

THE CITY OF CORAL GABLES
PLANNING AND ZONING BOARD MEETING

Wednesday, April 13, 2022

6:00 p.m. - 6:48 p.m.

405 Biltmore Way

Coral Gables, Florida 33134

City Hall, City Commission Chambers

Reported by Ashleigh Simmons, CER

Planning and Zoning Board Meeting

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Planning and Zoning Board:

Chairperson Eibi Aizenstat
Board Member Robert Behar
Board Member Claudia Miro
Board Member Venny Torre
Board Member Wayne "Chip" Withers
Also present:
Ramon Trias
Belkys Perez
Jill Menendez

- - -

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MR. EIBI AIZENSTAT: Good evening. This Board is comprised of seven members. Four members of the Board shall constitute a quorum. In the affirmative of four members shall be necessary for the adoption of a motion.

If only four members of the Board are present an applicant may request and be entitled to a continuance to the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board.

If a matter is continued due to lack of quorum, the chairperson or secretary of the Board may set a special meeting to consider such an act. In the event that four votes are not obtained an applicant may request a continuance or allow the application to proceed to the City Commission without a recommendation.

Pursuant to Resolution Number 2021-118, the City of Coral Gables has returned to traditional in-person meetings. Accordingly, any individual wishing to provide sworn testimony shall be present physically in the City Commission chambers.

However, the planning and zoning board has established the ability for the public to provide comments, non-sworn, and without

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evidentiary value virtually. Accordingly, the only individuals who wish to provide public comment in this format may appear and provide those comments via Zoom.

Lobbying registration and disclosure.

Any person who acts as a lobbyist pursuant to the City of Coral Gables Ordinance Number 2006-11 must register with the city clerk prior to engaging in lobbying activities or presentations before city staff, boards, committees, and/or city commission.

A copy of the ordinance is available in the office of the city clerk. Failure to register and provide proof of registration shall prohibit your ability to present to the Board.

As Chair, I now officially call the City of Coral Gables Planning and Zoning Board meeting of April 13, 2022 to order. The time is 6:07.

Jill, can you please call the roll?

MS. JILL MENEDEZ: Robert Behar?

MR. ROBERT BEHAR: Here.

MS. JILL MENEDEZ: Alex Bucelo?

Claudia Miro?

Luis Revuelta?

Venny Torre?

MR. VENNY TORRE: Here.

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1 MS. JILL MENEDEZ: Chip Withers?

2 MR. CHIP WITHERS: I'm here.

3 MS. JILL MENEDEZ: Eibi Aizenstat?

4 MR. EIBI AIZENSTAT: Here.

5 Notice regarding ex parte communications.

6 Please be advised that this Board is a quasi
7 judicial board, which requires Board members to
8 disclose all ex parte communication and site
9 visits.

10 An ex parte communication is defined as
11 any contact, communication, conversation,
12 correspondence, memorandum, or other written or
13 verbal communication that takes place outside a
14 public hearing between a member of the public and a
15 member of the quasi judicial Board regarding
16 matters to be heard by the Board.

17 If anyone made any contact with a Board
18 member regarding an issue before the Board, the
19 Board member must state on the record the existence
20 of the ex parte communication and the party who
21 originated the communication. Also, if a Board
22 member conducted a site visit specifically related
23 to the case before the Board, the board member must
24 also disclose such visit.

25 In either case, the Board member must

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1 state on the record whether the ex parte
2 communication and/or site visit will affect the
3 Board member's ability to impartially consider the
4 evidence to be presented regarding the matter. The
5 Board member shall also -- that his or her decision
6 will be based on substantial competent evidence and
7 testimony presented on the record today.

8 Does any member of the Board have such
9 communication and/or site visit to disclose at this
10 time? No?

11 MR. ROBERT BEHAR: I do not.

12 MR. EIBI AIZENSTAT: Nobody does.

13 Swearing in. We don't have anybody in
14 chambers, but I will go through -- does everyone
15 who speaks this evening, actually staff -- everyone
16 who speaks this evening must complete the roster on
17 the podium. We ask that you print clearly for the
18 official record. Your name and address will be
19 correct.

20 Now, with the exception of attorneys, all
21 persons physically in the City Commission chambers
22 who will speak on agenda items before us this
23 evening, please rise to be sworn in.

24 MR. CRAIG COLLER: That should be all staff
25 members rise to be sworn in.

1 THE REPORTER: Do you swear to tell the truth,
2 the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

3 MR. EIBI AIZENSTAT: Zoom platform
4 participants, I will ask any person wishing to
5 speak on tonight's agenda to please open your chat.
6 And send a direct message to Jill Menendez stating
7 that you would like to speak before the Board. And
8 include your full name. Jill will call you when
9 it's your turn. I ask you to be concise for the
10 interest of time.

11 Phone platform participants, after the
12 Zoom platform participants are done, I will ask
13 phone participants to comment on tonight's agenda
14 item. I also ask you to be concise for the
15 interest of time.

16 Next is the approval of the minutes. We
17 have two. The first is March 1st, 2022 minutes.
18 Has everybody had a chance to review those?

19 MR. ROBERT BEHAR: I make a motion to approve.

20 MR. VENNY TORRE: I second.

21 MR. EIBI AIZENSTAT: Venny, second. Any
22 comments?

23 Call the roll, please.

24 MS. JILL MENENDEZ: Venny Torre?

25 MR. VENNY TORRE: Yes.

1 MS. JILL MENENDEZ: Chip Withers?

2 MR. CHIP WITHERS: Yes.

3 MS. JILL MENENDEZ: Robert Behar?

4 MR. ROBERT BEHAR: Yes.

5 MS. JILL MENENDEZ: Eibi Aizenstat?

6 MR. EIBI AIZENSTAT: Yes.

7 The second minutes are those of March
8 9th, 2022. Is there a motion?

9 MR. ROBERT BEHAR: So moved.

10 MR. VENNY TORRE: Second.

11 MR. EIBI AIZENSTAT: Any discussion?

12 Call the roll, please.

13 MS. JILL MENENDEZ: Chip Withers?

14 MR. CHIP WITHERS: Yes.

15 MS. JILL MENENDEZ: Robert Behar?

16 MR. ROBERT BEHAR: Yes.

17 MS. JILL MENENDEZ: Venny Torre?

18 MR. VENNY TORRE: Yes.

19 MS. JILL MENENDEZ: Eibi Aizenstat?

20 MR. EIBI AIZENSTAT: Yes.

21 The procedure that we'll use tonight is
22 as follows: First, we'll have the identification
23 of the agenda item by Mr. Coller. Presentation by
24 staff. In this case, we do not have an applicant
25 so there will not be a presentation by an

1 applicant. We'll go ahead and have an open -- open
2 for public comment. First in the chamber, then
3 Zoom platform, and then phone line platform.

4 I'll go ahead and close the public
5 comment. We'll have Board discussion, we'll have a
6 motion, discussion, and second motion, if needed.
7 The Board's final comments and then a vote, as
8 required. Thank you.

9 The first item, which is item E-1, is
10 being deferred.

11 MR. RAMON TRIAS: Yes, Chairman, the City is
12 requesting to defer the item.

13 MR. EIBI AIZENSTAT: Yes.

14 MR. CRAIG COLLER: One question. Do we want
15 to defer this specifically to the next meeting for
16 a time certain or do we -- to avoid advertising or
17 --

18 MR. RAMON TRIAS: We will advertise again.

19 MR. CRAIG COLLER: You're going to advertise
20 again anyway?

21 MR. RAMON TRIAS: Yeah.

22 MR. CRAIG COLLER: So we're going to defer it.
23 And it will be advertised appropriately.

24 MR. RAMON TRIAS: We will see when we are
25 ready for that.

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1 MR. CRAIG COLLER: Okay. Great.
2 MR. EIBI AIZENSTAT: Thank you. And Mr.
3 Coller, would you please read item E-2?
4 MR. CRAIG COLLER: We need a motion --
5 MR. EIBI AIZENSTAT: To defer?
6 MR. CRAIG COLLER: Yes.
7 MR. ROBERT BEHAR: I make a motion to defer.
8 MR. CHIP WITHERS: Second.
9 MR. EIBI AIZENSTAT: All in favor, say aye.
10 (Multitude of Ayes).
11 MR. EIBI AIZENSTAT: Anybody against? It is
12 deferred. Thank you.
13 MR. CRAIG COLLER: Okay. Item E-2, an
14 Ordinance of the City Commission of Coral Gables,
15 Florida providing for a text amendment to the City
16 of Coral Gables official Zoning Code by amending
17 Article 14, "Process", Section 14-103.2,
18 "Membership; Terms; Vacancies; Removal," to allow a
19 certain percentage of the Board of Architects
20 members to not be residents or have their principle
21 place of business in the City of Coral Gables,
22 Florida; providing for severability, repealer,
23 codification, and an effective date. Item E-2
24 public hearing.
25 MR. EIBI AIZENSTAT: Thank you. Mr.

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1 (Inaudible) --
2 MR. RAMON TRIAS: Mr. Chairman, we had a
3 chance to discuss this the last time. It's the
4 same concept. The only change is that there was a
5 preference to have fifty percent or less -- in
6 other words, no less than fifty percent as opposed
7 to no less than five, which was the language prior
8 to this. So staff is recommending approval.
9 MR. CHIP WITHERS: I'm sorry, Ramon. No less
10 than fifty percent. Meaning it has to be more than
11 fifty percent?
12 MR. RAMON TRIAS: It says that no less than
13 fifty percent of the members shall be residents.
14 MR. ROBERT BEHAR: Or have offices in the
15 Gables.
16 MR. CHIP WITHERS: So how many members on the
17 Board are there?
18 MR. RAMON TRIAS: At least seven, there could
19 be more. So that's the --
20 MR. CHIP WITHERS: So fifty percent is
21 three-and-a-half.
22 MR. RAMON TRIAS: Yes.
23 MR. CHIP WITHERS: Is that --
24 MR. RAMON TRIAS: There would be four.
25 MR. CHIP WITHERS: Four -- why don't we

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1 just -- okay.
2 MR. RAMON TRIAS: However --
3 MR. CHIP WITHERS: I understand.
4 MR. RAMON TRIAS: There could be more because
5 the way that the ordinance is written, there could
6 be more members appointed to maybe ten or twelve at
7 some point. So that's why the fifty percent makes
8 sense.
9 MR. VENNY TORRE: So -- Robert, you've been on
10 the Board. So I guess before they were asking for
11 five minimum, now it's four. That means -- let's
12 pretend -- right now three could be non-residents?
13 MR. ROBERT BEHAR: Correct.
14 MR. VENNY TORRE: How do you --
15 MR. ROBERT BEHAR: I think it's great. It
16 gives the opportunity -- it opens it up to have
17 more opportunities. And I think it's -- like I
18 mentioned last time, I think this is a good thing
19 for the city and for the Board of Architects.
20 MR. CHIP WITHERS: How about the chairperson?
21 Should that be a Gables resident? Do we care about
22 that?
23 MR. ROBERT BEHAR: Chip, I don't think so. I
24 think that the best qualified person should be the
25 chair. You know, with the time -- I'm not a

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1 believer that just because you live in the Gables
2 you're going to do the right job anyways. So to
3 me, the best qualified person could become the
4 chair.
5 MR. CHIP WITHERS: I'm more concerned about
6 the optics of residents thinking that the Board has
7 now been hijacked by non-Gables architects. That's
8 my --
9 MR. ROBERT BEHAR: I mean, I don't see it that
10 way. I will see it -- I think this is a good
11 opportunity to bring other good qualified
12 architects to serve in the city. And you don't
13 have to be a resident, you don't have to have your
14 primary business in the Gables.
15 And I think that could be, for us, the
16 same thing that's -- it's mandatory, for example,
17 that you have to be registered. Well, I know a lot
18 of great talented professionals that are not
19 registered but they cannot serve on the Board.
20 That's a different conversation. But just because,
21 you know, you don't live here doesn't mean that you
22 cannot be an asset to the Board of Architects.
23 MR. CHIP WITHERS: So is it Dade County or is
24 Broward, Palm Beach -- is it limited to Dade or
25 does that matter to you?

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1 MR. ROBERT BEHAR: To me -- listen, I will
2 give you an example. If we could get, you know, an
3 architect -- Robert Stern.
4 MR. RAMON TRIAS: He's knocking at the door
5 trying to join us, yes.
6 MR. ROBERT BEHAR: To come to -- you know,
7 let's -- that, you know, he wants to participate in
8 the Gables because he resides in South Florida, you
9 know, on the winter times, and he wants to sit on
10 the Board, I think that could be an asset. So to
11 me, I don't want to limit to specifically -- what
12 do you think --
13 MR. RAMON TRIAS: This is a weekly Board. I
14 mean, for four hours every week. And we don't have
15 that many --
16 MR. CHIP WITHERS: I understand. As I said
17 the last time, I have no opinion on this. And I'm
18 deferring totally to someone --
19 MR. EIBI AIZENSTAT: I think the concern that
20 I heard Chip say is specifically on one, position,
21 which would be the chair for the optics. And in a
22 way, to me, that kind of makes sense. But I'm open
23 either way.
24 MR. RAMON TRIAS: We could forward those
25 comments to the comission and see what they --

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1 MR. EIBI AIZENSTAT: Just as a comment, and to
2 be clear, there doesn't have to be fifty percent
3 resident architects sitting at a time. It's just
4 the makeup of the Board --
5 MR. RAMON TRIAS: Yes, sir.
6 MR. EIBI AIZENSTAT: I just want to --
7 MR. RAMON TRIAS: Yes, sir.
8 MR. EIBI AIZENSTAT: -- be clear on that.
9 MR. VENNY TORRE: To follow up, how does the
10 chairman get elected to that?
11 MR. RAMON TRIAS: Well, a vote --
12 MR. VENNY TORRE: By the Board.
13 MR. RAMON TRIAS: -- by the Board, yeah.
14 MR. VENNY TORRE: Oh, yeah, that's the chair
15 right there, I guess.
16 MR. ROBERT BEHAR: I mean, the chairperson
17 could be -- it's not a --
18 MR. RAMON TRIAS: Yeah, I wouldn't over think
19 it. I think it's a good idea to open it up. It
20 gives us a chance to appoint. It gives the city
21 manager a chance to appoint --
22 MR. ROBERT BEHAR: I think -- to me, that's a
23 fundamental reason that this is good, because it
24 really is going to open up to a lot more.
25 MR. VENNY TORRE: Are there any discussion? I

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1 make a move for approval.
2 MR. ROBERT BEHAR: I will second it.
3 MR. EIBI AIZENSTAT: We have a motion to
4 approve, we had a second. As recommended?
5 MR. RAMON TRIAS: Yes.
6 MR. EIBI AIZENSTAT: Any discussion?
7 Call the roll, please.
8 MS. JILL MENENDEZ: Robert Behar?
9 MR. ROBERT BEHAR: Yes.
10 MS. JILL MENENDEZ: Venny Torre.
11 MR. VENNY TORRE: Yes.
12 MS. JILL MENENDEZ: Chip Withers?
13 MR. CHIP WITHERS: Yes.
14 MS. JILL MENENDEZ: Eibi Aizenstat?
15 MR. EIBI AIZENSTAT: Yes.
16 Okay. The next item, E-3.
17 MR. CRAIG COLLER: Item E-3, an Ordinance of
18 the City Commission of Coral Gables, Florida
19 providing for a text amendment to the City of Coral
20 Gables Official Zoning Code by amending Article 14,
21 "Process," Section 14-204, "Transfer of Development
22 Rights (TDRs)" to allow the City Commission to
23 designate a TDR receiving site when located in a
24 Planned Area Development (PAD) and zoned MX2 or
25 MX3; providing for severability, repealer,

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1 codification, and an effective date. Item E-3 of
2 the public hearing.
3 Just to check on Item E-2, I don't think
4 there was anybody on Zoom or --
5 MR. EIBI AIZENSTAT: Yeah, I did not ask.
6 MR. CRAIG COLLER: Maybe before we move on, we
7 just want to double check --
8 MR. EIBI AIZENSTAT: Thank you.
9 MR. ROBERT BEHAR: -- on that.
10 MR. EIBI AIZENSTAT: Jill, did we have anybody
11 on Zoom platform that wanted to speak on Item E-2?
12 MS. JILL MENENDEZ: No. No request was made.
13 MR. CRAIG COLLER: Let the record reflect
14 that.
15 MR. EIBI AIZENSTAT: Right.
16 MR. CRAIG COLLER: Okay. Item E-3 public
17 hearing.
18 MR. RAMON TRIAS: So Mr. Chairman, this is
19 exactly what the city attorney said, there's just
20 one sentence. And it adds the entity as long as
21 it's zoned MX2 or MX3, meaning in which it's only
22 (unintelligible) as I was saying for TDRs. That's
23 all it is. It's one more option for the city.
24 MR. ROBERT BEHAR: I don't have any comments.
25 If not, I'll make a motion to --

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1 MR. EIBI AIZENSTAT: Well, let me just -- is
2 there anybody from the public, Jill, on the Zoom?
3 MS. JILL MENENDEZ: No.
4 MR. EIBI AIZENSTAT: Go ahead, Robert. I'm
5 sorry.
6 MR. ROBERT BEHAR: If there's no -- I don't
7 have any comments on this. If there's nobody from
8 on the Board, I will make a motion to approve.
9 MR. EIBI AIZENSTAT: We have a motion. Is
10 there a second?
11 MR. VENNY TORRE: I'm not against it. I guess
12 I just want to make sure I understand it. This is
13 changing the receiving sites to have more --
14 MR. RAMON TRIAS: Yes.
15 MR. VENNY TORRE: Before it was only the CBD
16 that receive it?
17 MR. RAMON TRIAS: And a few other places like
18 the Ponce de Leon and --
19 MR. VENNY TORRE: Oh, now, for example, you're
20 -- you're just focusing TDRs if that commission
21 approves?
22 MR. RAMON TRIAS: As long as it's MX2 or MX3.
23 MR. VENNY TORRE: If the commission approves.
24 MR. RAMON TRIAS: Yes.
25 MR. CRAIG COLLER: And of course it needs to

1 be FDAP.
2 MR. EIBI AIZENSTAT: We have a motion. Is
3 there a second?
4 MR. VENNY TORRE: I will second.
5 MR. EIBI AIZENSTAT: We have a second. Any
6 comments? Chip?
7 MR. CHIP WITHERS: No.
8 MR. EIBI AIZENSTAT: No. Call the roll,
9 please.
10 MS. JILL MENENDEZ: Venny Torre?
11 MR. VENNY TORRE: Yes.
12 MS. JILL MENENDEZ: Chip Withers?
13 MR. CHIP WITHERS: Yes.
14 MS. JILL MENENDEZ: Robert Behar?
15 MR. ROBERT BEHAR: Yes.
16 MS. JILL MENENDEZ: Eibi Aizenstat?
17 MR. EIBI AIZENSTAT: Yes. Item E-4, an
18 Ordinance of the City Commission of Coral Gables,
19 Florida providing for a text amendment to the City
20 of Coral Gables Official Zoning Code by striking
21 Appendix E "Business Improvement Overlay District,"
22 Section B-1, Business District (BIOD)," Subsection
23 B(1)(D) ' Temporary Window Signs/Wraps", and
24 creating Article 11, "Signs", Section 11-101
25 "Purpose and Applicability", Subsection C(9)

1 "Temporary Window Wraps", to uniformly regulate
2 temporary window wraps within the City; providing
3 for severability, repealer, codification, and
4 effective date. Item E-4 public hearing. Thank
5 you.
6 MR. RAMON TRIAS: Ladies and gentlemen, what
7 this amendment does is that it moves the regulation
8 to the sign section of the code, the regulation of
9 temporary wraps, which as you know, is what people
10 do when they're doing construction. And enhances
11 the aesthetics of the wraps and the purpose of the
12 presentation.
13 MS. BELKYS PEREZ: All right. Good evening,
14 everyone. Belkys Perez, the economic assistant
15 director of the economic development department.
16 If you could pull up the -- thank you so
17 much. So we just wanted to give you a visual of
18 the changes that are happening in the code.
19 So this is what we're seeing in the city.
20 This is a type of wrap. Sometimes there is white
21 paper, there's brown paper, and sometimes even
22 trash bags.
23 This is another example of what we're
24 seeing in the city. The designs are very
25 (inaudible) as you can see. And so we're

1 questioning what exactly is part of the zoning code
2 and what is adequate to achieve the aesthetic look
3 that we're going for in the commercial district,
4 especially with our newly remodeled streetscape
5 area.
6 So we found language -- as Mr. Trias was
7 saying, that we found language in the city code and
8 we found language in the zoning code. So it made
9 it a little bit difficult for a business owner or a
10 property owner to go and really understand what
11 they were allowed to do.
12 So we're consolidating the language and
13 putting it all in the zoning code. And it's
14 providing uniform and standard that can be applied
15 across the board. And what is important to note
16 here is that we're not regulating the wording.
17 We're just regulating the design and the aesthetic
18 look.
19 So as such, we created basically a style
20 guide to help our businesses and our property
21 owners. We started off with a color palette that
22 is currently the secondary color palette for the
23 City of Coral Gables. We have -- obviously
24 everyone knows, the beige, green, and orange. This
25 is the secondary palette. And then we created

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1 three additional palettes. A cool palette, warm
 2 palette, and green palette.
 3 We don't want to be overly prescriptive.
 4 So this is going to be a living document. This is
 5 just a draft. But we wanted to give them a visual
 6 guide of what we expected.
 7 So aside from those colors, there will be
 8 backgrounds that they can pick from. Some examples
 9 of the backgrounds could be solid, as you see,
 10 textured, water marked. Some would contain floral
 11 and tropical foliage. So those are just some of
 12 the options that you see there. Anything in that
 13 tone or hue will be acceptable as well.
 14 And then these are just some examples.
 15 We wanted to mock them up to see -- so you could
 16 see what they would look like. Here we have a
 17 textured, water marked, tile defect with a solid
 18 color that complements it. And then a place where
 19 the logo would be placed for either a for lease
 20 sign or for a coming soon sign.
 21 Again, the same thing here. This is more
 22 of a vine effect with a different color palette.
 23 And then the same thing as far as where you place
 24 the logo.
 25 Here again, this would be a for lease

1 sign, solid panel. So this is really something
 2 that the -- let me see if it comes up. This is
 3 really a great alternative for our property owners.
 4 They don't have to think about it. They can just
 5 pick a color from the color palette and put their
 6 for lease sign up there as well.
 7 Maybe they're trying to get their Power
 8 Point up again?
 9 **MR. ROBERT BEHAR:** While we wait for that,
 10 that perhaps we should allow to show a little bit
 11 larger what's coming so that people are -- you
 12 know, because what I saw there is a small like sign
 13 of what's coming. If there's new business that's
 14 looking to come in, maybe something a little bit
 15 larger so people become more aware of that?
 16 **MR. VENNY TORRE:** I think what they're trying
 17 to do is one of these that you don't have to go
 18 around and getting a lot of approvals. That
 19 they're just basically off the shelf, here you go.
 20 You can do it without -- you just want to go
 21 through the -- pick it off of the shelf and go
 22 forward. The ones that you're talking about
 23 require process of --
 24 **MR. ROBERT BEHAR:** Yeah, but it may be as
 25 simple as that -- okay. Off the shelf -- like I

1 pick that, but it gives me a little bit more too.
 2 **MR. RAMON TRIAS:** But the language allows
 3 twenty-five percent of lettering. So that allows a
 4 significant --
 5 **MR. ROBERT BEHAR:** A twenty-five percent of
 6 your --
 7 **MR. RAMON TRIAS:** Yes.
 8 **MR. ROBERT BEHAR:** Okay, okay, okay.
 9 **MR. RAMON TRIAS:** That's the language.
 10 **MR. ROBERT BEHAR:** That's in the -- what
 11 you're proposing?
 12 **MS. BELKYS PEREZ:** Yes.
 13 **MR. RAMON TRIAS:** Yes.
 14 **MR. ROBERT BEHAR:** Okay.
 15 **MS. BELKYS PEREZ:** It was fifty percent and we
 16 reduced it to twenty-five because it was --
 17 **MR. RAMON TRIAS:** And it lacked horizontal
 18 lettering.
 19 **MS. BELKYS PEREZ:** Yeah.
 20 **MR. RAMON TRIAS:** Which is the -- in my view,
 21 the most important aesthetic consideration as far
 22 as the lettering.
 23 **MR. EIBI AIZENSTAT:** And what happens to
 24 people that are existing with the way that they
 25 have wrapped?

1 **MR. RAMON TRIAS:** Well, those are temporary
 2 wraps. And sometimes they have been cited because
 3 they didn't go through our prior process. Our
 4 prior process was a little bit informal. But as
 5 Belkys explained, there were rules in different
 6 places. And some of them applied to downtown, some
 7 of them applied somewhere else. And most people
 8 don't follow -- right, most people simply put up
 9 whatever just because they didn't know.
 10 So the challenge is that you don't want
 11 to have code enforcement action constantly over
 12 something that is just temporary. And this was a
 13 way to come up with a more user friendly approach
 14 of saying, look, the city does want to have some
 15 uniformity and some process. So I think it's a
 16 good idea. It applies all throughout the city as
 17 opposed to only the downtown, the way that it's
 18 written now. Because now it's in the zoning code
 19 in the sign section, so it applies throughout.
 20 **MR. ROBERT BEHAR:** I got to see it a little
 21 bit -- a preview of the rest.
 22 **MS. BELKYS PEREZ:** Yeah, I'm sorry. It's not
 23 working properly. But there is -- we give some
 24 examples. If someone can go to the next slide.
 25 I'm trying to do it myself, but the next slide is

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1 an example of something that is already up. This
2 is L'Artisane, it's a bakery. And it has a coming
3 soon sign with a solid background. And then it
4 took a complementary floral pattern as well.
5 And then another one is -- so this is an
6 example of what we like and what we're trying to
7 mimic across the city. Vinyo is another one. As
8 you can see they used a watermark feature on the
9 right-hand side. And it looks great. So there is
10 some flexibility.
11 However, if you don't pick from the
12 template, and you're 180 days from opening your
13 business, you can have a custom wrap. Everyone has
14 their brand guidelines. Our businesses could have
15 brand guidelines of their own. So we are allowing
16 that to happen. There is an administrative
17 aesthetic review process. But it just needs to be
18 graphically consistent with the style guide in that
19 same spirit, and have a muted color palette, is
20 what we're encouraging. So you can still have your
21 brand right before -- those six months before you
22 open.
23 MR. EIBI AIZENSTAT: But that's the example --
24 the two last examples that you showed us are over
25 twenty-five percent. That would be allowed?

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1 MS. BELKYS PEREZ: No.
2 MR. EIBI AIZENSTAT: For example, this is over
3 twenty-five percent.
4 MS. BELKYS PEREZ: That is over twenty-five
5 percent --
6 MR. RAMON TRIAS: Twenty-five percent of the
7 area, so the area of the --
8 MR. EIBI AIZENSTAT: Oh, the area.
9 MR. RAMON TRIAS: Yeah, of the area.
10 MS. BELKYS PEREZ: Of the entire wrap area.
11 MR. RAMON TRIAS: For the entire area. So
12 it's not only the twenty-five percent of the width.
13 MR. ROBERT BEHAR: See, I mean, I don't -- I
14 see this and I like it. I don't have a problem
15 with this.
16 MS. BELKYS PEREZ: Exactly.
17 MR. ROBERT BEHAR: If it's tastefully done and
18 he advertises --
19 MR. EIBI AIZENSTAT: Just so I can understand,
20 when you say of the area of each -- let's say one
21 glass is one area. Twenty-five percent of that
22 glass or --
23 MR. RAMON TRIAS: Twenty-five percent of the
24 wrap area, period. So --
25 MR. EIBI AIZENSTAT: The entire area?

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1 MR. RAMON TRIAS: The entire area.
2 MR. CHIP WITHERS: All three of those panels.
3 MR. EIBI AIZENSTAT: Right.
4 MS. BELKYS PEREZ: So in this case, this is
5 not all three panels. I mean, there are -- this is
6 at least five panels. I just cropped it so you can
7 get a sense of what the visuals would look like.
8 MR. EIBI AIZENSTAT: Because to me, this looks
9 -- only because -- I like it. There's nothing
10 wrong with it. But the way I see it written at the
11 bottom in two-tone, I would think that's more than
12 twenty-five percent and yet this looks great.
13 MR. RAMON TRIAS: There could be some
14 judgement in the sense of if it looks great like
15 this and it's gearing up -- then, you know, it's a
16 temporary wrap.
17 MR. VENNY TORRE: Can I?
18 MR. RAMON TRIAS: Yes.
19 MR. EIBI AIZENSTAT: Before we continue, if we
20 could go ahead and notice that Claudia has joined
21 us. If we could mark that for the record. Go
22 ahead, please.
23 MS. BELKYS PEREZ: Also, the wrap where you're
24 saying that large wording in watermark feature,
25 that is considered a texture, that is part of the

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1 background. We won't consider that part of the
2 sign, the amount of signage.
3 MR. RAMON TRIAS: Or not, but the main
4 (inaudible) the design. So in this case, yes,
5 that's okay. But if they were to do it in a way
6 that is more clearly distinct from the background,
7 then it would be different.
8 MR. ROBERT BEHAR: You went from fifty percent
9 to twenty-five percent?
10 MS. BELKYS PEREZ: Yes.
11 MR. RAMON TRIAS: Yeah. And then the -- you
12 could have the name, logo, contact information --
13 limited information. So it's not only -- you're
14 not advertising the products or anything like that.
15 MR. ROBERT BEHAR: I don't want to see
16 something that is, you know, overly outrageous.
17 But if we're going to try to get the new business
18 to be exposed, I want to give them the most
19 opportunity that they could possibly have to be
20 successful when they come in. You know, nothing --
21 you know, they're coming, I want to go and --
22 MR. RAMON TRIAS: The best way to success I
23 think is an overall strategy that shows quality and
24 shows the branding of the city. And I think that's
25 what we're trying to achieve.

8 (Pages 26 to 29)

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1 MR. ROBERT BEHAR: What I do like here is that
2 you don't have that old -- there was a time that we
3 had the same background.

4 MR. RAMON TRIAS: Right.

5 MR. ROBERT BEHAR: And you would see it
6 everywhere. I like this because it gives you more
7 of an identity that could be associated with the
8 businesses.

9 MR. EIBI AIZENSTAT: So it would be subjective
10 then? I mean, the reason I'm asking these
11 questions is because, looking at this, what's up
12 there right now, you know, I don't know if that's a
13 logo -- that would be the dishes and so forth, but
14 it looks great.

15 MR. RAMON TRIAS: The way --

16 MR. EIBI AIZENSTAT: I just don't want to have
17 conflicts come up because somebody says, well, she
18 doesn't like my design, or he likes my design, or
19 it looks good.

20 MR. RAMON TRIAS: The way the process is now
21 is that they ask me to take a look at it. Every
22 time I said change it they have changed it. I have
23 never had any problems with it.

24 MR. VENNY TORRE: I want to clarify what
25 you're trying to do. So I appreciate this is

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1 important because there's a lot of frustration by
2 tenants that the process is -- Coral Gables
3 (inaudible). So -- because I was with the bid for
4 a long time so this is something I dealt with quite
5 a bit. You're saying these type of things, as long
6 as they follow the color palette and have the
7 twenty-five percent, that's pre-approved? Is that
8 correct?

9 MR. RAMON TRIAS: And the information --

10 MR. VENNY TORRE: Correct. So if I do that
11 and I have -- I stick within the color palette -- I
12 can't do, for example, purple plates. That would
13 not be acceptable -- or black plates? In other
14 words, there could be things that just don't look
15 great, but someone decided to do it. And you're
16 not going to be able to say no because they
17 followed the colors. So is there a way to have
18 something so simplistic that say -- for people that
19 don't really care that much? Some of these
20 landlords are not trying to bring in tenants, they
21 just want to follow the rules. The rules are that
22 you have to provide the wrap. And they say
23 whatever, put whatever, we don't care. They don't
24 care. Really, they don't.

25 So the answer would be just put one of

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1 those solid colors and put for lease. That would
2 be simple. That would be great.

3 MS. BELKYS PEREZ: Right.

4 MR. VENNY TORRE: And it gets complicated when
5 you have tenants that say it's already
6 pre-approved. And then there's still some gray
7 matter to this.

8 So is it just put in an application, put
9 the picture, and it goes through the permit
10 process? It -- does it not go back to any
11 particular department? How is it just --

12 MS. BELKYS PEREZ: I believe it's going to
13 stay the same way it is when it's a custom wrap,
14 that it goes through the economic development
15 department and then the design review official.

16 MR. VENNY TORRE: I'm trying to figure out
17 what is not a custom design.

18 MS. BELKYS PEREZ: A custom design is
19 something that -- a custom design is something that
20 you can put up when you are at 180 days before
21 opening.

22 MR. ROBERT BEHAR: But go back to that --

23 MR. VENNY TORRE: The Vinyo one --

24 MR. ROBERT BEHAR: The one that has the
25 plates.

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1 MR. VENNY TORRE: Hold on.

2 MR. ROBERT BEHAR: Okay. Let's see that one.
3 Is that a custom?

4 MS. BELKYS PEREZ: That is a custom -- that
5 can be a custom design because it is a contrast.
6 There is contrast there so it can be. It doesn't
7 look like the rest of --

8 MR. RAMON TRIAS: Wait, wait, you don't need a
9 permit if it's --

10 MS. BELKYS PEREZ: You don't need a permit
11 regardless.

12 MR. RAMON TRIAS: So you just need to put it
13 up.

14 MR. VENNY TORRE: That's what I'm trying to
15 get at. Some people say the (inaudible) store --
16 these three people do it. Call them and get one to
17 help you and that's it. They should know what's
18 going on?

19 MR. RAMON TRIAS: Yeah.

20 MR. VENNY TORRE: That would be ideal.

21 MR. RAMON TRIAS: That's ideal. So we'll see
22 how that works. And right now, the problem is
23 people are doing it anyway basically without any
24 review. And most of the time that I get to see it
25 is after the fact. You know, I get to see things

9 (Pages 30 to 33)

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1 that are already up. So we are trying to see if we
2 can make it easier.
3 MR. CHIP WITHERS: I mean, if you put for
4 lease in a custom wrap are you still allowed to put
5 up a real estate sign?
6 MR. RAMON TRIAS: Yes. Those are separate
7 signs.
8 MR. CHIP WITHERS: Why? I mean, I'm just
9 curious. I mean, it's --
10 MR. RAMON TRIAS: We -- you know --
11 MR. CHIP WITHERS: I mean, I'm just -- I'm
12 just asking.
13 MR. RAMON TRIAS: Would you like to have
14 additional --
15 MR. CHIP WITHERS: Well, I don't know. I'm
16 just -- if you can put four leafs and you have a
17 phone, number, I'm assuming you can put the company
18 name that's leasing it?
19 MR. RAMON TRIAS: Yes.
20 MR. CHIP WITHERS: Is there a need then to
21 duplicate it with a sign? It just looks like it
22 clutters it up to me.
23 MR. RAMON TRIAS: Okay.
24 MR. CHIP WITHERS: I'm trying to clean it up.
25 MR. RAMON TRIAS: We might want to think about

1 it. Wait until -- the professionals of signs.
2 MR. CHIP WITHERS: And when can they take the
3 wrap down?
4 MS. BELKYS PEREZ: They take it down after
5 opening. So they've got 72 hours after they open
6 to remove the wraps.
7 MR. CHIP WITHERS: So if I'm doing some really
8 cool interiors, and I'm just waiting for a few
9 things, and I'm three weeks out, four weeks out --
10 MS. BELKYS PEREZ: You can keep it up.
11 MR. CHIP WITHERS: Why wouldn't we want them
12 to open it up and let them --
13 MS. BELKYS PEREZ: No, you can keep -- you can
14 keep the wraps up.
15 MR. ROBERT BEHAR: No, but the question is can
16 he take it off before?
17 MR. CHIP WITHERS: Can I take it off --
18 instead of two days before opening -- I'm just
19 thinking if you're trying to build a vibe for a
20 restaurant.
21 MS. BELKYS PEREZ: Absolutely. You can as
22 long as no construction is being seen, right,
23 Ramon?
24 MR. RAMON TRIAS: Yes.
25 MR. CHIP WITHERS: So what's the policy on

1 that?
2 MR. RAMON TRIAS: The policy is that no
3 construction is going on. However, I haven't seen
4 a practical problem with any of those issues. I
5 mean, maybe I just haven't seen it. But the fact
6 is that many people generally, I think, follow the
7 rules. And if they don't code enforcement takes
8 care of that.
9 MR. CHIP WITHERS: Well, I know, but instead
10 of saying two days before you open the door to the
11 public and you have to keep it under wrap -- I mean
12 --
13 MR. RAMON TRIAS: So --
14 MR. CHIP WITHERS: There might be some
15 flexibility.
16 MS. BELKYS PEREZ: You don't have to. If
17 you're ready to go you can remove the wraps.
18 MR. RAMON TRIAS: It just -- the only thing
19 that it says is temporary window wraps must be
20 removed within 72 hours of business opening.
21 MR. CHIP WITHERS: Right.
22 MR. RAMON TRIAS: In other words, if you open
23 your business you must remove it.
24 MR. CHIP WITHERS: Do you know if you can
25 unwrap it before then?

1 MR. RAMON TRIAS: Yes. As long as --
2 MR. ROBERT BEHAR: I'm not concerned about the
3 72 hours. Because the moment that you get a CO you
4 want people -- you want to have it beforehand. So
5 I'm not -- you know, what I think Chip's comments
6 is --
7 MR. RAMON TRIAS: You want earlier.
8 MR. ROBERT BEHAR: I want to do it so that
9 people start seeing -- wow, that looks nice. I
10 want to come there.
11 And you know, as long as there is no
12 construction going on you're allowed to do that,
13 right?
14 MR. RAMON TRIAS: We could add a sentence that
15 makes it clear.
16 MR. CHIP WITHERS: I don't know. I'm just
17 trying to help the people that are opening.
18 MR. RAMON TRIAS: Sure.
19 MR. VENNY TORRE: The only thing that concerns
20 me -- go to the one that says Vinyo.
21 MR. CHIP WITHERS: The one that says what?
22 MR. VENNY TORRE: The Vinyo Wine Bar. So you
23 have this twenty-five percent lettering that I
24 think could get tricky. Like that's --
25 MR. CHIP WITHERS: That's why I was asking.

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1 MR. VENNY TORRE: There's a lot of flexibility
2 that can go -- not be just standard off the shelf.
3 You know, that's sort of getting into the weeds. I
4 don't know if you restrict it to smaller -- so that
5 there is a color, there is those palettes. And
6 then the signs don't get to be designed over a
7 course of something that large. I'm just trying to
8 not --
9 MR. EIBI AIZENSTAT: But that looks -- to me,
10 that looks good.
11 MR. VENNY TORRE: Yeah. But somebody came up
12 with a beautiful design. What happens if that -- I
13 mean, I think twenty-five percent and that thing
14 could do a sign. So I'm still (inaudible). I'm
15 just bringing it up.
16 MS. CLAUDIA MIRO: I was going to say that --
17 MR. VENNY TORRE: I'm just saying if we want
18 it to be automatic, here, guys, just go for it,
19 simple enough. Does that give you too much
20 latitude to create a sign that twenty-five percent
21 could go really (inaudible) -- if you took the
22 bottom one away, all of the other ones will work
23 probably easy enough -- right, no problem. But
24 when you start adding stuff that big, I think
25 that's where you could get into some problems.

1 MR. RAMON TRIAS: And I think you're right.
2 And I think that should be a case by case basis.
3 And we do some have ability to --
4 MR. CHIP WITHERS: That's within the
5 twenty-five percent requirement.
6 MR. VENNY TORRE: Right. But that's a nicely
7 done sign. Again, this is where you get so much
8 flexibility that somebody could say, well, I will
9 limit my twenty-five percent, but --
10 MR. RAMON TRIAS: For example, if you did it
11 black letters vertical saying Vinyo, that would be
12 a problem, right? So at that point --
13 MS. CLAUDIA MIRO: Or I think even -- I was
14 going to agree with you if you used like graffiti
15 style lettering. Now it is an eyesore.
16 MR. RAMON TRIAS: You are right, you are
17 right.
18 MR. CRAIG COLLER: Mr. Chairman, I just want
19 to note that Claudia came in after it started, but
20 she's welcome to participate. If you recall, that
21 at the previous meeting -- I believe it was Louis
22 came in late and I think it was a quasi judicial
23 item and he couldn't participate. But this is
24 purely legislative. So the fact that a Board
25 member is not here from the beginning is not a

1 problem. So I just want to point that out for
2 future reference.
3 MR. EIBI AIZENSTAT: Thank you.
4 MR. CHIP WITHERS: In under the wire, just in
5 time.
6 MS. CLAUDIA MIRO: That was all I wanted to
7 say, was that I agree with Venny's comment. I
8 think that you kind of get into the weeds with the
9 size of that lettering. If you're going to do it
10 on a case by case basis -- and I'm okay with it --
11 but, you know, let's say you've got like some
12 graffiti lettering or something else that's a
13 little bit more risque, then it might start looking
14 like a blighted area or -- you know, like the
15 artistic concept, it can run away without a little
16 bit -- and be out of control.
17 MR. RAMON TRIAS: No, I understand. Believe
18 me, I understand.
19 MR. EIBI AIZENSTAT: That's why the question
20 was was it subjective.
21 MR. RAMON TRIAS: Things are subjective. And
22 zoning is subjective, believe it or not. And
23 people think that zoning is magical in terms of the
24 way -- believe me, you should see what --
25 MR. CRAIG COLLER: Let me just say this about

1 signs. I think the concept here is they're trying
2 to be as objective as possible by having a palette,
3 by having a general design, and still have the
4 option if somebody wants to come in to seek a full
5 review, they can. But the concept here is to have
6 a process by which if you follow the palette, you
7 have a reasonably objective way of approving it.
8 MR. VENNY TORRE: Here's what -- from my
9 experience, the people that are doing the simple
10 quickly get in and out are not trying to bring in
11 the fancy restaurants, they're just trying to
12 complete -- abide by the rules. We need something
13 and they'll put something up. It doesn't need to
14 get complicated. That's what they're trying to do.
15 For those people that don't want to be complicated,
16 here is the noncomplicated.
17 If you've got a fancy restaurant, you've
18 got a fancy store, you hire a graphic artist to do
19 your design. So once they get to that
20 sophisticated level, then you go through the design
21 process anyway. So what you're trying to appease
22 is the simple landlord that just wants to put a for
23 lease sign, or somebody says, you know what, I'm a
24 cheapskate or whatever, I just want to put
25 something -- so it's for that sort of faster route

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1 that you need to allow this to go forward and not
2 for the more, you know --
3 MR. EIBI AIZENSTAT: Let me give you a
4 scenario. You have a new modern restaurant that's
5 opening up. They don't need to come to you to get
6 a permit for an approval. So they go ahead and
7 they'll spend money on a designer, as you say, that
8 will go ahead and put together the logo and the
9 whole thing. Then when it's put up the City of
10 Coral Gables says, wait, that -- we don't like
11 that. How do you treat that situation?
12 MS. BELKYS PEREZ: If they follow the
13 guidelines --
14 MR. EIBI AIZENSTAT: Don't come to you first
15 and say, you know, is this okay to do so we don't
16 go through and spend X amount of dollars?
17 MS. BELKYS PEREZ: And we do that now. Those
18 that do ask questions, we do run them through the
19 process. And we give them some guidance. The
20 problem is, is that as Ramon was saying, many times
21 we just find out about the wraps after the fact.
22 MR. EIBI AIZENSTAT: By code enforcement?
23 MS. BELKYS PEREZ: By code enforcement or we
24 see it up -- we get calls. So in this case, we're
25 giving people a template so, you know, they don't

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1 have to take it down. There's many times that they
2 do vertical lettering and that's really not
3 allowed. So they'll have to go through that
4 process again. Here we're giving them distinct
5 guidelines for that.
6 MR. EIBI AIZENSTAT: Okay. And I will go back
7 to the question I asked before, which would be, for
8 example, where you saw the one restaurant or
9 something had the -- all of the individual people
10 and so forth, that's already up, are you going to
11 go to them and tell them you have got to take this
12 down because it's not within the color palettes?
13 MS. BELKYS PEREZ: No.
14 MR. EIBI AIZENSTAT: Okay.
15 MS. BELKYS PEREZ: That stays up until -- I
16 believe those will be grandfathered in.
17 MR. EIBI AIZENSTAT: Okay.
18 MR. RAMON TRIAS: So basically this gives us
19 more tools to do a better job.
20 MR. EIBI AIZENSTAT: Okay.
21 MR. RAMON TRIAS: And hopefully you agree.
22 MR. CHIP WITHERS: So I have one question on
23 the twenty-five percent rule. So if it's a flat
24 surface the twenty-five percent is measured. So if
25 it's one of these where there's windows on either

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1 side and you walk in, do you measure the whole wrap
2 of the window, the whole --
3 MR. RAMON TRIAS: Yes. The whole area. It
4 may not be flat, yes.
5 MR. CHIP WITHERS: No, I understand. So if
6 someone has 300 square feet of glass and 200 square
7 feet of it is on the -- facing the sidewalk, can
8 they put as much in twenty-five percent lettering
9 on facing the sidewalk and not worry about
10 spreading it throughout the entire --
11 MS. BELKYS PEREZ: Yeah.
12 MR. RAMON TRIAS: If it's done elegantly and
13 nicely, sure.
14 MR. CHIP WITHERS: Okay.
15 MR. VENNY TORRE: My point is, I will defer to
16 you, what you guys would want. I have concerns
17 about the twenty-five percent. But again, if you
18 guys think that's what you want -- I have concerns
19 that that gives some aptitude here for people to do
20 things that back to the -- that looks terrible --
21 or is that word really something we want to have
22 exposed -- two huge words. I don't know that you
23 need to do that for that simplistic approach.
24 Something's coming, there's a name, you get to have
25 these sort of larger squares. I wouldn't do it as

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1 a continual -- three panes of glass make up the
2 twenty-five percent. And I'm taking over three
3 panes of glass to create this large -- now it's a
4 large sign. It gives me some pauses that some
5 people will do something that you will not like.
6 But again, I defer to you guys.
7 MR. RAMON TRIAS: That's going to happen.
8 Some people are going to do things we don't like.
9 And that's why we have a chance to talk to them.
10 In my experience, which probably I am as
11 experienced as most people on this issue, is we
12 have a very positive process. And I haven't had
13 any --
14 MR. VENNY TORRE: Are those letters two feet
15 high?
16 MR. RAMON TRIAS: Two feet high?
17 MR. VENNY TORRE: Twenty-five percent, but my
18 letters are two feet high.
19 MR. RAMON TRIAS: And with a skinny, you mean?
20 MR. VENNY TORRE: Correct.
21 MR. RAMON TRIAS: And the ones that I don't
22 like --
23 MR. VENNY TORRE: And you can't say no because
24 it's approved.
25 MR. RAMON TRIAS: We'll see --

12 (Pages 42 to 45)

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MR. VENNY TORRE: I just think there's a lot of latitude for that.
MR. RAMON TRIAS: So the basic issue is I think that if we have some graphics attached, which I think that's the direction the economic development staff is going, then people are going to say, oh, okay, this is what we need and then follow that. I think that's the easiest way to do it. If it doesn't work then we can --
MR. ROBERT BEHAR: We will come back.
MR. RAMON TRIAS: We can come back.
MR. EIBI AIZENSTAT: Jill, do we have anybody from the public on this item?
MS. JILL MENEDEZ: No.
MR. EIBI AIZENSTAT: No, we don't. Would anybody like to make a motion?
MR. CHIP WITHERS: I'll move it.
MR. EIBI AIZENSTAT: Chip made a motion. Is there a second?
MR. VENNY TORRE: I'll second it.
MR. EIBI AIZENSTAT: Venny, second.
Any comments? Call the roll, please?
MS. JILL MENEDEZ: Chip Withers?
MR. CHIP WITHERS: Yes.
MS. JILL MENEDEZ: Robert Behar?

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MR. ROBERT BEHAR: Yes.
MS. JILL MENEDEZ: Claudia Miro?
MS. CLAUDIA MIRO: Yes.
MS. JILL MENEDEZ: Venny Torre?
MR. VENNY TORRE: Yes.
MS. JILL MENEDEZ: Eibi Aizenstate?
MR. EIBI AIZENSTAT: Yes.
MS. BELKYS PEREZ: Thank you.
MR. EIBI AIZENSTAT: Thank you very much. And this is the last item?
MR. ROBERT BEHAR: (Inaudible) motion to adjourn.
MR. EIBI AIZENSTAT: Is there a motion to adjourn?
MS. CLAUDIA MIRO: I'll make a motion.
MR. EIBI AIZENSTAT: Thank you very much. (Inaudible).
(Multitude of ayes).
(Whereupon, the public hearing was adjourned at 6:48 p.m.)

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STATE OF FLORIDA
COUNTY OF MIAMI-DADE

I, Ashleigh Simmons, Professional Reporter, certify that I was authorized to and did report the foregoing proceedings and that the transcript is a true record.

I further certify that I am not a relative, employee, attorney or counsel of any of the parties, nor am I a relative or employee of any of the parties' attorneys or counsel connected with the action, nor am I financially interested in the action.

WITNESS my hand and official seal this 25th day of April, 2022.

Ashleigh Simmons
ASHLEIGH SIMMONS

Notary Public - State of Florida
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