

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item F-8
April 24, 2018
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Raul Valdes-Fauli
Vice Mayor Pat Keon
Commissioner Vince Lago
Commissioner Frank Quesada
Commissioner Michael Mena

City Staff

City Manager, Cathy Swanson-Rivenbark
City Attorney, Miriam Ramos
City Clerk, Walter J. Foeman
Deputy City Clerk, Billy Urquia
Planning and Zoning Director, Ramon Trias

Public Speaker(s)

George Navarro

Agenda Item F-8 [2:06:22: p.m.]

An Ordinance of the City Commission of Coral Gables, Florida, providing for text amendments to the City of Coral Gables Official Zoning Code, Article 4, "Zoning Districts," Division 2, "Overlay and Special Purpose Districts," Section 4-201, "Mixed Use District (MXD)," amending parking requirements for MXD projects less than forty-five (45) feet in height; providing for a repealer provision, severability clause, codification and providing for an effective date (03-14-18 PZB recommended approval, Vote 5-0)

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: F-8

City Attorney Ramos: An Ordinance of the City Commission of Coral Gables, Florida, providing for text amendments to the City of Coral Gables Official Zoning Code, Article 4, "Zoning

Districts,” Division 2, “Overlay and Special Purpose Districts,” Section 4-201, “Mixed Use District (MXD),” amending parking requirements for MXD projects less than forty-five (45) feet in height; providing for a repealer provision, severability clause, codification and providing for an effective date. It’s a public hearing item.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Mayor, I’ll go real quickly through the PowerPoint, if I can have it; and that is to illustrate a general issue that we have with the code. May I have the PowerPoint please, maybe not? We discussed this maybe a little bit with the Venera discussion of a small building, OK, here it is. That’s a very nice small building that we have on Ponce de Leon, the three stories that are illustrated here, it’s just impossible to build today, because of parking requirements. You can’t do it even though it’s very nice. So, what we have here is a map that shows in orange some of the parcels that are too small to develop as mixed use in the industrial districts. So, we are talking about a reputedly minor number of parcels, except for Ponce de Leon, which is a lot of the smaller ones that vested longer. But what happens is, is that the code basically requires 20,000 square feet to be able to do a project of any consequence any more than 45 feet in height. So anything less than that, any parcel that is smaller than that basically, currently most of them in the commercial areas have one story buildings that date from the 60’s or 50’s or some time ago, and no redevelopment has happened. So that’s a concern that some people have expressed; and that map shows it all the buildings that are larger are the most recent ones, the small ones remain as they are. Now that area of the industrial district has a lot of mass transit, as you know has Metrorail, etc., so it’s very, very good in terms of the mobility aspect of it. So, the idea was to see if we could incentivize small scale incremental development similar to this; and basically – and the historical precedent from the 20’s, and the idea is that any parcel that is between 2500 and 10,000, although I would recommend that you do 10,500 to make sure that we allow for that in some of the more informal and some of the areas where 10,000 is not quite the right number; that anything at that size could develop up to 45 feet without requiring parking. That’s the idea. It seems to be a good way to incentivize small scale buildings, so like this one. See where it says Naples.

Vice Mayor Quesada: You’ve shown us that before.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yes – which I think is very nice, and the way to do that, they have parking garages that take care of parking of Code infill, three stories.

Commissioner Mena: Many of the buildings on Ponce there, on the east side of Ponce, are already some of them are two-stories, I know for sure...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yes.

Commissioner Mena:...I don't know if there are any three-story or not, and they already don't have parking, right, because they were grandfathered in.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Prior to 64. So, what happens is that if you have a one-story building it's likely that somebody may want to do a three-story building, if you already have a two-story building its likely that it's going to stay the same.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: I think it's a great idea.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: I'll end the PowerPoint here please.

Commissioner Mena: I had a question but I think you answered it, which is I just wanted to make sure that there wasn't like a way and looking at your map to sort of do an assemblage where you have now a substantial property and you are trying to do...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: 10,500 would be...

Commissioner Mena: It would top that 10,500.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: That is the recommendation, yes sir.

Commissioner Mena: OK.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: I think there are some people who may want to speak.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yes, Jorge Navarro.

Mr. Navarro: Good afternoon Commissioners, George Navarro, offices at....S.E. 2nd Avenue. We are very excited for this ordinance, we are fully supportive. I represent three of the property owners that are currently located within the north industrial district. As many of you know, the north industrial district has the MXD overlay, which has been very successful. It's actually led to the revitalization of this once industrial area and is now one of the premiere high end residential and retail markets, so it's really an ordinance that has been very effective and that has resulted in very beautiful architecture and a very pedestrian-friendly environment. The issue we have here was said by your Planning Director, we have some existing properties, or these smaller remnant parcels that have not been assembled as part of the larger scale developments that have gone on; and in order to park these you'd basically have to dedicate the entire ground floor to have a surface parking lot. Now what this ordinance will allow us to do is to replace that ground floor area with active ground floor usage. It's going to maintain the pedestrian environment, promote

walkability, which are two of the primary goals of the MXD, so we are very supportive of this. One of the changes that we are also in favor of is to increase the minimum lot size, sorry, the maximum lot size allowed from 10,000 to 10,500. This is part of a plat called the industrial section plat of Coral Gables and generally they are 2,500 square foot lots. There are some irregular shaped lots though that have a little bit wider of a frontage between 25 to 30 feet and we want to make sure that all the parcels within the overlay are able to participate in this program. So, we'd ask the Commission if it's going to move forward with this ordinance to make that slight change.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you.

Commissioner Lago: And, if I could just add quickly because I just want to give a little bit background. They didn't put my name on this item, no, no, because you guys are probably wondering how did this get here today. So Ramon and I have been working on this probably for, I don't even know, six months, nine months, discussing this and trying to find a way that we can basically do what George Navarro said. Take these properties that are in the MXD that are basically an eyesore, in my opinion, as a result of the requirement for parking and find a use that will benefit the entire downtown area. So, you are talking about an opportunity where these smaller properties are sandwiched between major buildings and there isn't really an opportunity to probably do something that will activate the ground floor with like a restaurant, something like the Naples example, I think hits it right over the head. So I just wanted to commend our esteemed Zoning Director, Director of Zoning because he's worked diligently on this with his staff and I'm happy the fact that we finally got it to First Reading.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: And you make the motion.

Commissioner Lago: The motion is made.

Commissioner Mena: Second.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Will you call the roll please.

Commissioner Lago: Yes

Vice Mayor Quesada: Yes

Commissioner Mena: Yes

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yes

(Vote: 4-0)

(Commissioner Keon: Absent)

[End: 2:13:23 p.m.]