

**City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting**  
**Agenda Items E-4 and E-5**  
**July 11, 2023**  
**City Commission Chambers**  
**405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL**

**City Commission**

**Mayor Vince Lago**  
**Vice Mayor Rhonda Anderson**  
**Commissioner Melissa Castro**  
**Commissioner Ariel Fernandez**  
**Commissioner Kirk Menendez**

**City Staff**

**City Attorney, Cristina Suárez**  
**City Manager, Peter Iglesias**  
**City Clerk, Billy Urquia**

**Public Speaker(s)**

**Mario Garcia-Serra, Attorney for Applicant**  
**Herbierto Delgado, Project Architect**  
**Willy Bermello, Project Architect**  
**Maria Cruz**  
**James Dockerty**  
**Clara Monsegur**

---

Agenda Item E-4 and E-5 [10:52 a.m.]

Time Certain 10:30 a.m.

E-4: A Resolution of the City Commission granting Remote Parking (Section 10-109) Conditional Use approval pursuant to Article 14, "Process", Section 14-203, "Conditional Uses," for proposed remote parking associated with the mixed-use project referred to as "The Avenue" hotel and residences on the property legally described as Lots 8 through 11, Block 9, Revised Plat of Coral Gables Industrial Section (351 San Lorenzo Avenue), Coral Gables, Florida; including required conditions; providing for a repealer provision, severability clause, and an effective date. (06 06 23 PZB recommended approval, Vote: 5-0)

E-5: A Resolution of the City Commission approving receipt of Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs) pursuant to Zoning Code Article 14, "Process," Section 14-204.6, "Review and approval of use of TDRs on receiver sites," for the receipt and use of TDRs for a mixed-use project referred to as "The Avenue" hotel and residences on the property legally described as Lots 8 through 11,

*City Commission Meeting*

Block 9, Revised Plat of Coral Gables Industrial Section (351 San Lorenzo Avenue), Coral Gables, Florida; including required conditions; providing for a repealer provision, severability clause, and an effective date. (06 06 23 PZB recommended approval, Vote: 5-0)

Mayor Lago: Moving onto our time certain that we had at 10:30, E-4 and E-5.

City Attorney Suarez: E-4 is a Resolution of the City Commission granting Remote Parking (Section 10-109) Conditional Use approval pursuant to Article 14, "Process", Section 14-203, "Conditional Uses," for proposed remote parking associated with the mixed-use project referred to as "The Avenue" hotel and residences on the property legally described as Lots 8 through 11, Block 9, Revised Plat of Coral Gables Industrial Section (351 San Lorenzo Avenue), Coral Gables, Florida; including required conditions; providing for a repealer provision, severability clause, and an effective date. E-5 which is related is a Resolution of the City Commission approving receipt of Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs) pursuant to Zoning Code Article 14, "Process," Section 14-204.6, "Review and approval of use of TDRs on receiver sites," for the receipt and use of TDRs for a mixed-use project referred to as "The Avenue" hotel and residences on the property legally described as Lots 8 through 11, Block 9, Revised Plat of Coral Gables Industrial Section (351 San Lorenzo Avenue), Coral Gables, Florida; including required conditions; providing for a repealer provision, severability clause, and an effective date. Mayor, these are quasi-judicial items and I request that we consolidate the items for purposes of the public hearing.

Mayor Lago: Perfect.

City Attorney Suarez: And so, anyone who will be testifying, I'll ask the Clerk to please swear them in.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Clerk.

City Clerk Urquia: Those who will be testifying on this item, please stand and raise your right hand. Do you swear or affirm the testimony you'll provide today will be the truth and nothing but the truth.

All: Yes.

City Clerk Urquia: Thank you. Mr. Garcia-Serra, good morning. You know how the new rules are, you go first.

Mr. Garcia-Serra: Understood. Good morning, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Lago: How's the family?

Mr. Garcia-Serra: Everyone doing well, thank you.

*City Commission Meeting*

Mayor Lago: Good. Thank you.

Mr. Garcia-Serra: Good morning Mr. Mayor and Commissioners, Mario Garcia-Serra, with offices at 600 Brickell Avenue, representing San Lorenzo Property LLC. The owner of the subject site located at 351 San Lorenzo Avenue on the northwest corner of the intersection of Laguna Street and San Lorenzo Avenue. I'm accompanied today by my clients, Oscar Roger, Sr. and Oscar Roger, Jr. of Roger Development, well known developers in the City of Coral Gables, with numerous projects, including what was the first mixed-use project in this area of the city, the One Village Place Building. I'm also joined today by our Project Architects Willy Bermello and Herbierto Delgado, who will present the project to you shortly. In the meantime, actually Herbierto you can start setting up, perhaps the presentation. There's a lot to like about this project. Most importantly, it is at long last bringing a hotel to this area of the city. Merrick Shops is probably the only high-end retail center in Miami-Dade County which does not have a hotel in close proximity. This project is also lower in scale than the maximum permitted. A 120-foot-tall building could be proposed for this site, and that is the height of several buildings in the vicinity. But this building is at a height of seven stories and 84 feet. It is significantly smaller than many of the other buildings in this area and it's a scale, I think that the city has been trying to incentivize for a very long time. Thirdly, the reason that we have been able to accomplish this lower scale is through the use of remote parking. Parking is a big contributor to the mass and height of a building and the code allows for parking to be provided remotely where appropriate, so a decrease scale can be achieved. Lastly, the location of these remote parking spaces is also a benefit to the city. When Merrick Shops was originally built, the city required that 400 extra parking spaces be built in their parking garage for city use. Those parking spaces have never been utilized by the city in any significant way until now. The project's use of a minimum of 70 parking spaces at Merrick Shops will have a direct monetary benefit to the city and what we are paying directly to the city for the right of the remote parking, as well as what we are paying to Merrick Shops as lease payments for those parking spaces which will ultimately accrue total revenue and lease payments to the city. With that said, I'll ask Willy to present the project, Herbierto.

Mayor Lago: Good morning, sir.

Mr. Delgado: Good morning to the Commission. The Avenue, as Mario said before, its located across the street from the Village of Merrick Park, not so far from where we are today. In red we're showing the site across the street, as I said before, from the Village of Merrick Park in the corner of San Lorenzo Avenue and Laguna Street. We're within the design and innovation district, we're an MX2. We are showing here how we have outside parking right across the street from Laguna, very close to our property. This is a seven-story mixed-use building. We try to keep the bulk of the building as small as possible. We felt like it was necessary for this site and went along with the neighborhood. We are allowed to go up to ten stories, 120 feet, but we felt that the lower scale was appropriate for this site. This is in response also to the Village of Merrick Park across from us. We have retail on the ground floor, along San Lorenzo and Laguna, and we're buying some of the on-street parking in order to expand the sidewalk and create an outdoor café environment. With also create a breezeway which reduces congestion for both drop-off and deliveries for the hotel use and this is all done within the property. Even though there is a zero step-back along San Lorenzo and

*City Commission Meeting*

[Date]

3

July 11, 2023

Agenda Items E-4 and E-5 – Resolution granting remote parking conditional use approval.  
Pursuant to Article 14, "Process" Section 14-203, "Conditional Uses"

Laguna, we proposed stepping back the building at the second and third levels seven and-a-half feet. We wanted to make sure that we are allowed as much sunlight as possible to the sidewalk and keep the scale of the building low. And we have on the rooftop the amenity level, with a swimming pool and a small area for dining. This is the ground floor. We have about 38,000 square feet of retail, with a drive which internalizes valet pick-up and drop-off. Our mezzanine level the rest of the back of house due to the size of the property, we had to move some of back of house spaces to the next level in order to provide as much retail and a wide driveway for the building. And our first level of units, we have 8 units per level, a total of six levels, 48 units, with a mix of six-one bedrooms and two-two bedrooms. And our typical levels from third to the seventh and the amenity level at the roof. As I said before, this is a small project, only 48 luxury suites. The project requires 60 to 70 parking spaces as designed, and we propose with the developer, or the developer is right now in an agreement in order to purchase 70 spaces.

Mr. Garcia-Serra: Thank you very much Herbierto. Mr. Mayor and Commissioners, this project has been well received by the various boards which have reviewed it. The Board of Architects unanimously approved its design; the Planning and Zoning Board recommended unanimously also approval of all of our requests. The project's use of transferable development rights will also benefit the cause of historic preservation in the city. The proceeds of the proposed TDR transaction will be utilized to help maintain the historic home of John Douglas, one of the city's pioneers and the namesake of Douglas Road. Your staff is recommending approval with conditions that are acceptable to my client. We would ask that you follow those recommendations and vote to approve this project, which is an important improvement and addition to this area of the city which in memory of all of us was at onetime a public works yard where legend says that the pond that was there would glow in the dark, because of what was there. If you look at what it is today, it's a thriving area and with a hotel it's a bit of a missing piece that isn't in that puzzle right now and this would complete it. So, I'll reserve some time for rebuttal. Of course, we have the whole team here ready for any questions.

Mayor Lago: So, I'd like to hear from the city, and I want to have some discussion with the developer and the architect, he's a good friend.

City Planner Garcia: Jennifer Garcia.

Mayor Lago: How are you. Thank you for being here.

City Planner Garcia: Good morning. Good morning. Thank you. PowerPoint please. Could I have the final PowerPoint please.

City Clerk Urquia: Its coming up.

City Planner Garcia: Okay. Thank you. Perfect. So, we all know where the location is, its on San Lorenzo and Laguna on the corner. Here is the aerial, as you can see its just outside the Shops at Merrick Park across the street. The zoning and the land use are industrial for land use and also MX2, which has been important to be able to receive those TDRs and also to take advantage of

*City Commission Meeting*

the remote parking. Existing conditions right now at the top, across the street is the bottom image which are the Shops at Merrick Park. So, the first request is conditional use for the remote parking. So, the ground floor is retail, as he went through, and the upper floors are mostly hotel units. There is a residential only unit that's on each of the floors, in the bottom left of the image on the upper floors. So, they are proposing, if they keep it as hotel units, the parking would be 67, sorry, 67 parking spaces with the possibility though of course, if they do not have a hotel then it will be one- and two-bedroom units. So that would be a total of 70 spaces. So, they are requesting 70 spaces even though as a hotel use, they'll only be required to have 67 spaces, just wanted to clarify that. So remote parking is happening across the street. It's going to be using 70 of the 400 city-controlled spaces. So, you can see here the parking garages on the site; the site is the red square with the white over it, that's the side of the Avenue, The Avenue Project. So, there you see 70 spaces of those two northern parking garages. They are not touching the spaces that are in the Shops at Merrick Park, they are usually used to parking there to go to the mall, and also not using the parking spaces along that triangular parking lot across the street from Ponce. The second request is the TDRs request. They are requesting to transfer about 9,600 square feet from the 36 Venetia Avenue, which is the historic landmark in the North Ponce Conservation District. They are transferring those TDRs to The Avenue. That's not adding more stories, its just adding the square footage that's left over from the ascending site. So, it's been reviewed by DRC since November, went to the Board of Architects in February. They went to the Board of Adjustment, they got approval, the granting of the variances to allow less of a step-back, because they're having a setback closer to the ground. They had a neighborhood meeting back in May; Planning and Zoning Board recommended approval in June and here we are today for Commission. This is the map that they mailed the radius, mailed to the property owners, 9,000 feet of the property. They did that three times, the property was posted twice, website posting was three times, as well as twice for newspaper advertisement. So, staff determined that this was consistent with the Comp Plan, recommend approval with conditions. Those conditions are laid out in the draft resolutions, but basically, they are going to comply with the remote parking requirements, going through the covenant, annual renewal, remedial plan, agreeing to all those requirements. They are going to maintain access during construction along Laguna and San Lorenzo, and they are going to pay for the loss of five parking spaces along San Lorenzo and I think a couple that are lost on Laguna, and they are going to improve that pedestrian crossing across San Lorenzo as well. That's it.

Mayor Lago: Perfect. Thank you very much. If I could have Mr. Bermello and the developer come up one second. First of all, I'd like to welcome you again. You are no strangers, both of you to the City Beautiful, not only you call this your home, but also, I'm very proud that you moved your offices to the City of Coral Gables, and I worked for you for four years between college and grad school, so its always a pleasure to see you and you are a dear friend. This is a project that I'm very familiar with because I've worked with these two gentlemen probably for the last three years, two or three years you've been working on. The first time that we saw this project, it was a conceptual idea of potentially building parking under the project, and it was maxing out at 120, potentially even higher. After a lot of discussion with staff, the City Manager, all the teams together, our zoning department, I think the best decision was made and it's something that's going to compliment the city and compliment the project. When you look at your design and what you're proffering, having just come back from vacation, you look at blocks in Paris and you look at blocks

*City Commission Meeting*

[Date]

5

July 11, 2023

Agenda Items E-4 and E-5 – Resolution granting remote parking conditional use approval.  
Pursuant to Article 14, "Process" Section 14-203, "Conditional Uses"

in Italy, this reminds me of a building in one of those epic world-class cities. If we could do this everywhere, that was the intent of remote parking. This fits perfectly in this area, as a result of the simple fact that we have Merrick Park adjacent to this structure and its going to play a very good symbiotic relationship between the building and the few thousand extra parking spaces that we have in Merrick Park. I know 400 only controlled by the city, but there's a lot of extra parking in Merrick Park.

City Manager Iglesias: There's 3,400 parking spaces.

Mayor Lago: 3,400 – so thank you Mr. Manager. So, this is the first time that we are going to be able to tap into those 400 parking spaces which will mean revenue for the city, plus an added bonus of, what are we talking about there.

City Manager Iglesias: \$10,000 per space, \$700,000.

Mayor Lago: \$700,000 which that money can go, for example, for the development of a new parking garage in the downtown, which we're working on, but I just wanted to say thank you. Thank you for persevering, not only doing an incredible design. The building is gorgeous. This is going to be an incredible amenity for the community, and I think that you are the benchmark of a building that didn't just come to market with parking, Mario played a big role. Mario, we probably had two or three dozen meetings to talk about this, on how we can deliver a worldclass building being the first to use remote parking in this magnitude.

Mr. Garcia-Serra: I'm remembering Mr. Mayor, about a year ago, because dealing with Merrick Shops also had its challenges.

Mayor Lago: I didn't want to say, you're the one that said.

Mr. Garcia-Serra: Both you and I were on vacation in separate places, and we ended up having to be on a Teams call, in the middle of that with kids crying in the background.

Mayor Lago: With the City Attorney, Miriam Ramos and the developer and the architect, so this is a team effort, not only bring a great project to the city, but bring a well design project to the city, and you meet your goal of what you want to do and develop a property that you have property rights, people forget, people who own property have property rights, but it was thoughtfully curated by an exceptional architect using legislation that we worked on a few years ago, to deliver a design that I think will pay significant dividend because you're getting rid of that monolithic structure under every single building that takes away from the beauty of the design. So, congratulations. We worked on this for a long time and I'm proud of what we've done here today.

Mr. Bermello: Mr. Mayor, if I could add, because not every developer will do things that go a little bit beyond and in terms of context, this is the second project that actually took advantage of the conceptual voluntary review by the Board of Architects which was really the essence of the Blue-Ribbon Committee and the formal decisions and actions taken by the Commission. And when we

*City Commission Meeting*

[Date]

6

July 11, 2023

Agenda Items E-4 and E-5 – Resolution granting remote parking conditional use approval.  
Pursuant to Article 14, "Process" Section 14-203, "Conditional Uses"

went before that conceptual at that time, we were doing the normal thing that people do, which is – it was a ten-story building with three levels of parking, and at that time, we discussed with the city and with Mario and obviously with the developer, the concept of the remote parking to reduce bulk, and really activate the area where people are walking, because once you have remote facilities there’s a propensity for people walking; and this project not only did that, this project is also buying some of the on-street parking spaces to widen the sidewalks. Why? – to create an amenity of outdoor eating, café-style across Neiman Marcos; and number three was, ways in which we could alleviate congestion, and we did that by creating the throughway breezeway so that whether its Uber or drop-offs or service deliveries are not clogging the city streets but are done internally. So, kudos to our client because he normally would have said maximize the ground floor, maximize the height, and forget about spending \$45,000 and buying on-street parking spaces, he did everything right to make this an outstanding project and I want to congratulate Oscar here publicly. And thank you for allowing us this morning, Mr. Mayor, Madam Vice Mayor.

City Manager Iglesias: Mr. Mayor, may I say something.

Mayor Lago: Of course.

City Manager Iglesias: Thank you Mayor. And this project also, at the beginning of this project we were able to take advantage of the 3,400 cars that we have in Merrick Park, look at our 400; restructure our deal with Merrick Park to better take advantage of those 400 spaces, and actually make a better project by removing the parking pedestal. So, we have many firsts on this project that I think will benefit our new innovation district.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Rogers, I’m sorry, Vice Mayor.

Vice Mayor Anderson: I just want to note this outstanding building like many of our historic buildings utilizes remote parking. Its not like you don’t have any parking on site at all, but if you think about some of our best buildings in the city, whether it be the Biltmore Hotel, the Fink Building, Coral Gables Museum, all those buildings how it meets the street and how it looks aesthetically is enhanced because you don’t have parking absorbing the building and taking up a huge chunk of it. I’m going to applaud you for enhancing the crosswalks there and I’m going to ask you to take particular attention to those and if you can put in an enhancement such as audible buttons for individuals that cannot see, and I don’t know where the bus stops are there, but that’s one of the things that I think our city does need to look a little more carefully at, so that there’s an accessible route. But for this project and future projects, I hope we can do this. Thank you for doing such a lovely job on the architecture, I think it’s a fantastic project.

Mayor Lago: If I could add just one last thing that I always add to every project and I ask this more of staff. We are going to build such a worldclass building facing Merrick Park, which the city owns, and Neiman Marcos is right there. This is an area that’s getting so much traffic, good traffic, walking traffic, people are coming, there’s a lot of young people, a lot of professionals. We have accessibility through the trolley, through different modes of transportation, let’s make sure that we plant trees that are not five feet tall and that look like a lollipop. Let’s do something beautiful, so

*City Commission Meeting*

it compliments such an exceptional design by Bermello and let's do something that again, it's a mature tree to a certain extent. Let's be candid with ourselves, we're not going to put a massive tree there, but let's put something that again, compliments such a beautiful project. Yes, it costs more money, but you can reap the benefits and I say that in every single project. So, I'm asking staff to please, to please, put it here where you're not putting a five-foot tree that takes 30 years to grow. Let's put something significant. I didn't see the rendering, but let's look at something, please, because we need to have shade. The more shade, especially now, we've had 30 days of pretty brutal temperatures. You had about ten days, they're saying its almost over 105 here locally, so Mario, will you do me that favor.

Mr. Garcia-Serra: Of course, Mr. Mayor, I'm pretty sure its already now become a standard condition in these approvals. So, it should be there already, but if not, we of course will accept the recommended condition of approval.

Mayor Lago: That's not too bad. Mr. Rogers, thank you.

Commissioner Menendez: Mr. Mayor, I just want to add, I love the work that you've done. I love the scale of it. I think its seven floors. I was invited to a birthday long time family member, a breakfast birthday, never had a breakfast birthday celebration, and they live in the area, and they said it was the best decision they ever made in their life. In going back and we all remember what was there before. I think Mr. Garcia-Serra mentioned and what that area has become. I remember historically so much pushback to develop that area, and now I think its an area that I think residents, we draw people to our shops, people are enjoying life, they are outside having coffee, breakfast, and people are enjoying what Coral Gables is all about. I think to have a project that you're delivering in the way that you're delivering and what's beautiful, I think the Mayor alluded to it earlier and the Vice Mayor, is the process by which. This wasn't an overnight effort. This was something that took a lot of thought, a lot of consideration, and I think through that process the product is not only better than it probably ever was, but I think it's the type of project that I think would be a model going forward. It really contributes to the community, and it contributes to the quality of our lives. So, congratulations everyone involved in that process.

Mr. Bermello: Thank you Commissioner.

Mr. Rogers: Thank you so much.

Commissioner Fernandez: I have to echo some of those comments. A lot of times we hear proposals where we're removing to remote parking, but then we're going to add to the height, and I'm glad to see that you maintained the seven floors that you had originally by removing to remote parking. The design, I think the Mayor was absolutely correct, it reminds you of European design nowadays, phenomenal work on that. I did have a couple of questions about the number of remote parking spaces. You mentioned that there were 67 that were required but 70 were being used. I wanted to kind of understand the difference between hotel versus residential and the parking requirements.



City Planner Garcia: Yes. So, a hotel is based off of just the rooms. You could have a hotel room that is a studio without a bedroom, or you could have a hotel room that's two bedrooms. So, they have the flexibility built into the program that each unit, each owner of each unit can have the ability to rent it out with their management as a hotel room or they can live there. So, the stricter would be obviously, not obviously, the stricter would be the residential parking requirements. If you add it all together would be 70 spaces and that's what they are requesting. If it was just hotel, it would be a little bit less, because its one and an eighth parking space per unit, so that would be 67.

Commissioner Fernandez: Got it. So, its residential we're at 70. That's how we came to that number.

City Planner Garcia: Yes.

Mr. Garcia-Serra: And that's how many we have leased with the Village of Merrick Park, and we also have an option for another 30, to lease there at the Village of Merrick Park in case we need it.

Mayor Lago: But more importantly than anything, one of the things that I asked the developer when we sat down was, one, I want a front desk, I don't want this to be an Air B&B free for all. You promised me it was not. You guys do exceptional work; and number two, I want security. I want to make sure that this is like, again, this is an area that has so much potential, so much potential, and this property is going to redefine this area immensely. I have a feeling that this area, to the point I think its an opportunity for great shops, there's an opportunity for an amenity in the rooftop that could be activated. I even thought it would be a great opportunity to do some sort of fine dining activation, something tranquil, something respectful, something classy. You can do it anywhere you want. For example, something like what they have in Coconut Grove at Mr. Cees, you have a very small area where people can sit outside but you have an interior. People want to enjoy fine dining and that's one of the things that Coral Gables is lacking where you can fine dine, for example on a seventh floor overlooking the beautiful sunset, the Biltmore, the lushness of Coral Gables. And a lot of people have given me the same insight on that front, and I hope that you consider that that's an opportunity for this project. It's a benefit of you and Merrick Park. We want people to come to that area, because that area has the ability for people to park in a setting across literally 30 feet away valet, there's no – it's a safe environment, it's a welcoming environment. I think your project is going to be immensely successful which it already has from what I hear.

Commissioner Fernandez: Now on the five on-street parking spaces, were those calculated into the 70, because we're technically losing five parking spaces in the area.

City Planner Garcia: Actually, that might be a Kevin question. So yes, whenever a developer takes away parking spaces on the street, they pay into the parking fund for those spaces.

Commissioner Fernandez: So basically, it evens out.

City Manager Iglesias: Those are \$42,000 per space so they are expensive spaces.

*City Commission Meeting*

Commissioner Fernandez: Alright.

Parking Director Kinney: They are much more expensive than the remote parking spaces.

Commissioner Fernandez: And then on the activation of the roof, have you considered a pickleball court?

Mr. Garcia-Serra: Pickleball, I don't know if we have the space for that, do we.

Commissioner Fernandez: I'm just throwing it out there. We are looking for options.

Mr. Bermello: I wish we had the space, but one of the things, I guess piggybacking on your comment and also the Mayor's comment regarding activating food and beverage. We right now are at our maximum in the FAR. We cannot add a square inch of food and beverage area on the rooftop, which goes to maybe consideration, not just for our property, but for all properties that when you're dealing with rooftop environments that providing amenities such as food and beverage, I don't think pickleball court would actually be enclosed, but that those areas don't add count against the FAR, because we would have loved to have provided for some kitchen preparation pantry areas but we're at the maximum. But we have a beautiful pool area with cabanas that will be spectacular with a view of Merrick Park, and we wished we could have had a restaurant up there, but we don't.

Mayor Lago: Amazing opportunity.

Mr. Bermello: Maybe there's something that we can think about in the future.

Mr. Garcia-Serra: And I would tell you Commissioner, that the development community is conscious of the need for pickleball courts out there. There's going to be a couple others coming down the pipeline where you'll see that proposed.

Mayor Lago: Thank you.

Commissioner Castro: Excuse me. Jennifer, I wanted to make sure that you could provide us an update of the 400 parking, have they ever been occupied, are they 100 percent free, how many do we have?

City Manager Iglesias: Commissioner, the 400 parking is something that was done in the deal with Merrick Park was done almost 18-20 years ago. Those parking appeared to be ours, we had no control, could be used from 7 to 7, Monday through Friday, initially, and financial benefit came to the city. We have a new agreement that we can now use them 24/7, the mall does have an issue that parking must be approved by the major tenants, so there's a little bit of an exception for these 400, but these were never financially viable for us. I think they are more in name only and this

allows us to capture some funds from this 70, and it allows the mall a little more flexibility from the approval of the major tenants.

Mayor Lago: Those spaces have never been used. This is the first time it happens. As a result of the conversations that Mario and I had with the Manager over the last two years, two major things have out of this; number one, we have accessibility now, two of these parking spaces we renegotiated that deal and they are also relandscaping all of Merrick Park which is something we have been working on for the last two years, and we've seen progress and there's a lot more beautification that's forthcoming. So this is the first time that those parking spaces which – it was not an easy negotiation with the City Attorney's office and the City Manager's office, but there is new management in regards to Merrick Park and they understood the importance of being team players and cooperating with the city and doing everything in their power to put their best foot forward, because this is a benefit of every single person. This building gets built, these individuals are going to be shopping at Merrick Park, they are going to be visiting and they are going to be eating there. Mr. Kinney, Mr. Director.

Parking Director Kinney: Just to kind of let you know the direction we're headed is, the Manager and the Mayor are correct. I can't really say they've not been used because they'll all part of the 3,600 spaces that Village of Merrick Park has, but...

Mayor Lago: Let me correct myself. Not that they haven't been used. We've never sold spaces.

Parking Director Kinney: Right. We've never actually – we've told them certain people are not allowed to use them and we have rules about how they manage them, but this is the first time that we've actually intentionally followed through on what the original vision was, was that those spaces would be used to support the area around the Village of Merrick Park and the intention for us, even though its going to be managed by Shops at Merrick Park, what we are going to do is, we have a supply of 400, we know that, and we're going to monitor as the remote parking agreements come through the Commission, we'll track those as permits in our permit system, so that we with this project will mark it as 70 permits for those 400 spaces. We know there's a couple other infill projects in that area that are going to at some point come forward and we'll track those also as permits, so that we have a mechanism to know when we get to the 400 or when we get close to the 400, so that we don't wind up over selling the spaces that are the city's.

City Manager Iglesias: We cannot oversell, we have 330 left from the 70, that we've really truly never used before and now I think we have an effective use for it and I do believe, as the Mayor said that parking pedestals really affect a building, as you can see, this is a much beautiful, it's a great building that the architects have done by removing the parking pedestal and using the over 3,400 cars parking spaces that we have in that project.

Parking Director Kinney: And if you look at the whole of the Village of Merrick Park, I mentioned 3,600 spaces, every parking study we've done on the average they are well under 50 percent occupied, even on peak days there's 1,000 spaces available. So at least for the next couple of projects parking is not going to be an issue.

*City Commission Meeting*

Commissioner Castro: Moving forward with parking permits is a phenomenal idea. Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Okay. Thank you. I'll entertain a motion.

Mr. Garcia-Serra: Mr. Mayor, I just need one slight correction to the resolution on the remote parking. Condition 1A(i) is showing seven stories, 83 feet. Its actually seven stories, 84.5 feet due to the thickness of a slab and the rooftop that Willy could explain more if you need to, but just that correction; and public hearing just we need to...

Mayor Lago: Mr. Clerk, do we have any public comment?

City Clerk Urquia: Yes, Mr. Mayor, we do. First speaker is Maria Cruz.

Ms. Cruz: Maria Cruz, 1447 Miller Road. I have several questions. First of all, I didn't hear anything about an open green space, is there any open green space in that project? Didn't hear. Okay. We just heard about parking study. The parking study that's attached to the presentation, if you click on it and you look for it, is hidden. It was done in 2016, for another project that was on the other side, 2016. This is seven years later and we're still using the parking study that was done in 2016, because the October 6, 2022, study was not a parking study, was a trip generation study. How does that apply to this. So, we're approving something with a parking study that was done seven years ago, because you know things haven't changed. We have the same number of people going to stores now. Okay. I'm going to keep putting emphasis on hotel. Well, if I read it correctly it says that the people that buy the condo, the people that buy have the option on making that hotel rooms. So how does that affect the number of parking? Next, when I go some places where there is valet parking and they use a regular parking garage like the hospitals, valet parkers take the best spots, not the worst spots, the best spots. So, if you're going to Merrick Park and we finish selling because now we're in the business of selling because we need money, we sell more parking spaces. Let's say that we get to sell the 400 spaces, the people that go to Merrick Park will be parking in the worst spaces, because the valet parkers are not going to park where its difficult for them to run back and forth, so that needs to be – how are you going to assure that the valet parking is not the preferential areas, because otherwise you're creating issues with the customers that go to Merrick Park. Okay. And I believe the last one that I have to say and I still do not know where there is open green space there, and I'm glad that we're making the sidewalk bigger so we can have eating, but we're using the city land to make the sidewalks larger, because we're taking five parking spaces in the front that people could use and just pay for parking at the time, but we're going to use that for this and of course, we're going to do this because the city needs the revenue, because we need money for you know, we don't call it mobility anymore, we call it downtown parking; and obviously, nobody worried about where the parking study was accurate or not.

City Clerk Urquia: Next speaker is James Dockerty.

Mr. Dockerty: Good morning, Mayor and Commissioners, my name is Jim Dockerty, I live at 1230 Catalonia Avenue. I also own two buildings in the design and innovation district on Ponce de Leon

*City Commission Meeting*

Boulevard and I've been there owning properties for 20 years, so I've seen all the wonderful things that have happened in the neighborhood. I know a lot of people talk against density, against parking, against usage of sidewalks. I can tell you as a property owner, all of the decisions of the developments that you've approved like The Avenue today, which I'm here to fully support, those developments help the neighborhood, help the property owners in the neighborhood and 100 percent support what you're voting on today. I do want to ask as another item down the road, I would ask for the Commission to think about the median and landscaping of Ponce de Leon south of Bird Road. It's the only stretch of Ponce that doesn't have a median, in the whole stretch from U.S.-1 to 8<sup>th</sup> Street. I own properties fronting the street, so I know how sometimes dangerous it is for people to cross that stretch of Ponce. So, for another time, please do something about that. But I'm here 100 percent to support The Avenue and I know Oscar for 30 years is a first-class gentleman. Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Thank you. Mr. Manager, quick question. I know that we have work coming in 2023, the median on Ponce all the way to 8<sup>th</sup> Street, that's forthcoming, we're going to be doing the landscaping there. Refresh my memory, do we have any plans from Bird to Ponce?

City Manager Iglesias: To the circle. I don't know Mayor, but I will find out and get back to you.

Mayor Lago: I can't remember right now if we do. I thought we had some sort of plans.

City Manager Iglesias: There's a lot of commercial there, so we have to look at what the impact of that would be, because there is so much commercial there and there's angle parking on both sides. We'd be happy to take a look at it.

Mayor Lago: Okay.

Commissioner Menendez: We've had discussions in the past about safety, being a difficult place to cross and I think what you're alluding to, Mayor, we do need to look into that to see how we can make it a safer stretch of Ponce.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Manager, will you do me a favor. We could talk about that in the next Commission meeting, just talk to the Public Works Director and see if we can just kind of see if there's a possibility to do a very simple design. It doesn't have to be anything crazy or over the top, especially now we have another forthcoming project which is going to be in front of Nordstrom's which is going to be coming before the city for approval. Maybe we could potentially piggyback on that project and ask them to help us with some sort of median or some sort of beautification.

City Manager Iglesias: Yes. We'll look from Bird to the median that starts right at Nordstrom's, there's a median there and then the circle.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Through the Mayor. I just wanted to point out a couple of items and that is...

*City Commission Meeting*

Mayor Lago: I'm pretty sure you were the one that brought that up last time. I can't remember.

Vice Mayor Anderson: So, I've had some discussions with some other folks about the needs of the area, so I wanted to point out when we bring this back, hopefully in August, that there are a lot of students that walk through that area and through Merrick Park from the Coral Gables High School to go pick up the rail and there is a particular street that we need to focus on and have enhanced crosswalks in those areas. Especially at night when you have people going to Merrick Park enjoying themselves, might be having a drink, etc., people get in their cars, and they drive. As I've mentioned a few other times, we do need enhanced crosswalks with the yellow lights in the asphalt to help alert drivers whose windshields might be dirty or someone wearing black that they can't see as well, to alert the drivers that there's a pedestrian in the crosswalks. So, I'd like that entire corridor between the high school and the rail to be considered for these enhancements.

Commissioner Menendez: To bring up the two issues of concern I had when we last spoke about this stretch, when you come from U.S.-1 past the circle and then you start heading towards Bird, the road Ponce going north at the light it jogs left, both lanes jog left, and you see cars crossing lanes because they are just staying in a straight path and the road shifts left and I've seen near collisions. I've seen collisions left and right and then my other concern which I mentioned last time, you have a trolley stop exactly where there's a crosswalk at the edge of the Collection. So, you see people standing there. You don't know if they're standing there to cross or they're standing there waiting for the trolley, and it creates confusion, not only in the pedestrian side, but also creates a lot of confusion by the drivers. Do they stop to let them cross, are they not crossing. So, to have a crosswalk and a trolley stop exactly on the same spot adds confusion and I think it creates safety issues as well.

City Manager Iglesias: We'll take a look at the whole area holistically.

Commissioner Fernandez: Through the Mayor. What year was the parking study done, and are those numbers still accurate today, because it's been seven years if it was 2016.

Parking Director Kinney: That is the last major parking study for the whole of the Village of Merrick Park.

Mayor Lago: And why is that, tell me.

Parking Director Kinney: Well, to be honest, the traffic at Village of Merrick Park is much less today than it was in 2016, and we have considered a new parking study, but the issue is, we would rather have the traffic recover and then do a parking study.

Mayor Lago: And also, a parking study cost a lot of money.

Parking Director Kinney: Yes.

Mayor Lago: So, think about spending \$50, 70, 75, \$100,000 on a parking study when we're trying to fund so many projects to get things done.

Parking Director Kinney: The project that drove that parking study was the one on the half block, vacant lot on Aurora that's right next to across the street from Nordstrom's. Eventually there will be another project that comes back with that, and they will be required to fund the parking study.

Mr. Garcia-Serra: And for the purposes of my client, very important to point out that our traffic analysis that we prepared for this project is dated in 2022, so that is recent. The parking study which Ms. Cruz refers to is the last parking study that was done of the Village of Merrick Park that city staff was relying on to have the analysis as to what the parking availability is in the Village of Merrick Park.

Commissioner Fernandez: And regarding the open space requirement, the open green space requirement.

Mr. Garcia-Serra: I was going to go through each of the objections and respond to them. So, there is an open space requirement for this property. We do comply with it. The reason that it's a relatively small property, its also commercially zoned, so some of that open space can be hardscaped open space, but we do comply 100 percent with the required open space of the zoning code for the project. The parking study we discussed already. You know, I think she was concerned perhaps sort of an apartment in disguise. As the numbers show, if we wanted to do just a straight apartment, we could have done the apartment. You know, we needed was three more parking spaces which we are already providing. So certainly, the challenge here what we really wanted to try to get was the transient use, that's really what the market is demanding and that's what we're providing. Then the location of the remote parking spaces, you know, this is a three-party agreement here, city, Merrick Shops and ourselves. Everybody is very sensitive about how it's going to work and making sure that shoppers are not inconvenienced, especially the anchor tenants. So, trust me, we're not getting the premiere spaces in that parking garage.

Mayor Lago: You and I worked on this for several years. So, does your client get the premiere parking spaces?

Mr. Garcia-Serra: No. No.

Mayor Lago: How many times was that brought up in our conversations?

Mr. Garcia-Serra: Several.

Mayor Lago: How many times did you try to get that. How many times did you try, how many? – 30 times, 40 times. It was in your letters, in your e-mails, it was...

Mr. Garcia-Serra: Dozens.

Mayor Lago: And did you get it?

Mr. Garcia-Serra: No.

Mayor Lago: Alright. So, moving on, moving on.

City Clerk Urquia: Mr. Mayor, I have one more speaker.

Mayor Lago: One more.

City Clerk Urquia: Clara Monsegur

Ms. Monsegur: I am just a simple neighbor in the area.

Mayor Lago: You're an important neighbor. Thank you.

Ms. Monsegur: And I'm speaking on behalf of people from Merrick Manor, I'm from One Village Place, 4100 Salzedo Street, Apartment 420. I've been living there for the past four years and that's when all the commotion started coming around this area of beautiful Coral Gables. We've had Belmont being constructed in front, which caused a lot of problems to us as neighbors in One Village. Sometimes we couldn't get into our homes, streets were closed, etc., etc., all the inconvenience. The only thing as neighbors, we're thinking now we're having The Avenue is going to be built. We have another project which is 4241 Aurora, with 14 story high building. I checked, I went to the zoning department, and I checked that 97 feet was the allowed construction. Now they're telling me that the zoning laws has changed. I see The Avenue is doing seven floors which is beautiful, but all these concerns are to us neighbors, and we have a lot of building going on around four blocks, and so, where is the urban planning for this area. Are we going to have all these buildings being constructed at the same time? What is it doing to our density in the area? The school, Coral Gables High, the days that the kids go out, the traffic, is terrible, because we're having all this construction going on, roads being closed. People from Merrick Manor cannot leave their garages because they're blocked by parents waiting for them to pick up their kids. So, I want to know what the City of Coral Gables is going to do in order to help us neighbors live in a more quiet, organized manner. The area is beautiful, but we are getting over-populated, over-populated, and there's no park, there's many dogs living in these apartments, there's no dog park to take the dogs, they are doing their things on the street, people don't, not everybody picks up their things, and I think we need someone to take more care of this area. Its very beautiful to come and create these beautiful buildings, but there's people that live in this area that are very concerned of the density, of how all these buildings are going to be created at the same time, bringing a lot of mess to the area. I've been living – my apartment is right across from Belmont, my house is...the machines start at 7:30 a.m. I've been going through that three years in a row, and there's more going to come.

Mayor Lago: So, I'm going to answer your question. Number one, in regard to the park opportunity, Belmont is going to have an open space, number one; number two, the proposed

*City Commission Meeting*



project on Aurora, which has not come to the City Commission for consideration is also going to have an open space facing Nordstrom's. I've asked the developer to put an open space there. If you do not want the open space, perfectly fine, that will reduce the height of the building, it will push the building down. We had a community meeting which I think the Vice Mayor attended at the Mexican restaurant that opened, adjacent to the open space on Aurora, where a lot of the residents attended and the developer showed them two renderings: a taller building with a park; a less taller building, same density, same intensity, both projects have the same square footage, same unit count, but obviously went up in height, because they squeezed the building to make a park facing Nordstrom's.

Ms. Monsegu: You're talking about 41 Aurora?

Mayor Lago: Talking about the property the green space that's in front of Nordstrom's.

Ms. Monsegu: Yes – 4241 Aurora.

Mayor Lago: So, that's already in the works. You can talk to staff, maybe they can show you some of the renderings that are being proposed.

Ms. Monsegu: I've been to the meeting. I've seen everything.

Mayor Lago: So, you know that there is a green space.

Ms. Monsegu: Yes.

Mayor Lago: The third one is, obviously the Underline which is fully funded through the city. Been working on that for the last eight years. The city alone has contributed over \$7 million dollars of impact fees for the Underline and that is right now expecting construction to commence over the next six to nine months on our section. As you can see, there's been a lot of progress in the City of Miami area, and now they're coming in our direction. So, you are going to have green space on multiple different projects and at the Underline, which is in the City of Coral Gables, a three-mile linear park, which is going to be something that, again, I think its going to be something of a beautiful amenity for the entire community. In regard to the project in itself, the height could be 120 feet, as per the code. People have property rights.

Ms. Monsegu: So, the zoning was changed.

Mayor Lago: The zoning was changed – I don't have a date when the zoning was changed. It was not changed for this project. They are complying within the zoning requirements. They are basically here, because as per the code and Mario, correct me if I'm wrong and staff, when a project comes before the Commission, it comes to the Commission because number one, its mixed-use, correct, so the Charter requires it, the code requires it comes before the Commission if its mixed-use, so that's why its coming. They are not asking for additional variances, they are not asking for additional density, they are not asking for anything additional. They are actually well below the

*City Commission Meeting*

height of the building which is allowed 120 feet. What we're doing for the first time to afford a building which is much smaller in scale is, activating the 400 parking spaces that we have in Merrick Park that we've never been able to do over the last few years, because Merrick Park has not wanted to play ball with us. So, they have property rights, they are coming to us to build something here in the city. What I'd love to see a green space park there and make it into a dog park, yes, we should have bought the piece of land, like we bought in many different alternatives here throughout the city, we should have bought the land, but we didn't. We didn't buy the piece of property, and maybe we dropped the ball. They bought it, its in private hands and at the end of the day, they are entitled to build a project. What we're trying to do, like I said for the first time when I met with the developer, I said, let's not build 120-foot-high building. Let's build something that, again is a more appealing building, using the parking spaces that Merrick Park has and that's where we are today.

Commissioner Menendez: Mayor, I want to add, if you don't mind directed to the City Manager. If you could notify the police department and also the school itself that parents are parking blocking the ingress and egress to apartment buildings in that area, then I think we should have representatives of the city go out there to ticket them, to move them, but also notify the school that there's a problem across the street, they need to be good neighbors on both sides. And the other part is, I think we have control over that is, whatever streets are closed for ongoing construction, that we look at the big picture to make sure that whatever street we're closing that the folks that actually live on that street can actually come in. I know we've closed streets just for local traffic only, so that means the folks that live there. So, let's make sure that people can get in and out of their apartments even if there's construction.

City Manager Iglesias: May I respond Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Yes. Absolutely.

City Manager Iglesias: Thank you. We always ask for an MOU, a traffic plan for pedestrian and vehicular traffic when construction was done, just like when Merrick Manor was done, it creates issues. I remember Merrick Manor had sewer issues, we had all kinds of issues throughout the streets, you get the sewer connections back to Merrick Manor which we resolved. For other projects, I don't know if you remember, Mayor, they had to go through quite a number of streets and upsized it now so that doesn't have to be done. So, we do try to look at the projects as they come in, try to minimize the impact of these projects later on, and in your particular building, we actually minimized the impacts of the project now by taking care of the sanitary sewer. So, we do look at that. We do look at vehicle traffic, we do look at pedestrian traffic, we look at utilities. Construction sometimes is difficult, but all those things are taken care of as best we can while providing for the construction.

Mayor Lago: And I just want to add something also to your comments. I would like for you to meet with our zoning director.

Ms. Monsegur: I'm sorry.

*City Commission Meeting*

Mayor Lago: I would like for you to meet with our zoning director so that she can provide a little bit more background in regards to what could be built on that lot, number one; number two, I don't know if you're aware, your building is by far one of the tallest buildings in that area and its outside the code, and let me tell you why your building is outside the code.

Ms. Monsegur: Salzedo 4100.

Mayor Lago: You're in Merrick Manor, correct.

Ms. Monsegur: No.

Mayor Lago: Merrick Manor, for example that building is outside the code, because that was a settlement that happened here in the city where built a trolley station in the Coconut Grove area and we were marred in litigation for a long time in regard to where the placement of the trolley station. So, there was an agreement between the developer, City of Miami, City of Coral Gables, a bunch of different parties that were involved to basically cure the issue where the trolley station was going and that resulted in that building, I think having about one or two additional floors in height. So, there's a backstory in regard to the area and our zoning director can give you a little bit more information in regard to the zoning, in regard to those few blocks.

Ms. Monsegur: I pulled the zoning, and it says 97 feet out of the page.

Mayor Lago: Would you like to answer. Are we also talking about the issue where the Med-Bonus comes into play?

City Planner Garcia: Yes, the 97 is with Med-Bonus, so that is the quote/unquote Coral Gables By Right height. However, they can go to the Commission and request 120 feet for ten stories. I think that's what you're alluding to and that's what she's pointing to. In addition to that, something is being reviewed tomorrow at Planning and Zoning Board to allow additional height in exchange for a park, the park incentive program.

Ms. Monsegur: How big is the park?

City Planner Garcia: It's done by increments of how much extra open space on their property that they provide, and they can get additional stories in feet.

Ms. Monsegur: Okay. I'll check into that.

City Planner Garcia: I'll give you my card and you can.

Ms. Monsegur: Okay. Perfect. One more thing, what about density and schools with the amount of apartments that we're going to have around – schools?

Mayor Lago: We don't control schools. I can schedule a meeting for you, if you like, with our School Board member who would be more than willing to sit down with you and have a conversation.

Ms. Monsegur: It's a concern for the community too.

Mayor Lago: I understand. We partner with the schools, but there is also – we give 36 percent of our budget every single year to the School Board and 13 percent of the kids that attend public schools here in Coral Gables are Coral Gables residents. So, we give an immense amount of money to the School Board every single year for 13 percent of the population that visits those schools. So, when you talk about things that are going on in schools, I'll give you an example. I'm not going to say the name of the school, but there is a school in Coral Gables that installed windows and it's a historic building without notifying the City of Coral Gables. We've been dealing with that issue for some time now and we're working on that, but what we're trying to do is have the best relationship with the School Board so that we work together in making sure that historic buildings are restored properly, that they don't do what they want to do, but sometimes its not within our jurisdiction.

Commissioner Menendez: I wanted to add. I wasn't here then in terms of the Commission, but I remember when Merrick Park, the vision of Merrick Park and the concept was to add apartments, condos in the area that was sort of have a symbiotic relationship between the shops and the restaurants. This was the early vision and I think that's why you see that area now, obviously booming, but that was always the vision, and now lately is where there is some traction. I would also imagine coming out of the pandemic where everything froze, perhaps that's why you see construction, what appears to be construction all at once. I think there was a pause nationally through the economy, but I think there was always a vision to have condos and apartments in the area so people can walk to the restaurants.

Mayor Lago: Commissioner Castro.

Commissioner Castro: Yes. Could staff provide me with the list of proffering. What was proffered for The Avenue, so maybe she could be a little happier knowing.

City Planner Garcia: The list of which properties, I'm sorry.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Proffers.

Commissioner Castro: Proffers.

City Planner Garcia: Oh, the Commission's approval, you mean.

Commissioner Castro: Yes.

City Planner Garcia: Oh, okay, yes.

*City Commission Meeting*

Mayor Lago: If I may, Madam Director. When we talk about proffering, they were asking for additional density outside the code or they're asking for additional intensity. Are they asking for anything outside what is permissible by the code?

City Planner Garcia: So, this applicant, they were granted variances for the step-backs, I think by a few feet and that's all. If that's what the question is. They're not asking for extra height or anything.

City Attorney Suarez: The two items that are before you today are the conditional use request for the remote parking and to use the TDRs, to use the receiving site for those TDRs. It's limited to those two requests.

Commissioner Castro: My question comes back to when I was going through the documentation submitted it said, list of proffers, but I didn't see a list.

City Planner Garcia: Maybe that's referring to the conditions of approval.

Mayor Lago: I think we'll be addressing those issues when the actual project comes before the Commission. Right now, we're just talking about TDRs and the remote parking.

City Planner Garcia: So, this project is not going to require site plan approval.

Mayor Lago: Why is that?

City Planner Garcia: Because it's a small property. The zoning code only requires conditional use for the site plan approval if its 20,000 square feet or more. This one, I think is 10,000 and some change.

Mayor Lago: And that's dictated by?

City Planner Garcia: The zoning code.

Mayor Lago: Perfect. Thank you. Madam Vice Mayor.

City Manager Iglesias: Mayor, oh, I'm sorry, excuse me, Vice Mayor.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Just to clarify because you spoke about another project as well, ma'am, and that project, the Aurora project the one with the open field right now, that has not come before the Commission yet. There hasn't been a zoning change yet. That was the one the neighborhood meeting was done about.

Ms. Monsegur: Yes.

*City Commission Meeting*

Vice Mayor Anderson: To propose a plan where they use the FAR in a different way, in other words, buildable space in a different way by turning the building a little taller to create more ground floor open space which that area is just starving for. So, it's actually a great opportunity for those residents in the area that not be so claustrophobic in the area and that's why we had the neighborhood meeting to see if this is something that the neighbors wanted.

Ms. Monsegur: It's starting to feel claustrophobic, let me tell you.

Vice Mayor Anderson: I know and when I was on Planning and Zoning back in 2019, 2018, I think even 2017, I looked at the aerial map on there and I asked that question. I said, do we own this, and unfortunately, we didn't. We were just too late to the train station to be able to get that one.

Ms. Monsegur: I feel that it doesn't represent Coral Gables and its green spaces just like Rhonda was explaining before those beautiful people that did so much for Coral Gables. I think we have to put that into practice in this area as well.

Vice Mayor Anderson: We do.

Ms. Monsegur: I love Coral Gables. I love the green spaces, and this is just a mass of cement.

Vice Mayor Anderson: I know that's why we're looking.

Ms. Monsegur: Its eight blocks of cement.

Vice Mayor Anderson: That's why we're looking for ways to incentivize developers to create more open space, more green space, more trees, have minimum amounts of landscaping coverage and shade created on the ground level where you walk and I walk, not just the residents.

Ms. Monsegur: It's the absorbance of the heat that we're going to start getting.

Mayor Lago: Thank you very much.

Ms. Monsegur: Thank you. Thank you for your time.

Commissioner Fernandez: Just one point Mr. Mayor. You're concerned about the traffic regarding the school. The Mayor and I actually had a meeting with the School Board member when I served on the School Community Relations Committee and the Mayor actually made a recommendation of how to try to avoid that traffic. We were supposed to hear back. I'm not sure if you heard back on that, but that's something I'll definitely follow up on to see if we can get a response from the School District.

Ms. Monsegur: Thank you so much.

Mayor Lago: I will have our staff send you so you can get a better understanding and provide guidance. We have right now in the works, ten projects in the downtown that are coming that's already been approved that are going to have parks attached to them. Let me give you an example, Publix and Andalusia, I worked that one out with this gentleman and I hate to say this right now, because I want you to understand don't despair, but people have property rights. I worked with this gentleman here, he'll tell you, and the Manager, sitting on my vacation on a conference call, in a restaurant on a Teams call with this gentleman here negotiating over the last three years on how we can finalize a new Publix on Andalusia and get a park. How big is the park going to be?

Mr. Garcia-Serra: There's two separate parks. Each one of them is somewhere between 10 and 15,000 square feet.

Mayor Lago: That's number one; number two, a block away where the Codina Building is forthcoming, I negotiated with the Manager and the lawyer who was here before, who's no longer here, a 12,000 square foot piece of property which is a surface parking lot in front of Mercedes Benz, to be made into a beautiful park with two oaks that are on it and save those trees. The same thing on via Valencia. We have a small park adjacent there also, 8,000 square feet. Now, we're moving in that direction and there are other parks that are forthcoming where the developments are going to be built one way or another, if the Commission approves them, or they are as of right, but we're trying to figure out a way that do we go one story higher and then squeeze the building and have some more green space on the first floor. Those are things that we're talking to the community about. How do we get more green space on the ground floor, and we have about eight to ten projects right now in the downtown that is going to bring small 10, 12, 15 almost 20,000 square foot parks to the downtown, which before never existed, and I'll give you another example. On Miracle Mile there is a green space, aye ya aye is right, on Miracle Mile there's a green space and that green space is, people think that that green space is there forever. That green space is owned by the individual who owns Books, excuse me, not Books and Books, but Borders. If that individual one day wants to develop Borders for one reason or another, he's within his rights to do that. What we're trying to do is figure out how do we not only keep that green space, but how do we expand that green space. How do we do it? So that we can have a big park on Miracle Mile. Those are conversations that we've been having with this gentleman's client. So don't despair, we're trying to find ways to bring more green space, because we have financed the Underline using impact fees and we have written legislation which has park impact fees associated with every single development that goes into a trust that allows us to buy green space, and we've been doing that all over the Gables, as you can see little parks popping up in the residential neighborhoods and I can give you a bunch of examples where we've done that over the last five or six years.

Commissioner Menendez: To mention the examples the Mayor gave, these are areas that never had green space. So, the city through legislation, through work with the developers, through work with the community, we're creating green space where green space didn't exist. So, it's not that we're taking away green space, we're actually working very hard to create green where there wasn't. And I think from a historical perspective it's a challenge, but we're with you that its needed, so it's been difficult, but there's been a lot of success so far and hopefully more success going forward, but we agree with you.

*City Commission Meeting*

Mayor Lago: And I would love your input, I would love your input whether its worth having a 10,000 square foot park in front of Nordstrom's or having a building that's one floor smaller. Those are the tradeoffs that we are going to have to make and that we're going to have to figure out as a Commission and with the help of the residents to understand, do we add a floor to a building, but add a beautiful 10, 15,000 square foot park on the first floor, or do we just abandon the park and we just go setback to setback and it's a concrete jungle.

Ms. Monsegur: Well, I invite you all to pass by or walk by the neighborhood so you can see the picture clearly.

Mayor Lago: I get a haircut every single two weeks at the spot, so I know exactly what's going on there, very clearly, and I have coffee there.

Ms. Monsegur: The buildings are not up yet, but we have four buildings that are going to go up.

Mayor Lago: I get it. I understand.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Understood.

Ms. Monsegur: So, it's to be considered.

Vice Mayor Anderson: So that's why I asked for a minimum amount of shade in the green space, not just grass, we want shade.

Ms. Monsegur: Thank you so much. I really appreciate your time.

Mayor Lago: Thank you very much.

Commissioner Menendez: You were a pleasure to talk to.

Mayor Lago: Anything else for the good of the order. I'll entertain a motion on E-4. We have to do separate ones, correct Madam City Attorney.

City Attorney Suarez: Correct Mayor.

Vice Mayor Anderson: I'll move it.

Commissioner Menendez: I'll second.

Commissioner Fernandez: Yes

Commissioner Menendez: Yes

*City Commission Meeting*



Vice Mayor Anderson: Yes

Commissioner Castro: Yes

Mayor Lago: Yes

(Vote: 5-0)

Mayor Lago: Moving onto E-5.

Commissioner Menendez: I'll move it.

Vice Mayor Anderson: I'll second.

Commissioner Menendez: Yes

Vice Mayor Anderson: Yes

Commissioner Castro: Yes

Commissioner Fernandez: Yes

Mayor Lago: Yes

(Vote: 5-0)

Mr. Garcia-Serra: Thank you very much Mr. Mayor, Commissioners. Its going to be a great project.