago: Moving onto G-19.

City Attorney Ramos: G-19 is a Resolution of the City Commission directing staff to implement a process to allow the public to provide written input on projects during an established comment period prior to Development Review Committee and Board of Architects meetings. Deputy City Attorney will present the item.

Deputy City Attorney Suarez: Mayor and Commissioners this resolution directs staff to implement a process for receiving written public input for items that are before the Development Review

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Agenda Item G-19 – Resolution directing staff to implement a process to allow the public to provide written input on projects during DRC and BOA

[Date]

1

Committee and Board of Architects. Basically, all it is having a dedicated e-mail address, one for DRC and one for Board of Architects and that all public input that's submitted by close of business prior to the day of the meeting will be uploaded onto a webpage for the respective board and provided to the board members before the meeting. It also incorporates the application of the city's rules of decorum and order and the civility code in public input, similar to the way that public comment is made at meetings, such that if the written input contains, I'm going to read it, if the written input contains irrelevant, impertinent or slanderous remarks, profanities, insults or other disparaging remarks or comments, references, or statements regarding race, gender, ethnicity, religion or sexual orientation, and no other relevant input it won't be provided to the board members or uploaded to the webpage. And just to clarify one other point with respect to Board of Architects. This process is meant to apply to projects that would otherwise be required to go to DRC. So, a single-family residence wouldn't fit into this.

City Attorney Ramos: And also, to add, because it came up earlier and the idea is not for the comments to be read orally, but rather for them to read it before and take them into account.

Commissioner Anderson: Right. Otherwise, I think it would take up just too much time. We've discussed this a little bit earlier, I wanted the civility code incorporated in it, so that we reinforce that and allow the Board of Architects to have that contemplated time, there's a deadline, its 5 o'clock.

Deputy City Attorney Suarez: Close of business, right, so 5 o'clock the day before the meeting.

Commissioner Anderson: So that staff has adequate time to get the comments to the Board of Architects.

Deputy City Attorney Suarez: So, it would be e-mailed to the members.

Commissioner Anderson: As well as DRC.

Deputy City Attorney Suarez: Correct. The resolution also clarifies that, it kind of reemphasizes the public comment is not intended to be solicited at DRC meetings, since it is an administrative staff meeting.

Commissioner Anderson: Yes. Any discussion?

Vice Mayor Mena: What was that last point?

Deputy City Attorney Suarez: The DRC is an administrative staff committee, and it doesn't contemplate that public comment would be solicited at such meetings, and so, this is like providing a process for the written public input and kind of emphasizing or reiterating that the public comment at the meeting won't be solicited.

City Manager Iglesias: The DRC is for larger projects so that any issue with a project can be told to the developer by the different departments, so that's really a technical, its solely a technical meeting.

City Attorney Ramos: I don't want to speak for the sponsor, but I think the intent was that because DRC is supposed to be very technical, not about whether we like the project, but about like police and public works and like a super hyper-technical thing that a lot of public comment was taking over that time, that the applicant needs to really get input from staff and they are paying a lot of money to do that, so at least this way the comments are in writing and don't take an hour of the meeting. I think that was the idea. I don't want to speak for Commissioner Anderson.

Commissioner Anderson: That is the idea, but there is a need for some public comment. We've talked about some projects where why did the fire pipes end up being basically the hood ornament of the front lawn on particular projects, perhaps these things can be brought out at that time and dealt with early on and avoid a lot of unnecessary expense for...parties including developers.

Commissioner Fors: I'll move it.

Commissioner Menendez: Second.

Commissioner Anderson: Yes

Commissioner Fors: Yes

Vice Mayor Mena: Yes

Commissioner Menendez: Yes

Mayor Lago: Yes

(Vote: 5-0)

Commissioner Anderson: Thank you.