

**City of Coral Gables City Commission  
North Ponce Workshop  
Agenda Item K-1  
October 27, 2015  
City Commission Chambers  
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL**

**City Commission**

**Mayor Jim Cason**

**Commissioner Pat Keon**

**Commissioner Vince Lago**

**Vice Mayor Frank Quesada**

**Commissioner Jeannett Slesnick**

**City Staff**

**City Manager, Cathy Swanson-Rivenbark**

**City Attorney, Craig E. Leen**

**City Clerk, Walter J. Foeman**

**Deputy City Clerk, Billy Urquia**

**Planning and Zoning Director, Ramon Trias**

**Public Speaker(s)**

**Craig Coller**

**Dean Warhaft**

**Vicky Rua**

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Agenda Item K-1 [3:00:00 p.m.]

Discussion on the North Ponce Community Vision Workshop, the Workshop Report, and ongoing planning efforts in the North Ponce neighborhood.

Mayor Cason: Ramon, are you going to be leading the discussion today?

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yes.

Mayor Cason: Alright. I think we're all here. Why don't we -- even though the City Manager's not here, I'm sure she's aware of what you're going to say, so why don't we start?

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Thank you, Mayor. If I could have the PowerPoint...

Mayor Cason: Before we start, let me ask, Craig, do you have any legal opinion on any of this? I mean, this is a workshop among ourselves.

City Attorney Leen: Yes. Yeah, this is a workshop, so it's for the Commission. At one point during any proceeding -- it doesn't have to be at one meeting. At one meeting during -- while this whole issue was being brought up, there has to be a time for public comment before the Commission can make a final decision, under state law. But, for purpose of today, that's purely within the discretion of the Chair. And the purpose of this particular workshop is for the Commission to discuss the matter with staff.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: And Mr. Mayor, we have a larger audience than we usually do, and in some instances, a younger audience than we usually do. Do you want to explain who's come?

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Absolutely. Thank you, Cathy. Mayor, today we have a class from FIU. It's a Public Administration class, and Dr. Ganapati, is their professor. He's the Ph.D. director at FIU. So I -- they had a chance to visit with me prior to this meeting. I gave them an introduction to cities and what you get to do on a daily basis, so they're very interested in the opportunities in terms of their career. So, they're here, and I thank them very much.

Mayor Cason: Great. Great to have you here. I hope you'll apply for City jobs when you graduate.

Commissioner Lago: Ramon, if I could just interject one moment, based on the City Attorney's comments in regards to public comment. I'm in favor of maybe, hopefully, having a little bit of time to maybe get some public comment, if my colleagues are also in favor of it.

Mayor Cason: It depends how long your presentation is because we have to...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: I have a PowerPoint.

Commissioner Lago: I know we have a 5 o'clock, but I'm saying, if there is time.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Certainly, I'm not going to speak until 5 o'clock. I think that I'll speak for maybe 15, 20 minutes. And my -- if you have any questions, interrupt at any point.

Mayor Cason: Okay.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: If I could have the PowerPoint, please. Thank you. Mayor and Commissioners, and City Manager, I want to say one thing first. I redid the PowerPoint yesterday based on the new graphics that were prepared under the direction of the City Manager, so this is the first time that I'm using the branding approach to this PowerPoint. So, if you like it, I'll keep doing it, and I think they did a great job. Michelle Cash was very instrumental in those graphics, and I thank her very much. As you may remember, we had the workshop for North Ponce. And, one of the great things about this City, and one of the great things about that PowerPoint template that Michelle worked on, is that it encourages telling the story of the City, because I think that that's a very valuable story. And, it's a story that actually begins in North Ponce, to some extent, and it includes buildings, such as the elementary school, which I photographed in this image. And it talks about the foundation of the City by George Merrick, with a very clear dream, a very clear master plan, a master plan that had an aspiration of quality and aesthetics beyond anything that I know in any other city. And one of the most iconic drawings in the history of the City is this one, which is of Douglas Entrance, and Douglas Entrance is at the very edge of the area that we're talking about, the North Ponce planning area. And this drawing you've seen before. I had a chance to scan the original, which happens to be at the historical museum, downtown Miami. And, it's a beautiful drawing, and it was prepared by three people that were close collaborators of Merrick. And this is the message that I

think is important to keep in mind. We had really, really great people working on this at the very beginning, and we have now the opportunity to continue that work. Walter DeGarmo, a graduate of Cornell University, interned under John Russell Pope. If you've been to Washington and you've seen the Jefferson Memorial, that's the kind of work that was done while he was being an intern. Phineas Paist, the architect of this building, again, really fantastic, well-trained architects, and Damon Fink (phonetic), who was the artistic director of the City, the one that created the imagery of all the entrances, Venetian Pool, that very valuable imagery and quality that we all aspire to. And it's so easy to do a report when you have such great tradition to work with. The drawing that I used for that cover, I found, again, in a museum, by chance, at the historical museum. I saw it being exhibited, and you know, we were able to scan it. All of that information, all of that quality is all around us and should be used as we design the future. The other thing that is very important, and I have tried to emphasize, is public outreach. And I think that this workshop was one of many, many opportunities that the community is going to have to discuss the future and to brainstorm ideas about how to make things even better. The public outreach, as I've said before, included all kinds of notifications on the web, the eNews, the emails. We tried to be as transparent and as open with the information as we can. The actual workshop itself was very interactive. Many of you were there and had a chance to really participate and so on, and that's the kind of environment that I would like to encourage. The fact that none of this is a final document or somebody's idea -- it's not -- we had Chuck Bohl as our consultant. Unfortunately, he was ill today. He was not able to join me. But, it's not Chuck's report. It's really the report of all those people that worked on this at the time. And as I will show you later on, they actually have done some work since the workshop. We had a chance to tour the community and learn from the wonderful examples of the City. We did some analysis. Of course, staff has the opportunity to look at maps and aerial photographs, and try to understand the conditions, and try to identify the opportunities. And you will see some maps later on about what we have learned since the workshop. During the workshop, we looked at the existing conditions. We looked at the existing regulations. And one of the things about the regulations that you will see immediately is that there's a lot of brown in these maps. Brown is a rare in the map of the City, but it is the most common land use and zoning designation here, which is MF-2. MF-2 is tricky. It's one of the challenges that we have in terms of the future, in

terms of amending the Code. In addition, in the past -- in the recent past, we've had some discussion about site specifics, et cetera. Here, we have a lot of issues related to that, the site specifics, that are quite a challenge. On a regular basis, I am consulting the City Attorney, trying to interpret a few sentences in a book. It shouldn't require a City Attorney, and an architect, and other people to understand a few sentences. I think that's one of the challenges that we have...

Mayor Cason: What's the latest zoning code? When was the last zoning put in in that area?

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Well, the last was about 2007, which is about...

Mayor Cason: So that was there too, okay.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yeah, but it goes back to the '70s, a lot of the site specifics. So, there's a little baggage that was carried through the decades into that rewrite.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Ramon, you might...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yes.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Mention to the audience what MF-2 is.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Multifamily 2, and MF-2 is one of those magic names that we use to designate the type of development that you can do in an area. So, MF-2 basically is the small apartment buildings that you see all around the area. So, that's one of the challenges, you're right. I mean, we have to be more clear in terms of -- everybody should be able to understand what the future is like or should be or could be. So, that's one of the challenges we have. Then, the public input, the actual public input, just to recap, we used several techniques. Chuck ran that effort very well. We had some surveys in which we asked for one-word descriptions of the area. We also had some more involved surveys that asked for some questions and provided some opportunity for discussion. We did a visual preference survey,

which basically, you know, a green dot means you like it, so you put it in next to the picture you like. And if you don't like it, you use a red dot; pretty basic, but it works very well. And then, we had the table discussions that you saw in that photograph. We had maps of the area, and people wrote ideas, ideas of what could happen, ideas that went from details to the big ideas. And I think that's the beauty of these types of efforts. So, the community vision expressed in the workshop -- and again, I'll remind you, this is the font and the graphics that we're trying to use. That's a whole separate dimension to this presentation. If you like it, let me know. And part of the community vision was that there was a unique character to the neighborhood that should be preserved, and that had to do with the scale. And I think the scale, relatively speaking, is smaller than, for example, downtown. Downtown, we have larger buildings.

Mayor Cason: What's the highest building in that area now? I mean, in that -- not along the edges, but...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Well, you could go to the 190s, so for example, I think the Oficina project is going to get to that, and that's along Ponce.

Mayor Cason: Right.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: But immediately beyond that -- and that's not MF-2. The Ponce area is commercial, so those are -- and that's one of the issues. The issue is that Ponce de Leon is very different than the blocks on either side.

Mayor Cason: But the MF-2s are roughly how high?

Unidentified Speaker: Two stories, I think, or four?

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Well, the typical buildings are two stories. You can go to six or seven stories, according to the site specifics. So, there's a big difference between two and

six, particularly when you're including parking. So, that's one of the challenges that we have to address and discuss. And there was a real support for the area's diverse and walkable and compact character. I think those are very good things. And what I tried to do is summarize those ideas, summarize the public input and the discussion into some action steps. You've seen them in the report. I broke them down into short term and long term. And again, it's a working document. It's certainly -- the point of the meeting today was to look at some of those issues and see how far we have advanced, and see what kind of priorities the Commission may have. And that's what I am describing as implementation. This is where we are now. We've done the public input. We came up with some ideas, short-term, long-term ideas. Now, let's see what we can do as far as implementation. There were some easy ideas. One of them was to update the historic preservation maps, and that's an ongoing process, and we're trying to make them more interactive, and trying to have some additional information, like drawings and photographs, et cetera, to create that wealth of resources that can be used by the public and the private sector to make decisions, so that's going on. And I'm happy to say that Scott, in our office, has been working on that. Now, during the workshop, I discussed with Liz -- Liz promised me that she was going to do a studio this fall, and she did. She did the studio, and then the presentation was a couple of weeks ago. I was lucky enough to be there. So, she had a lot of the graduate students, I think about 12 or so, working on ideas for that Ponce Park, which is at the core of the neighborhood. So, I'm hoping that this is an ongoing discussion. They already had their presentation. They really worked hard. They came up with all kinds of different ideas that deal with the different landscape options, ideas about infill buildings, all kinds of dreams, sometimes excessively ambitious, but a lot of times, very realistic, so all kinds of things took place. And as you can see, the students really, really made an effort to conceptualize the area. Now, in terms of what we are doing as a city, we do have some proposals that are in the context of the development buildings around. And Oficina, in particular, had committed to making some improvements, up to you what type of improvements, that dealt with the Art in Public Places component and some of the landscape mitigation. So, that conversation continues, and hopefully, we'll be able to get to something to your liking soon enough. Another idea was that we should try to identify some locations for new parks, and that's an ongoing discussion. And I would separate that into two options: one, project-related public space. And, we do have some

opportunities, as the project review process comes along, to affect for the better some of the areas around. And in particular, for example, I'm really excited about some potential improvements on Douglas Entrance. Very preliminary discussions, but if that were to happen, I think that would be transformational for the City to be able to rescue that façade towards the City of Miami again. Because right now, I think it's a little bit less clear than it should be. And then, of course, there's also the opportunity to create some City parks. So I would think -- I would encourage you to think in those two terms, some potential parks and some projects that enhance sidewalks and public space related to development proposal, so that's what I recommend on that issue. We also thought about identifying some parking lots, some public parking lots because parking is one of the challenges in this area. And I mean it from a functional point of view, but also in terms of aesthetics in the sense that if we continue to have large parking garages on buildings that are relatively small, then what we have is a neighborhood that looks like a parking garage. So that, to me, would be something that we need to think about, and at the leadership of the City Manager, we were trying to try to come up with some potential locations for that. Again, an ongoing project that we are providing some of the mapping and some of the zoning support, but hopefully, with Public Works and some other staff, we'll be able to propose something more specific.

Mayor Cason: Let me ask you on these...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yes.

Mayor Cason: On both the parks and the parking lot, are you looking at currently vacant land or buildings that may be falling down that could be bought and cleared and used for those purposes?

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: We're looking at both, and we're not finding any really easy answers, so this is a process. And I think that, at some point, we'll come up with some very specific proposals for you to review. But I mean, I don't want to make it seem that this is



something clear at this point. I think it's easier to coordinate with the development projects because they have an incentive to enhance sidewalks and plazas and so on.

Unidentified Speaker: And Ramon...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yes.

Unidentified Speaker: Are you talking about parking garages?

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: No. I was talking about the parks and public spaces. But in terms of parking, I'm thinking more in terms of lots, parking lots. I think small, infill incremental is better than large projects for this type of neighborhood that is, you know, known for its small scale and its diversity of buildings and so on. So that's what I'm thinking. Certainly, we could think of different options.

Unidentified Speaker: The City does build beautiful parking garages. I mean, they can be smaller-scaled parking garages.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: That is a very good point, very good point. And like I said, this requires a discussion. And the reason I'm proposing this for you is that I want to know which priorities are the ones that you think we should focus on.

Mayor Cason: Has anyone done a survey at a particular point in time, maybe at 7 in the evening, of the number of cars that are up there in that area so we know what the overnight parking is? Or some way to get a handle of, do we have...

Vice Mayor Quesada: Well, actually...

Mayor Cason: A database for...

Vice Mayor Quesada: We can actually pull that from the Oficina project. One of the requirements during the preliminary process is to get a traffic study, so I'm sure we can pull that from the public records. Can you circulate that to us, when you have a chance?

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yeah.

Vice Mayor Quesada: I know we can find it -- I'm sure we can find it online.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yeah, it's online, but we can get that to you, the Oficina. The answer to the Mayor's question is exactly what you said. We have some information. Let's put it together and see where we are. We also have been working on -- we had mapped the sidewalks of the City, and this was a project that we had already started, but we were able to focus on this. And this area has sidewalks pretty much everywhere, so this is not one of the biggest challenges. However, there's some opportunities to enhance sidewalks. This project is more relevant to some other areas of the City where sidewalks are a big issue, but we're working on that, too. Now, in terms of street design, we talked about some opportunities to enhance streets. And I told you that some of the participants in the workshop did some homework afterwards. This is a drawing from one of the participants. They sent it to us, and they said, well, this is the way the street looks right now, and we would like that it had more trees and bike lanes. And this was completely out of their own initiative, so we have been able to get the excitement or the involvement of the community actually actively trying to have that conversation. So, I think that's a very good thing, and I think that these are some of the young professionals that live in the neighborhood. They have expertise that they want to share. So, that was another one of the issues we're working on. Shared parking was an idea that was discussed, and I'm happy to say that we are working on an ordinance. We have presented the ordinance already to the Planning and Zoning Board. Planning and Zoning requested additional information, so we're working through those issues. However, it's coming to you as soon as we get through that process. The shared parking idea here is that, again, parking is a challenge. It's best to have the optimum parking amount than more or less parking. The shared parking that we're proposing, it gives you three options as a developer. One option is to follow the

methodology of the ULI, which deals mostly with different uses at different times of the day. Another option is to follow a matrix, which is in the middle right there, and that matrix is similar to the one in Miami, in the Miami 21 Code. And the third option, if you don't like what you get in those three, is to do your own study and then propose a plan that is tailored to your needs. And it may include, for example, valet parking. It may include the trolley. It may include a variety of other things that may be unique to your project. So that's going through the process, and I think you will get to see it soon, and I think it will be very beneficial.

Commissioner Lago: Ramon, before we move forward in regards to shared parking, I want to make sure -- and this is something that I mentioned with the City Manager before, and I brought it up at the last Commission meeting. If shared parking, if we're going to move forward on this, which I'm in favor of some iteration of it, I want to make sure the City has a windfall when a developer chooses to move in that direction. Either it be, if you're going to have a reduction in parking, you owe the City "X" amount, and that money be used, as I mentioned before, again, we can discuss it amongst the Commission, but I think that that money has to be used like we talked about before, acquiring land for parks, not renovating parks, not the general fund. It has got to go to a straight piggy bank, which is used to buy land in North Gables. So I'm all for shared parking, but there's got to be -- if you're not going to have to build it and you're going to save \$20,000 per space -- I know the developers probably don't like me too much for saying this -- but if you don't have to build it as per the Code's current requirement, I want some sort of money back, which the City then eventually could use to purchase parks. Does everybody agree or disagree?

Unidentified Speaker: No, I agree with you.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Or to build parking garages.

Commissioner Lago: Yeah, and then that was my second step. I think that -- and this is the purpose of today's meeting is eventually we're going to get into a situation, which I guess we'll talk amongst later, that we're going to have to really dedicate certain -- I don't know the exact

word, maybe you can help me is like a parking structure, with maybe two, three or four buildings can access that parking lot because we have certain height restrictions right now. We have certain density restrictions, and I know we'll get into more detail, but I agree with you. Either that money can be used to buy land for parks or land to build parking garages so that we can make it more accessible.

Mayor Cason: Or even possibly to expand trolleys, if that's part of the solution.

Commissioner Lago: Yeah. You're taking away from parks, but you have to expand trolleys.

Unidentified Speaker: I think that we also talked about the -- having public parking within some of the buildings that are built, is to work with developers to make some public parking accessible in the...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: We talked about it in a couple projects.

Unidentified Speaker: Right.

Commissioner Lago: I just want to...

Unidentified Speaker: (INAUDIBLE) yeah, that there is some public parking within the projects that are being built, some of the larger projects that could accommodate more parking.

Commissioner Lago: I just want us to be realistic. And I know that we -- our expectations in regards to the requirements for parking are, in my opinion, a little excessive when you compare ourselves to other municipalities. Yes, we're not other municipalities. We have a different level of standard, and I appreciate that, but when it comes to parking, I think we're, like the Vice Mayor has mentioned before, a little over parked in certain buildings, as you can probably see. For example, we mentioned Merrick Park. You know, that building has one to two floors on a daily basis, not matter what season we're in, what holiday it is, there's nobody parking on

those floors. It's excessively parked. That costs money, so I just want to make sure that we keep that -- that we're -- I don't want to be too aggressive, but I want to push in that direction to try to get to a good number when we talk about shared parking methodology.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: It's a policy choice, so clearly, you can control what you want to do on this. So, that's something that is coming to you fairly soon, I hope, and then we'll be able to make some decisions. Related to that is we are proposing to revise some parking standards within mixed-use buildings. Basically, one of the biggest issues we have is that our restaurant requirements are very high; they're three times the amount of, let's say, retail. So, if you have an existing mixed-use building and, all of a sudden, there's a change of use on the ground level and somebody wants to bring in, let's say, a small restaurant, then there's not enough parking and that project goes away. So, we're proposing to blend the parking requirements to 300 per space, more or less, and then basically allow for change of use as a matter of routine for any kind of mixed-use project. Those are the larger projects. I think it makes sense for the ground level and it probably will activate a lot of the ground, the sidewalks. And that may be also in conjunction with some of the shared parking ideas. Another idea that was proposed is to eliminate -- yes, ma'am.

Unidentified Speaker: Ramon, where are we with that right now? I mean, with the revising the parking requirements. Is this still -- this is not policy yet.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: No.

Unidentified Speaker: This is just under discussion?

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yeah. This was...

Unidentified Speaker: Okay.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: The mixed use text amendments were taken to the Planning and Zoning Board, and they're coming to you soon.

Unidentified Speaker: Okay.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: So they passed Planning and Zoning.

Unidentified Speaker: Okay, good, because it's creating a problem for some of those...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Absolutely.

Unidentified Speaker: Mixed-use projects along Ponce up there that it'll be good to resolve.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: It's an ongoing issue, and it's really simply what happens when a restaurant or a small deli wants to move in? Well, you can't, and that's really very frustrating for many people.

Unidentified Speaker: It's not a good thing. It leaves those empty and...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yeah. So, I think this is coming to you first. This is coming to you as soon as we are able to schedule it for Commission.

Commissioner Lago: That's going back to the Planning and Zoning.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Not this.

Unidentified Speaker: No, it's gone through the...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias; The mixed use -- we have two sets of amendments.

Unidentified Speaker: This is...

Commissioner Lago: Then I apologize.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yeah.

Unidentified Speaker: This one has already gone through.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: The mixed use, they agreed and it's moving forward. And shared parking, they wanted more information, so hopefully, that will move forward fairly soon. Another idea that we have not taken to the Planning and Zoning Board yet was to eliminate parking requirements for small buildings. That idea was proposed during the workshop. That's a policy choice. It's already the case in the downtown for the small buildings beyond a certain FAR, and we were thinking of expanding that to the North Ponce, if you believe that's a good choice.

Unidentified Speaker: What's a small building?

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: It was 1.4 or 5 FAR.

Unidentified Speaker: What does that translate to?

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: It's a two-story building.

Unidentified Speaker: A two-story building with...

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: The best example that we use is the John Martin's, where it has a mezzanine, so it's not a full two stories.

Unidentified Speaker: Okay.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: It has a story and a half.

Unidentified Speaker: Right, okay.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yeah.

Mayor Cason: And this would be for new construction, renovations....

Unidentified Speaker: Existing.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: It's up to you. I would recommend for new and old, and for any building (INAUDIBLE)...

Unidentified Speaker: It would be good for the older too because you want to preserve some of the older construction in that area so it doesn't...

Unidentified Speaker: The historic buildings, we talked about giving some incentive...

Unidentified Speaker: Right, and some of the significant buildings, and some of them were non-historic but they are (INAUDIBLE)...

Mayor Cason: And some of this may depend on, again, if we decide to expand the trolley. That would certainly -- I think we said 78 percent of the people there are renters.

Unidentified Speaker: Yeah.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Something, I guess.



Mayor Cason: So a lot of them are probably working in the Gables. If they could take a trolley, they wouldn't need a car.

Unidentified Speaker: Right.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Certainly, in terms of preservation, it's a great incentive for historic preservation purposes. We may want to also use it for new buildings.

Unidentified Speaker: Right.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Alright, so...

Unidentified Speaker: Ramon, I'd like to see historic preservation worked into this somehow, where we do give some incentives, if possible.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Right. Well, that was my first slide. We mapped the area, and we are trying to...

Unidentified Speaker: Yeah.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Explain those issues better with a brochure. It's just that we haven't finished yet.

Unidentified Speaker: But as far as parking, as far as parking.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Oh, okay, okay, sure.

Vice Mayor Quesada: In conjunction with the reduction in -- the potential reduction in parking requirements and shared parking, I think something that has to be expressed in there is working - and I don't know if it's a City vendor or we do it on a project by project basis that maybe they

don't have to deliver parking, but they have to deliver some sort of car service for that block or that neighborhood. And I'm not talking about an Uber.

Commissioner Slesnick: Car2Go.

Vice Mayor Quesada: I'm talking about like a Car2Go or a Zipcar. Those are the two that come to mind. I know there are a lot of competitors out there. Just because, you know, I go back to -- I lived in Philadelphia for a while for school, and I still go back almost every year. And I've noticed in neighborhoods where the buildings don't have parking, some of the neighborhoods that look similar to North Ponce, it's pretty consistent you'll have two or three of those Zipcars or Car2Gos in those areas because it helps. It helps leverage you because the people that may be working in downtown, on the weekend, they might want to go to the beach, or they might need to go to Costco or whatever errand that is. They still have that option so that they don't need to stash a car, you know, parked in another residential neighborhood where they shouldn't be parking.

Mayor Cason: And likewise, bicycle rental, if we get that far to where you can use a bike, if you didn't use a car.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Yeah. I think it's got to be a complete pedestrian plan really, you know, maximizing all the different possibilities that are out there.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: So, Vice Mayor Quesada, just so that you know, Kevin Kenny is working with Miami Parking System, and also following what Miami Beach is doing so that we can piggyback on both Zipcar and Cars2go, I believe, and wanting to locate them up in the North Ponce area so it also connects to trolley. So, but it's easier for us to piggyback, and they are either close to completing the contract.

Unidentified Speaker: We're hoping to piggyback on the Beach contract, and they're supposed to be negotiating (INAUDIBLE).

Vice Mayor Quesada: But I think that should be worked into the actual zoning requirements or conditions of, you know, being able to receive some of these benefits.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: That's what option three in the shared parking allows you to do.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Got it.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: So, we'll make it more specific because we talked about the trolley. We talked about all those issues.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Because I think we've got to be practical and realistic of all different kind of situations why an individual might need a car so they could really be independent of having maybe two cars or one car.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Absolutely. Very good point. Alright, so, another thing we did is that we did promise to have more transparency and more communications, so we have a webpage within the City's webpage on the North Ponce workshop, with all the documents, all the input, et cetera. We're trying to make it as interactive as possible and trying to link it. And then, eventually, we would like to have regular meetings with the community and try to make it more of a neighborhood planning effort, more of an ongoing effort that I think would be very beneficial for the area. So, that's up already, so all the information is easily available. In terms of the longer term or the changes that are going to influence the future, we do have some ideas, and we discussed this with Craig Collier, who's our attorney, consultant attorney -- I think he's here today -- in terms of some of the amendments that really need to take place. There's a lot of site specific requirements in the MF-2, the mixed -- the multifamily 2 district, which are very unique and they deal with a sliding scale of FAR, meaning the size of the building depending on the height, et cetera, extremely complex. As I said, I find myself discussing this and in great detail with the City Attorney, and sometimes, we have a hard time finding the right answer. But,

the most interesting thing is that usually the difference that we're talking about is one unit or one story, in the sense that we -- if we just clarify zoning with a clear vision, really, the change, the ultimate change wouldn't be so big. So, that's one of the things we're working on. Hopefully, we'll bring you some specific amendments in the near future.

Mayor Cason: Is this where the issue that we first discussed six, eight months ago of density, number of units per building, which a lot of the developers said, in order for them to be able to get in there and develop, they need to be able to have more units that fit what people what now, which is 1,000 square foot, 800, 1,200, that people can afford, and that's an area of renters. I would assume that you wouldn't want to gentrify it so much that the people there now have to move out because they can't afford it. So, that's got to be in this mix somewhere.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: It is, it is. And, what it has to do is that the FAR, the bulk, the floor area ratio of the building tends to be larger than the number of units that are allowed in terms of density. So, that creates a real challenge because it's simply different numbers. And, the other thing is that the land use map and the zoning map, which are what the City ostensibly is showing as policy, are sometimes different. So, what happens is that the density that are allowed by the future land use map may be in conflict with some of the site specific, so it's a really complicated situation. We deal with it on a case by case basis, but I would like to have the opportunity to propose some better options for you. I have discussed some techniques in the past, in terms of having some more graphic depiction of zoning so it's clear to understand. We've done some of this work in the past. We'll get to some point in the near future as we discuss this with the Planning and Zoning Board, but I think that's a real important priority in terms of the long-term plans for the area. And finally, I want to end with the last slide of the new PowerPoint pattern, and if you liked it, I'll use it again. And thank you very much, and I'm here to answer any questions.

Mayor Cason: Is there a -- you've been able to reduce to a consensus from, I don't remember, of the two workshops -- I don't remember how many people were there, but let's assume that's a good representation of the neighborhood -- the kinds of things that everybody agrees on, so we

can move past that and focus on what we -- where there's some difference. Like, we know they don't want -- in the center, they don't want high buildings. They want shorter sidewalks. They want paseos. They want trees. They want mixed use. They want some fun stuff there. I mean, other than that, are there other things where we could have a list and say we all agree on the following?

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: I think that the points that I presented to you are pretty much ideas that everybody agrees with. I haven't heard any real criticism of any of them. The real -- the immediate question that is going to come before you is that there is a project, as you know, 33 Alhambra, that may request -- or, actually, has requested a change of land use and a change of zoning. So, at that point, I think you have to make some policy choices that deal with the intensity of the area.

Mayor Cason: It's sort of split at -- I remember in a previous discussion, it's sort of the corridors, which are higher in the center, but the vast bulk of this is MF-2.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yes.

Mayor Cason: And so for a number of developers that said they -- interest rates are still low. They would like to get in. They agree with everything, but can they have more density so that they can build for the market, and I don't know when we can get to that point or we're going to miss the boat at some point.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Right. And the issue is that density is different than height, right, and different than FAR. So what happens is that if you were to change density only, meaning strike-through some of the site specifics and allow the density that is in the future land use map, I think that would be a big change, or at least a change that is getting you to the right direction. And it's not changing the City's land use map or anything. It's simply, that's the map we have and let's implement it.

Unidentified Speaker: Right. It's using the -- we can -- it's just amending our Code, and it's not our land use or the zoning district, the underlying zoning either. It's just the Code.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: And these are Code requirements that are legacy language from decades ago, basically, and they're still in the Code.

Unidentified Speaker: Do you need to change parking requirements with that, if you change the density?

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: No, no. Now, we could, if we figure out a way to have public parking areas and so on. But, certainly, I wouldn't propose that immediately, no.

Commissioner Keon: No, but I think that some of the things they asked for -- you know, I think that the vision of the people that at least attended that workshop and a lot of, you know -- that we have spoken with really are looking to that to be, you know, an urban residential neighborhood with amenities within walking distance of their homes. So, you know, even in the MF-2, that, you know, there would be the ability to have a small coffee shop on the corner, you know, next to some apartment buildings. Or that, you know, you might have a -- you don't see them here often, but it's like a newsstand, you know. They sell newspapers and those sorts of things, or a small bakery. But, you know, it's all the things that service the residents in a neighborhood that you can walk to. You know, if you work all week, you get up Saturday morning and you go walk and, you know, you do your errands and whatever else. So, I mean, I think it's allowing for those uses that we really don't allow for.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: We don't.

Commissioner Keon: You don't allow for. And you need to -- we need to look at this area and draw its boundaries and allow for that to happen, and allow, you know, this to become, you know, an urban residential community with a scale that is appropriate for that site to keep it residential, to keep it alive, to keep it going so that it's not so big and the buildings are not so

high that, you know, people don't know each other, you know. The hope is that there's this opportunity to have eyes on the street and for people, you know, it's a walking community, the people know each other in the community and all of those sorts of things. And so, something that we need to come up with is, you know, what size is that, how big is that. There are things that we can go ahead and do that is land that is ours, like that Ponce Park, or you know, where Ponce splits off into East Ponce. There is a real opportunity there to take back some of that space and create a very nice park, you know, in that area. You have, you know, people are going to live there, you know, they're going to have dogs and things. You're going to have some place to walk your dog. You know, we're going to have to put in, you know, those stations where they have bags and whatever else. I mean, but, I think the things that we maybe could look at is the things that we can do that we, as a City, can do now. What is the public part of the process that we can start to move that, you know, moves us in that direction and creates -- begins to really create, you know, or formalize that ambience in that area? And I think one of them is that, you know, Ponce Circle Park, certainly is one. Bike lanes are very important in that area. You know, we need to look at, you know, if we put -- I know there's a lot of talk about continuing the median down Ponce, but you know, you may want to look at it -- you know, you really want to maybe use the space for bike lanes and not for a median. So, I think you need to look at how you want to divide up that space on Ponce so that it, you know, best serves the community. Because if you can get, you know, I think it's -- now it's two lanes in each direction, you know, so...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yes.

Commissioner Keon: You know, you could, you know, maybe maintain two lanes in each direction. And if you didn't put a median in, you could create, you know, a bike lane on each side...

Mayor Cason: Or reduce the width of the street.

Commissioner Keon: With the space that's there, you know, and the parallel parking and whatever else. So, you know, I think it's -- we really need to decide before you move forward

with the median whether you want a median and how you want to use that street space. Because if you put in a median, it takes away from the available space that you can use for other things. I think, you know, when I asked that we would do this study, it was so that we could get out in front of development because we know that people are assembling properties in that area, and a concern that was raised by the community was -- and we have seen is how deep that assemblage is going into a block. And so, you know, although we are allowing high-rise on Ponce, it's, you know, how does the high-rise on Ponce step down into the residential neighborhood, so how far back does that building go, and how does that building have to step down. What is it currently? Is there any regulations on it at all now?

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: No, and that's up to you, in terms of rezoning, yes.

Commissioner Keon: So, are there any -- there is no regulation on that?

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: There's no real policy guidance. There's two or three...

Commissioner Keon: Okay.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Cases in which it's gone fairly into the middle of the block.

Commissioner Keon: Okay. I would like -- I would really like to see us take that as a priority because I think, you know, we need to put the things in place that don't compromise the MF-2 portion of that some, so we need to look at, you know, the assemblage of property up in there. I mean, you can assemble as much as you want, but this is what you can build. I mean, you know, and how it has to step down. The buildings need to step down from Ponce into, you know, the neighborhood, so this also -- those are long blocks between Ponce and -- what's the block in back of Ponce?

Unidentified Speaker: Galiano.



Commissioner Keon: Galiano. They're very long blocks. And you know, we were looking -- there was a suggestion or a discussion from those developing along Ponce not develop right to their property line, but you allow, you know, an alley that you can have pedestrian cut-through to go from block to block so it's not, you know, you don't have to walk all the way to the end of the block. It allows, you know, shortened blocks, which make it more residential, a little more friendly, a little more walkable. So, you know, and I know that, you know, people that are in the business of developing are not so happy with those things, but I think for the long-term viability of our City and what we -- how we want to see that developed and to preserve it, we would really have to do those things, and we're going to have to have that discussion and see where we go on that.

Mayor Cason: I agree if you could come up with a step down policy around this area and then isolate where there's not an issue so that developers that agree to everything that we've mentioned in here can start developing.

Commissioner Keon: Right.

Mayor Cason: Because otherwise, depending on what...

Commissioner Keon: So if we could do that...

Mayor Cason: The economy is going to do and they could stop development, it could be -- and we end up losing a good, quality development.

Commissioner Keon: Right.

Commissioner Lago: I didn't have the chance to go to the North Ponce workshop. I was out of town. But, it was interesting, and I wish I had the names. Chelsea can probably get them for me. Two individuals reached out to me, residents in our community who are renters, who currently rent between Valencia and those blocks that run all the way to the Coral Gables Youth

Center. There's a lot of change coming in that area, a lot of developers who are picking up those 4-plexes, those 3-plexes, those 6-plexes, and they're turning them into high-end townhomes, million and a half, two-million-dollar townhomes. Again, you can't fault them, you know. That's the way the economy is. This is a free market. They're following the rules. They're feeding a demand, but that's causing an issue, and let me tell me you a little about the issue. The two residents that I met with called me, and their concerns were very simple. Where are we going to move to? I live in this apartment building. They're not extending my lease. I have an issue. I work in Coral Gables. I love living a stone's throw away from my office. I think one of them was a waitress, and the other one was a paralegal. As a matter of fact, I think Chelsea may actually be texting me her name right now. Her name is Maria Christina Fernandez. It was a lady who came to see me, and there was another gentleman. So, the interesting thing, why I bring this up? Because the Mayor mentioned about gentrification. Again, we're going to have a big problem, and this is why I was so happy when Commissioner Keon brought up the idea of this North Ponce workshop. And that is that individuals who are business owners in this community are going to have, probably in the next few years, are going to start having an issue. If we continue at the pace that we're going and we continue to take offline all these rental buildings, we're going to run into a situation where individuals can no longer afford to live in this community and they're going to have to move away. And as you know, when the commute becomes longer and longer and longer and this county continues to basically disregard our infrastructure, people are not going to want to work in Coral Gables. And like I told this very nice lady, I said, well, you know, do you want to move up one day, maybe you want to buy a property, maybe there's different options in North Gables for smaller apartments. She says, I don't want to buy an apartment. I want to rent an apartment. And I kind of started beginning to have a discussion with her about the possibility of North Gables being a haven for, like we said before, a lot of renters, what we call middle to higher workforce housing, and I think that we mentioned that discussion before...

Commissioner Keon: Yeah.

Commissioner Lago: As workforce housing being a true blue option for North Gables. Either when a developer comes to the table and they want to do an assemblage, if you want to give them an extra floor, an extra two floors, they have to meet a certain threshold requirement to provide a certain amount of units for individuals who work...

Mayor Cason: Or teach.

Commissioner Lago: Or teach in the City of Coral Gables and our development services can prove it, once a year, two years, with an actual paystub, something simple. It doesn't overcomplicate the system. But, I'm just a little bit concerned if, you know, you don't take into consideration the actual current cost of doing business in the City of Coral Gables, when you have these zoning codes, which are basically taking an existing six-unit building and only allowing for seven units, when you tear -- when you buy a property and you tear it down, after demolition, construction becomes an impossibility. Let's be honest. You cannot build anything in North Gables to sell. It even becomes unfeasible to rent because the prices are that high. That's a good thing and a bad thing. So, what is the answer for that? Are we going to lose the individuals who work in this community?

Mayor Cason: And you know...

Commissioner Lago: We got to seriously think about that because that's the next thing. That's the next thing that happens.

Mayor Cason: And picking up on that, there's a direct relationship between the ability to find a place in Coral Gables -- if you're moving from Brickell and you want to come -- say you have a baby, you're married, you have a baby and come here. You want something you can afford to start off with. So, it may not be lower or middle income.

Commissioner Keon: Yeah, it's just affordable.

Mayor Cason: It may be people that are working in all these 160 corporate headquarters. To the extent they live in a thousand square foot apartment to start off with, they're not driving necessarily -- if you look at -- we just got the statistics on -- we have 189 entrances in Coral Gables; 14 of those, every day, 548,800 cars come into Coral Gables on just those 14. Now, those people are generally going through Coral Gables going somewhere else. To the extent they were coming here, that would be reduced, if we can build this sort of...

Commissioner Lago: Can you imagine, like we've been discussing about the issue that we have the best, just look at what we saw today. We saw Coral Gables Prep. We have A+ schools here in the City. Can you imagine how spectacular it would be if we could draw the best teachers into our institutions and say, listen, you can live in North Gables. You can live five minutes from where you work. That person would jump for joy. We would be able to bring the best teachers because they wouldn't have to drive an hour and a half to -- again, nothing wrong with Doral, nothing wrong with north Kendall, but that's not -- in my opinion, that hour and a half there and hour and a half back in traffic is -- you know how it is. It's complete lack of quality of life.

Commissioner Slesnick: Speaking on that same vein, more and more people are looking to move to North Ponce because it is now the Coral Gables Preparatory School District, so they are guaranteed of getting in that school...

Mayor Cason: Controlled Choice gone.

Commissioner Slesnick: With Controlled Choice gone, they want that neighborhood.

Commissioner Lago: So how do you keep these people, which are the lifeblood -- they're the individuals who serve you your food. They're the chefs. They're the accountants. They're the young professionals. They're the divorcees. They're the single parents who live in our community. I personally, again, I know that we all want to have quality controlled growth in this community with the necessary infrastructure. We want to have bike lanes. We want to have car sharing. We've been talking about it with the City Manager with Zipcar and Cars2go and the

bike sharing program. But there comes a point where we just can't talk about it anymore. We have to make a decision. Either we truly define how this area is going to be viewed, or we just continue to talk about it and developers proffer ideas, like we talked about 33 Alhambra, and nothing ever ends up happening, and we just have a battle here in the Commission floor. Or do we really take a step forward today and say, okay, we're going to address this issue. We're going to address this issue because one you sit down with an individual like I did from this community, Ms. Fernandez, it's heart wrenching when the lady tells you, look, my option is going to be very simple, I have to leave.

Mayor Cason: And when you look at it's our 90th anniversary, how many of our -- I mean, that's an area where probably a lot of those homes are 70 or more years old and they're falling down, and they're not ADA, and there's all kinds of safety issues related to them. They're only going to deteriorate unless we can set the rules and move as quickly as possible so that developers at this sweet spot will come in and improve the quality of life up there and the quality...

Commissioner Lago: And by the way, if I may just interject, but I want to make sure that people understand when I say move quickly, I mean, we move quickly addressing issues like I talked about before. If you're going to have a reduction in parking, you're going to pay for it. It's very clear. I mean, we're not giving anything away here. We're making sure that if you're going to provide -- if you're going to get an added amount of density, you're going to provide workforce housing. We want to make sure that you adhere by the rules. But, there's got to be a give and take here. It can't just be one sided.

Mayor Cason: And remember, also, looking back on Arva's book on the Gables, Merrick wanted this to be not -- no place just for fat cats...

Commissioner Keon: It wasn't an elite community.

Mayor Cason: But for middle class and for all ranges of income, so that we don't -- people always use the word "tony" when they talk about Coral Gables. I always think it's unfair, but it means it's because they think we're too rich. But I mean, I think that we need to make sure we maintain -- if we look at the demography, I think 26 percent of our residents are under -- relatively low income, so we don't want to force those people out. We need to make it possible for them to live in the Gables.

Commissioner Keon: A lot of them are elderly. (INAUDIBLE) a lot of people that are elderly...

Commissioner Lago: You have a lot of...

Commissioner Keon: (INAUDIBLE) young professionals that you want coming in. You have corporate headquarters that you're attracting here. It is much easier for them to be able to have housing for their staff, I mean, it -- you know, maybe not their upper level executives, but for their secretarial staff and that level of staff, that there's within some not so distant proximity, you know, to their office buildings and whatever.

Mayor Cason: And it promotes diversity. It promotes, you know, all kinds of good things. And we (INAUDIBLE) Quirch. I went over to the -- I mean, they're moving, what, 150 people out from Medley, and I was asking them, are you going to live in the Gables? They said, if we can find a place to live for our younger people.

Commissioner Lago: That's the interesting thing about it. I mean, obviously, the realtor on the panel, on the Commission, could probably tell you even better. I mean, people just don't come into the Gables and buy a million-dollar home. That's not the way it worked out for me. The way it worked out for me is I started in Edgewater, in 100 Edgewater, not the nicest building.

Mayor Cason: Pink building?

Commissioner Lago: No, I wish. I started in the yellow, three-story building where, you know, it's kind of rough, but at the end of the day, it's -- my wife and I started there. We saved our pennies. We ended up finding a house four years later that needed a lot of work. We bought the house, we fixed it up, but that's the progression.

Commissioner Slesnick: It's time for you to move again.

(LAUGHTER)

Commissioner Lago: I'll give you an example. I mean, my grandfather lived -- he passed away 15 years ago, but he lived most of his life on Galiano. He lived on Galiano. That was -- I mean, I grew up on Galiano. I used to walk in that area. He used to pick me up from school off Le Jeune. So it's something that I think we -- this is great. The workshop, I wasn't there, but it was spectacular. Today, what we're doing is important, but I think we really need to set goals to, like Commissioner Slesnick said before, either we need to have a presentation where in one month we take it to the public and get their input and say, look, this is what we're moving forward. Let's get your input one more time. I just feel that we're going to start getting into a situation like 33 Alhambra, where we're going to be doing things piecemeal, and I don't want to do things piecemeal. I want to do a comprehensive development plan, which all the quality developers -- and some of them are in this room -- can put forth projects which are really going to be -- not only benefit them, but also benefit this community.

Mayor Cason: Let me ask, at this stage, do we have any developers who would like to come up and make any comments?

(LAUGHTER)

Commissioner Keon: The 33 Alhambra developer.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Mr. Mayor, before they do, and I may say something that is, you know, that the community is struggling with, but if you talk about wanting to incentivize historic preservation and you talk about wanting to introduce neighborhood services that people can walk to and maybe some of those, if you look at the historic properties that have the potential of being designated and we work with Donna on it, maybe that becomes the little fruit and juice bar so that the neighbors can come. And you talk about adding more parks so that people that don't have a backyard can have a swing set and they can do the stroller to that because of Coral Gables Elementary or Prep being the feeder school and connecting Zipcar and also -- maybe they don't even have a car at all, but they have the access to that car, then introducing new development is going to push that possibility away. And I think we just need to be honest with that. If you want to encourage new development on Ponce, then you're going to need to understand how you're going to protect the neighborhood that could be displaced, not just the residents, but the structures, as a result of that development pressure. If you really want to turn this neighborhood around as an existing built community, then I think you really want to think carefully about what Commissioner Keon was saying about how deep could development or should development go into the area because there's a lot of maps here, but how we -- you know, we've identified some parking lot opportunities. Maybe we just go in and we buy them. You know, we've identified historic preservation potential. Maybe we look at those sites and see how can we create the transfer development rights so that it does make it worthwhile to save so that the highest and best use isn't bulldozing. I think the community is struggling. I think the Commission has some, you know, you're being approached with some different interests. And so, if you really want to create affordable housing, whatever you call it, whether it's for...

Commissioner Slesnick: Workforce.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Workforce housing.

Vice Mayor Quesada: It's called workforce housing.

Commissioner Slesnick: Workforce.



City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: This is workforce housing. The North Gables today, when you look at the income that was measured that we did for the school district, this is a high concentration of workforce housing today, where you can get to the trolley, you can get to a lot of things where -- and so, I just want you to be careful with when you introduce development, high-rise development into that area it's not necessarily going to provide that workforce housing. It may...

Commissioner Slesnick: Reduce it.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Challenge it.

Mayor Cason: Right, but that's a different -- that's why I was trying to put this in sort of two categories.

Commissioner Lago: Mayor, I never said high rise.

Mayor Cason: Yeah, the duplexes are one thing; the edges are another thing. And if you could - - a lot of this is focusing on the brown, the duplexes.

Commissioner Lago: Let me...

Commissioner Keon: But I think...

Commissioner Lago: Let me address the City Manager's comment for a second, please. She mentioned something important. For example, let's say Valencia all the way to Coral Gables Youth Center...

Commissioner Keon: That's not North Ponce.

Commissioner Lago: I know, I'm saying...

Commissioner Keon: Okay.

Commissioner Lago: But let me give you an example. They're not introducing high-rise development and they're displacing -- all those residents are being displaced. For what? For high-end townhomes that are selling between 1.5 and 2 million. And all the people who are buying those are either retirees, like my parents, soon to be, or individuals who are new to this community. And all those individuals that are being displaced, like the two that I met with, which I recommend -- I can give you their information -- you meet with -- they're looking to stay in this community because they work here, but their response is exactly what the Mayor said about the individuals from Quirch Foods. They can't find anywhere to live. Again, I never said high-rise development. That's not what I said. What I said was we need to come together and really put together a plan because what exists now doesn't make sense for, let's say, a non-historic building that somebody builds one or two pieces -- assembles two or three pieces together. It doesn't make any financial sense to knock them down and build something new. Even if you were to introduce workforce housing as a component to that development, it still doesn't make sense.

Commissioner Keon: Yeah, but that area that you're talking about is strictly, clearly a residential community, where you're going to introduce bakeries or, you know...

Commissioner Lago: Which area?

Commissioner Keon: The area by the youth center. I mean, that is...

Commissioner Lago: I agree.

Commissioner Keon: Strictly a residential community that you're just going to upgrade the residential product that is in that community. And it functions very differently than I think the north...

Commissioner Lago: But some people are being displaced, though.

Commissioner Keon: That's going to happen.

Mayor Cason: Well, we're talking here, I think, basically...

Commissioner Keon: But I mean, I think what we're looking at is, in the North Ponce area, an attempt to preserve...

Mayor Cason: Redevelop.

Commissioner Keon: To preserve an area who has kind of functioned in that way, and now, because of the pressure of development, it's -- you know, it's likely to change. And if we want to see that remain an urban residential community of not high scale or large scale development, we need to take some action in order to do that. Now, that's why I said, I would like us to start with -- we already have -- you have existing zoning on Ponce, and I don't think that you can downzone, you know, you can't downzone what's on Ponce. So I think you have to look at what's on Ponce and decide how far back -- you know, how far from Ponce, you know, can you develop, and at what heights, you know. If it's the first -- you know, so, I mean, I would like to see that be a start...

City Attorney Leen: If I can...

Commissioner Keon: You know, in what we do with Ponce...

City Attorney Leen: Just to give a...

Commissioner Keon: And how Ponce connects on both sides to the residential areas in back of Ponce because they're significant.

Mayor Cason: Craig.

City Attorney Leen: Just to provide -- and I talked to Craig, but you can downzone, but if you do, it's quasi-judicial, one. Two, you know, you do a takings analysis. Typically, it won't be a taking, but you do have to do a Bert J. Harris Act analysis then just to make sure that you're not doing an inordinate burden...

Commissioner Keon: Right.

City Attorney Leen: On the property. But you can downzone and...

Commissioner Keon: I mean, I would think...

City Attorney Leen: In certain circumstances.

Commissioner Keon: Before you would take that action, which is an action I don't think anybody's interested really in pursuing at this point, I think we should just look at the regulation for how deep into the block you can go and how does the building need to step down as it goes into the MF-2 district, and we need to decide, you know, what is the maximum height in the MF-2 district. And, if it's, you know, six stories...

Commissioner Slesnick: Well, Ramon, looking at your...

Commissioner Keon: Eight stories, you know, decide what it is. And so, then -- because that will determine the step down from Ponce, which will be...

Mayor Cason: That's your nine and ten.

Commissioner Keon: The maximum height in those others.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yeah, if we look at item 10...

Commissioner Keon: Yeah.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: That provides some of the tools that we can use to...

Commissioner Keon: Right.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Shape buildings more precisely.

Commissioner Keon: Right.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Which an overlay with this kind of information can achieve.

Commissioner Keon: Yes.

Commissioner Slesnick: Ramon...

Commissioner Keon: So, I would like us to start there. I would like us to give direction to Planning to start there and go forward. Now, I know that -- you know, I don't know how everybody feels about it and the project hasn't come before us at 33 Alhambra. But, you know, that is a project that requires -- is going to require a land use change and a zoning change. And you know, this is where, you know, we have to decide, you know, where is the boundaries, where is the border. Where do we step down into that district? Although it's part of the CBD, the zoning and the land use on that particular parcel, although it goes Navarre, was not changed.

And I'm going to assume it's because of its proximity to the MF-2 district. There has to be a way for that building to step down into -- and how it meets that community. It's right next to Coral Gables Elementary. It's going to -- you know, it's kind of right at the border of this, you know, area that we're talking about.

Mayor Cason: Commissioner Slesnick.

Commissioner Keon: And that is a very, very important decision that we're going to have to make because I think, in all fairness to a developer, you know, I don't want them to go through, you know, this whole process and, you know, go through designing and whatever, and you know, not have heard that that's not going to be okay.

Mayor Cason: So, you wrote that down?

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: I did.

Mayor Cason: Okay.

Commissioner Slesnick: And the 33 Alhambra project has a historic building on it, which would be perfect for a coffee shop.

Commissioner Keon: Well, I mean, but they -- and they had done a good job. I mean, I think Historic Preservation has worked with them, and they have done a good job in preserving that building, and they should be applauded for that. But, you know, I think -- you know, I don't -- I hold nothing against any developer that ever comes before us. I think everyone is entitled to do their job to the best of their ability. You know what, they are here to purchase land, to build a building, and to get the best return on their dollar they can get, you know. Every architect tries to build the best building they can for the client who hires them. Every attorney, you know, provides the best defense or the best case for the developer that's going to -- so, you know, everybody's just trying to do their job.

Mayor Cason: Let me...

Commissioner Keon: And everybody's trying to do their job well. You know, so ours is -- our job is to say, yeah, no, I don't think so or, yeah, I think it's okay.

Mayor Cason: To enliven our conversations, let's get some input from a developer or two.

Commissioner Slesnick: Can I just ask a question of Ramon before? Ramon, I see on the chart that you have that we have the commercial high-rise, high density right along Ponce. Has any -- has the staff looked at the properties that are right behind that which are zoned for...

Commissioner Keon: They're MF-2.

Commissioner Slesnick: Yes, that are only 70 feet high, as versus 150 feet high.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: That's...

Commissioner Slesnick: I mean, you're talking about stepping down, which I agree with Commissioner Keon. Stepping down maybe that might be the place to have that...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yeah, and that's -- I intend -- we...

Commissioner Slesnick: That's item 10.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: My recommendation is to come up with an overlay that is very clear about the dimensions of buildings, stepping down...

Commissioner Slesnick: And is that where you would do it, right behind...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yes.

Commissioner Slesnick: It's along Ponce.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: And also, issues such as the paseos and the ground level pedestrian amenities as required elements. So all of that, you have the ability to put into an overlay for Ponce. That, I think, is half of the question, what to do with Ponce and how to transition. The rest of it is the City Manager's absolutely correct. The housing that is there is actually the affordable housing that we're likely to have. I think it's a good scale. It's something that should be valued, and then we may have an opportunity to encourage some of that preservation also.

Vice Mayor Quesada: So, here's the thought I've had related to that, sort of piggybacking on that question. You know, I guess I have a different opinion on this. I don't think the step down into the middle of the block should be so abrupt. The thing I hate the most is driving down Bird Road right now between Ponce going to US-1. It feels like you're driving in a valley. And obviously, it's not something what we want.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: And that's in Miami...

Vice Mayor Quesada: My -- it is City of Miami, not City of Coral Gables.

Mayor Cason: That's that city to the north of us.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Let's be clear.

Vice Mayor Quesada: So, I think -- and we might have discussed it up here how we don't like that. We don't want to create that feeling. But we have, you know, in an ideal world for me -- and I'm not a planner. I'm just thinking about it. I would prefer to have smaller buildings along Ponce and the taller buildings midblock, just because you wouldn't get that impression.



However, we can't really do that now because we have tall buildings there that are existing prior to us today. So, something that I had thought about is actually for some of that -- so I'm looking at your -- if you could pull it up on the screen or maybe just (INAUDIBLE) looking at...

Commissioner Slesnick: That same screen (INAUDIBLE)...

Vice Mayor Quesada: Yeah, so I'm looking at the zoning map screen. I don't know if...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yeah, can we have the PowerPoint again?

Vice Mayor Quesada: Gables TV, if you could...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: (INAUDIBLE).

Vice Mayor Quesada: Put that back on for us just for a second. I think my explanation works a little bit better with the map up there.

Commissioner Slesnick: That's an interesting concept.

Vice Mayor Quesada: So, but he's not thinking, though, because I don't want to run into any property rights issues is -- It doesn't work on this screen.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: (INAUDIBLE).

Vice Mayor Quesada: If you could put the PowerPoint back up that would be great.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yeah, we -- I'll get...

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: And those that are following the report, it's page 18 is the zoning map that Commissioner is talking about.

Commissioner Keon: 18 or 6?

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Well, it depends. If you're talking about the report, it's page 18.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Yeah, page 6 on our summary.

Commissioner Keon: On the PowerPoint presentation.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Yeah, page 18 on the formal report.

Commissioner Keon: Right, right.

Vice Mayor Quesada: And if -- okay, so if Gables TV cannot get that back up, that's fine. So what I'm thinking about doing or what I think would make a lot of sense -- now, think about this. So we don't have any single-family homes in the area, but what I would like to do is allow additional height midblock and require a larger setback for the properties on Ponce. So, what that would do is -- and again, this is an uneducated opinion on this -- but just put that out there, food for thought. What we can do is we can require that the frontage of those buildings along Ponce is lower, so we're not going to get that canyon effect. So any kind of height that they want to bring in or their density impact is going to be midblock, so you don't feel it. I don't know if that makes sense or not. I've never discussed that with anyone. It's just something that I had been thinking because I don't want that Bird Road feeling.

Commissioner Slesnick: But the owners don't own that...

Commissioner Keon: You can...

Commissioner Slesnick: Land that's midblock.

Vice Mayor Quesada: But, obviously...

Commissioner Slesnick: I mean, the owners...

Vice Mayor Quesada: What it would encourage is it would encourage developers to come in and to assemble those lots, and really what you'd end up having is one type of project would actually feel like two different types of projects because, along Ponce, it'd be the smaller buildings, the wider sidewalks, more walkable, more pedestrian-friendly. We can work in some shade trees so that walking on Ponce doesn't feel like you're walking on the street. You know, there's a lot, I think, that we create by doing that.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: We must have more sophisticated tools (INAUDIBLE) than what we have now. Right now, what we have is that the height is regulated by the land use.

Commissioner Keon: Right.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: And it's 190 feet or 97 feet, that's it. That's all we have.

Commissioner Keon: Right.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: So, with such simple tools, it's very hard to implement this vision. Now, with a little more sophistication in terms of the way that we do the zoning, we may be able to come up with...

Commissioner Keon: Right, but you could go up the first 45 feet on the street on Ponce. You either go up 35 feet and then you step back...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: For mixed-use properties.

Mayor Cason: Mixed use only.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Just think about this for a second. Think of how nice it could be, you know, you have an art gallery or a small restaurant or a townhome type of setting that's two, three stories max, and then you have, with -- you know, they're entitled to have that 16 stories on Ponce. Push that back, you know...

Commissioner Keon: Right, but that's what I'm saying so...

Vice Mayor Quesada: Into the property so that that height is midblock, so when you're driving or walking or cycling, you don't feel it.

Mayor Cason: That's the Collection residence formula, live/work, in a sense. In French, you have the...

Vice Mayor Quesada: But the aesthetic is different.

Mayor Cason: Right, but I mean, it's that...

Vice Mayor Quesada: It's a larger setback, so you're still -- I mean, what you would be doing is promoting for a developer to come and assemble larger blocks, larger swaths going in the middle so that -- because they would need it to get all that density that they...

Commissioner Keon: So, but that's it.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Would require to make financial sense for them.

Commissioner Keon: Step down the building -- steps up from the street, steps back, goes up, and then steps back down as it comes into -- as it comes toward Galiano.

Vice Mayor Quesada: As it comes towards – yes, correct.

Commissioner Keon: So that's exactly -- it's like, you know, the Bacardi building that was built here on Le Jeune, because it's across from single-family residences, it only goes up so far and then it steps back, and then it gets taller and then steps back down.

Vice Mayor Quesada: I'm thinking of a more drastic, so not -- I mean, even less height...

Commissioner Keon: Yeah.

Vice Mayor Quesada: On the main thoroughfare.

Commissioner Keon: And that's fine, but then that's how it meets the street, how it steps up, you know, steps back and then steps back on the other side into -- because, you know, the density along Ponce is probably good. It provides, you know, for a lot of commercial space and other mixed-use spaces along Ponce, which are very good. It allows, you know, for them to build, you know, the atriums and whatever over the sidewalks there so it does provide shade and everything else. But you have the tools, and you know the product that will make that a viable area. All we ask is that, you know, bring it back to us, but start with Ponce.

Mayor Cason: Ramon.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: And if I could go back to the previous discussion we all had with the Paseo project. A lot of the same layers of review apply here, so my recommendation in the document was to come up with a new overlay that is tailored for this condition here.

Commissioner Keon: For Ponce.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: And what I can do is, we could come up with maybe two or three scenarios so you can test it.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Okay.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Whether it makes more sense to do a certain thing versus another thing. So, that probably will be a good way for you to make a decision.

Commissioner Keon: Okay, but that would be a very positive action step that we could take now to begin to make a difference in how that area assembles itself.

Mayor Cason: Alright.

Commissioner Lago: Let me ask you a question. If that's the step that we're going to take, how are we going to address the proposed projects that are coming before us in regards to North Gables?

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Well...

Commissioner Lago: Are we going to address them as per the existing code, or are we going to address them as per --? Because that was the whole point of...

Commissioner Keon: Right.

Commissioner Lago: My understanding was the whole point of having a moratorium and having a North Ponce Commission workshop, along with the workshop that we did for two days, was to get to an end goal, and that's why we...

Commissioner Keon: Well, I think...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Well, but there is one project.

Commissioner Keon: There's only one project.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: The reality is that there's only one project that has requested to be scheduled immediately, basically, before the Planning and Zoning Board, and there's some representatives of that project here.

Commissioner Keon: Right.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: And that's 33 Alhambra.

Commissioner Keon: There's only one.

Commissioner Lago: But I'm saying -- but there will be more.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: There will be more.

Commissioner Lago: There will be more.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yes.

Commissioner Lago: I'm just saying, again, I don't want to look back one year from now and say, okay, we had this discussion when maybe we can start heading in a direction whether it could be a rewrite of the Code in reference to this area.

Mayor Cason: No, sooner is better.

Commissioner Keon: Well, but, I would like to see them bring that forward, you know, that overlay forward and let us take a look at it, and that would be the applied regulation for that corridor.

Mayor Cason: For that, yeah.

City Attorney Leen: Can I add something here?

Commissioner Keon: By which everything else would be judged.

City Attorney Leen: I just want to clarify that the City did not have a moratorium. What the City did was...

Commissioner Keon: No.

City Attorney Leen: We stayed...

Mayor Cason: Stayed.

Commissioner Keon: We just stayed.

City Attorney Leen: The non as of right projects...

Commissioner Keon: Right.

City Attorney Leen: Pending these reviews that were done. As of right projects were able to go forward. Now, the Commission, if it wanted to, if you do something in the future, what a moratorium does is stays all of the projects pending the change in the code, but that's something different, and it's much -- there's actually provisions in our code that govern how that's done and it's a much broader tool than what we did, which was just to stay.



Commissioner Lago: Like I mentioned before -- and I'll be brief -- that being the case, it doesn't make financial sense for projects to move forward, so you're not going to see projects move forward because of the land costs right now and because of the zoning, so you're not going to see this. So, you're right, we're not going to have projects coming before us because it just doesn't make sense. So, I would like to move in the direction of getting something more concrete, putting a timeline, six months to a year so that we can have something, you know, actually before the community so that they have some guidance because, like I told you before, just look at Valencia. I'll give you the name of the two individuals. They're going to come before looking for some sort of housing, and right now, the only option is North Gables, and try to find something for rent in North Gables. It doesn't exist.

Commissioner Keon: Ramon, what...

Mayor Cason: Alright, let's take -- Benny, why don't you come on? Do you want to say something? Let's get some input and that'll help our conversation go forward.

Commissioner Keon: You know, Benny, before you start, I'm going to thank you for the City of Charleston. Thank you.

Unidentified Speaker: You're welcome.

Commissioner Keon: Very good, thank you.

Unidentified Speaker: So, I wasn't planning to speak, but this is such a great conversation, and I think we need to enlarge the conversation, so I'm here to help whatever I can. And my value is, I think, is because I have my ears on the ground, a lot of this stuff that you're discussing, I do every day and I really listen to all these things and I take note that this is happening every day, every time we try to find property to develop that's affordable is a difficult situation. And where to fit these projects is hard because we only have so many spaces to bring these projects forth.

So the (INAUDIBLE) project is one that people are looking to fulfill, and we only have a few streets to do it. So, once you start getting up there, the price keeps going up, and then the price keeps going up, and then we get to unaffordability. So, North Ponce, to me, is probably one of the coolest, greatest areas left in the City. It's got an unbelievable available situation there. This could be our Wynwood. This is really our coolest space. And if you think about it, we could be making something like South Beach happening, where those low-scale buildings bring people all the time, 24 hours, and the bicycles are going, and that's what I think we could be envisioning. But I think the driving force here is to have a vision of what this area could and should look like, and once we get that vision and really crystalize that vision, I think it becomes a lot clearer. And maybe sometimes, just looking at other examples, to me, I see that area as a low-scale area. I don't see it as a high-rise area. And one of the problems that I'm finding is that the MF-2 code really helps, encourages the larger buildings. When you look at the way that the Code is written, the smaller properties are very hard to develop. I do the numbers and they just don't work. The way the Code is written specifically helps the 20,000 square foot assemblages, specifically.

Mayor Cason: Because they have to assemble them in order to be able to...

Unidentified Speaker: Yeah, and at that point what you're getting...

Commissioner Lago: And I want to -- because you mentioned -- that's what I want to make sure we emphasize that from a person who does this for a living. Because not only are you in construction, like I am, but you're also a developer, which I'm not. I want to make sure that my colleagues understand how difficult it is to assemble 20,000 square feet. They -- because it's not just the one person that you got to get two or three buildings, four buildings together. It's just finding the people who want to sell, finding the person who lives in Coral Gables, finding the person who lives in Dade County, the person who lives out of the state. They're just collecting rent. They're living off that rent. They don't want to sell. I just want them to understand that's why it's very easy to say, okay, yeah, you know, let's move in this direction, but it's very difficult.

Unidentified Speaker: And I don't think everybody wants to live in a big building with a long corridor. I think that's...

Commissioner Keon: No.

Unidentified Speaker: Not what people want, and I think that area does not -- is not -- really, that's not what should happen there. So, I think that the encouragement should be for the lower scale, you know, maybe four or five stories. That'll probably be the size you want. I think the lower scale makes sense there. And then what drives affordability here a lot of times is the density and the parking requirements. And you guys were talking about that, and I think one of the ways to accomplish a lot of the things that you're discussing is to incentivize. And I think, without changing the Code dramatically, one of the ways to do it is to provide incentives as method to get people to do what you want. And incentives are created by having the vision, and then with that vision, you create these incentives. So, if the idea is to provide smaller units for affordable, then you incentivize those type of projects. I think that may be an easier way to get people to do what you want than it is to change the...

Vice Mayor Quesada: What kind of incentives do you have? What kind of -- what are your thoughts?

Unidentified Speaker: The incentives are going to become -- they're going to come up with the professionals. I don't know what those are, but there's ways that these things are being done around the country, and there's track records of how to do that. But incentivizing people, whether it's you take away some parking, but we give you this, but you have to do that, I don't know all the ins and outs. But I think that, to me, the carrot is better than the stick when you try to get somebody to do something to match what your vision is. The other item that you guys discussed, which was affordability, I wanted to make sure that you understand that the best source of historic -- of affordability is historic preservation. Historic preservation immediately creates affordability, those units that are small that are staying there. You are, by the time you do that, you're creating affordability for those. Those are locked in and those are the same sizes

with the small closets, and that's what you can get and rent. That's what you're going to get. But, those buildings that you create to be historic, to make historic, will be affordable. The parking situation and the car situation, this was the way the conversation started, I get uncomfortable when the conversations always lead with the cars. I think that, to me, is a flawed discussion, especially when it comes to this area. I think you should be talking about urban context and walkability and stuff like that and the cars should be secondary. I think when you start getting the cars in the discussion up front, you sort of drive it the wrong way, in my view. That's how I perceive it. So, the other item was, Vince, you started talking about making sure people pay for the things they're going to get. Sometimes, the benefits are already inherently in what you're going to get that you don't necessarily have to charge them. I think when you start getting some of these people to do what you want, you're getting basically the benefit of the situation. So maybe that could be looked at where, you know, the incentives may...

Commissioner Lago: I think you have to be also careful because some of the incentives, as you know, being a builder, there's tax credits. We're not going to be offering tax credits.

Unidentified Speaker: That's correct.

Commissioner Lago: So (INAUDIBLE)...

Unidentified Speaker: But I'm saying more units for the sake of creating a better product could be an incentive.

Commissioner Lago: Yeah, but then that goes against what we were discussing before, more density is what sometimes is not always the answer. So, if you're not pushing the density on all projects higher and you're basically releasing a developer from having to build "X" amount of parking spaces at a cost of \$20,000 a space, there has to be some sort of return on investment for the City.

Commissioner Keon: But you could also build, you know, that four-story building with more units than what is allowable today, so that's increasing the density without increasing height or anything else. You're maintaining, you know, that height and you're maintaining the ambience and the aesthetics of that area that you want to create by that, and you can just allow it to be smaller units. And I think, you know, that, absolutely -- and Ramon had talked about that, and I think that's an easily achievable thing for us to do.

Commissioner Slesnick: And reduce parking requirements.

Commissioner Keon: And reduce the parking requirements and you have small units.

Commissioner Lago: And you guys, you've heard this.

Commissioner Keon: I mean, if you ever lived in New York, I mean, my first apartment in New York was a studio. I mean, you know, if I was in the kitchen and laid down, I'd be at my front window.

Mayor Cason: You ever seen a Japanese efficiency.

Commissioner Keon: (INAUDIBLE), but that was fine. Yeah, it was good, I mean, you know.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Benny, two quick things, two corrections for you. Number one, I liked the pun. When you said if the conversation starts with cars, then it drives the conversation. I had to point that out. It was a great pun. And number two is, okay, what do we do -- and I'm sorry, I'm digressing a little bit from that conversation, but coming back to what I was discussing. Right now we have the zoning requirements that can go up to 190 feet right on Ponce. If developers choose to continue taking it all the way down to 8<sup>th</sup> Street, all the way north to 8<sup>th</sup> Street, they can have that height all the way and we're going to create that same canyon. Right now, we're running a little bit of a risk -- I don't want to say risk, but if we do nothing, we're going to end up with a canyon down Ponce to 8<sup>th</sup> -- going north to 8<sup>th</sup>, which we can't do

anything about. What are your thoughts -- because I know you said you liked MF-2, the lower the heights. But again, I bring up that idea, that proposal just to try to remove some of that height off of Ponce so that we don't end up with that canyon effect all the way up Ponce. Like I said, you're against it, I would, of course, prefer to have smaller buildings around there. The vision that I see, it could be the true arts district. I would love to have little small restaurants and small galleries. I think it's a perfect neighborhood for it. I see it the same way you see it.

Commissioner Keon: Pop ups.

Vice Mayor Quesada: The Greenwich Village.

Commissioner Keon: Well, the West Village.

Vice Mayor Quesada: The West Village, I'm sorry.

Commissioner Keon: The West Village.

Vice Mayor Quesada: The Grove in the '70s, you know, the artsy kind of community. That would be great. We would love it, but we've got to be realistic with the current formatting that we have. So, if we just do it on incentives and we don't change that into the Code...

Commissioner Keon: No. We need to change the Code.

Vice Mayor Quesada: We may end up with that. What are your thoughts on what I suggested about moving some of that height midblock so we don't have that height on the main thoroughfare?

Unidentified Speaker: The first thing, the changing of the Code is a complicated thing. To change MF-2 requires a lot of thought, so...

Vice Mayor Quesada: Yeah.

Unidentified Speaker: That's why I said sometimes you may want to take it with a simpler approach first, and then get into the MF-2. That's a difficult change right there. It's very complicated. But, the -- what you're talking about is the commercial piece, which is the red, I believe it's red.

Vice Mayor Quesada: And this is just a brainstorming session. I'm not putting you on the spot or anything. This is...

Unidentified Speaker: But that is different from the FS-2, the commercial which lines the Ponce side.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Yeah.

Unidentified Speaker: It needs to be studied a little different, and I don't have -- you know, I think what you're saying is true, that it needs to be studied for that canyon effect, which is awful and it's horrible. But I'm not sure -- you know, I think we have that sort of stepping thing now in Miracle Mile, where we have to step it back.

Mayor Cason: Yeah.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Yeah.

Unidentified Speaker: And that may be something that we can look at. I think the two things are separate, you know, the...

Commissioner Keon: Yeah.

Unidentified Speaker: Commercial and the MF-2.

Commissioner Keon: And the MF-2.

Unidentified Speaker: So we need to look at both, but I'm in, you know, agreement with you that...

City Attorney Leen: Mr. Mayor, to the Vice Mayor, do you mind if I have Craig Collier speak for a moment?

Vice Mayor Quesada: Of course, sure.

City Attorney Leen: Because he could talk a little bit about this.

Mayor Cason: And after, anybody else who would like to...

Unidentified Speaker: Thank you.

Mayor Cason: Make – thank you.

Commissioner Keon: Yeah. But I also think what, you know, Ramon's...

Mayor Cason: Thank you very much.

Commissioner Keon: Proposal of creating an overlay for Ponce will achieve what we're looking for.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Yeah, but the overlay is going to be based on our comments, so don't just think the overlay is a magical wand.

Commissioner Lago: That's what I was saying before



Vice Mayor Quesada: So we got to discuss some of the details and what we want to see, or at least give him some direction.

Commissioner Keon: Well, I think...

Vice Mayor Quesada: Because Ramon's going to want to hear where we want to be, so this is sort of the...

Commissioner Keon: Well, I think he understands...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: And I would like to bring at least a couple of scenarios of some options so you can really see the range or (INAUDIBLE).

Commissioner Keon: I think he's heard what we've had to say.

Mayor Cason: What are your thoughts?

City Attorney Leen: For those who don't know, Craig is the former head of the land use and zoning section for the County Attorney's Office. He's now our special land use and zoning counsel, and he's heard your conversation, so I thought he could answer your legal questions and give you ideas.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Yeah. And our City Attorney only hires attorneys who have the same first name as he does.

Craig Coller: Just to make things simpler, right?

City Attorney Leen: I did on this occasion, that's true.

Mr. Coller: I think that what Craig and I were discussing was the issue of where you have an existing zoning, which is a higher height, but it hasn't been exercised, what you can do with that. And generally speaking, you don't have vested rights to zoning. So if they haven't exercised it yet, there's the opportunity to possibly make adjustments. The only problem with that is the Florida Legislature, in their infinite wisdom, created this thing called the Bert J. Harris Act, and we're still not sure to this day what it really means, but it talks about inordinate burden and whether somebody could argue, well, you've inordinately burdened my property. However, you've been -- you've had your property in this condition for so many years. How have you inordinately burdened it? So I think that the general proposition that you don't have vested rights to zoning, so if you haven't exercised it, I think there's an opportunity to potentially change it if you needed to. So, that's kind of my thoughts. I don't know if that's hopeful to you or not.

Vice Mayor Quesada: No, that's actually very helpful.

Commissioner Keon: That's very helpful.

Vice Mayor Quesada: And I think it goes back to something that Benny said also. It's the carrot, not the stick, you know. It's incentivizing it and doing -- whether it's bonuses or changes in density if you're following the certain path that, you know, falls in line with the vision that we have, I think that's the way we do it. And the City Manager pulled me aside to say exactly that. Maybe we'll do it through, you know, incentivizing projects, you know. And from what I was talking about is, you know, maybe we incentivize if, you know, the developer -- you know, the project I keep thinking about now is the old Buick site, the one that --

Commissioner Slesnick: Angel Buick.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Yeah, that Hollo -- that Tibor Hollo has.

Commissioner Keon: Tibor Hollo has.

Vice Mayor Quesada: You know, that site there, you know, they have a pretty big piece of land right there.

Commissioner Keon: I know.

Vice Mayor Quesada: You know, they can do a significant project. You know, I would love...

Commissioner Keon: Don't even talk about it.

Vice Mayor Quesada: To try to incentivize that project so that they take the height off of Ponce and give them the height in the middle of the block...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yeah.

Vice Mayor Quesada: So that we don't get that effect.

Mr. Coller: Yeah, right. I...

Vice Mayor Quesada: You know something big is going to come there.

Mr. Coller: Well, with respect to workforce housing, the County has adopted zoning regulations in an attempt to provide incentives to developers by increasing density if they're -- but they have to meet a certain test, and it has to do with medium income levels. And they have provided some incentives in zoning for workforce housing.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Well, here, obviously, the incentive that we have here is the Mediterranean bonus, which is really the Coral Gables style...

Mr. Coller: The 50 percent bonus.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Bonus, and that's the way...

Mr. Coller: Right.

Vice Mayor Quesada: We incentivize here.

Commissioner Lago: That would be...

Vice Mayor Quesada: The question is, we would need to add additional incentives, and what would they be and how do we follow those requirements?

Commissioner Keon: Yeah, but maybe we don't need to add incentives yet. Why don't we look at regulation and what's going to happen with regulation, and how we want these buildings, the form of these buildings to be, and how they're going to work. And then, you know, you can see what comes and what develops. I will assure you that developers will come and have a conversation with you if they think that they in any way are not being allowed to develop or whatever. I mean, before you decide what incentives, do -- how do you, in planning, what do you do? Do you plan and you come up with the form...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: You come up with a vision.

Commissioner Keon: You want, the vision?

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yes.

Commissioner Keon: And then you worry about incentives?

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: You need to come up with a vision. And I think that the vision...

Commissioner Keon: Yeah, I would wait. Let us figure out how we want it to look and how we want it to act and how we want it to feel, and then we'll worry about how we get there, once we know it's an achievable look and it's what we want.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: The current regulations are different than what Commissioner Quesada wants. The current regulations have the height on Ponce de Leon through the land use.

Commissioner Keon: Right.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Okay, and that's the only way that we control height, through the land use designation.

Commissioner Keon: Right.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Well, maybe we can come up with better tools – and that's what I'm proposing to you.

Commissioner Keon: Yeah.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: And we'll come up with...

Commissioner Keon: To do an overlay.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Two or three scenarios, and then you'll be able to make decisions with data, with information that really is (INAUDIBLE)...

Mayor Cason: When do you think you would be in a position to come back with scenarios, I mean, realistically? We've got only two meetings, one in November, one in December.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: I'm hoping December.

Commissioner Lago: Ramon, let me ask you a quick question.

Commissioner Keon: December?

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Is that...

Commissioner Lago: We've been talking about density, you know, fluctuation of density. We haven't really touched on the issue of intensity. Is that anything that -- what are you -- what's your opinion of that?

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: The issue of density is the number of units.

Commissioner Lago: No, no. I know that, I know.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Great. So, the issue of in...

Commissioner Lago: I'm talking about intensity.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Intensity really, the way that, let's say, Marshall has described and so on refers to FAR in general, I would say, and that deals with the retail, office, all the other uses. I think FAR, as we know, we have a 3.5, once you get all the net bonus, as the top. The problem with that number or the misleading aspect of that number is that it doesn't include parking, which is about half of the building.

Commissioner Lago: That's what I was going to say. When you have the -- when you reduce parking, when you implement shared parking, the goal is to..

Mayor Cason: Reduce the height.

Commissioner Lago: Reduce the height, reduce the bulk of the building.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: It would, yeah. I mean, FAR, the way we use FAR is almost like the net leasable area of a commercial building. That's really what we mean when we use FAR, which is not what FAR is. And that's part of the confusion that we have. So my recommendation, I want to have the opportunity to bring you some options that are clear, that are vision oriented and that accomplish the things that you described today. I think you've given us excellent input. I think, in terms of policy, I have some really good ideas to work with.

Mayor Cason: Let me ask if anybody else would like to speak on the developer community. Would you like to come up?

Commissioner Slesnick: Craig, while he's coming up, since the Angel Buick property has been vacant for so long now, are you saying that the City could downsize that property as far as zoning goes because it's been vacant and unused?

Mr. Coller: I'd like to look at it. I don't know if I want -- can make a commitment to whether it could downsize (INAUDIBLE)...

Commissioner Slesnick: I'm just putting you on the spot here.

Mr. Coller: Yes, you are. And I -- and those kind of conversations, I'd rather not have in the public, as far as what the impact would be.

Commissioner Slesnick: But that's an interesting proposition.

Mr. Coller: Right, it is. And I think that you have to look at there is the traditional concept of there's no vested right to zoning, but there is this wildcard, which is the Bert Harris Act, about inordinate burden. And so, you just don't have a lot of...

Mayor Cason: So look into it and get back.

Mr. Coller: Case law on what Bert J. Harris means.

Mayor Cason: And come back in a different setting and give us your advice.

Mr. Coller: Okay.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Commissioner, before we talk about that, I'm sure with all those good ideas and all the tools that Planning has, the feedback that the Commission has provided, we will be able to sit down with the developers and talk about that shared use incentives that includes Zipcars, that allow the, you know, redirecting of height. I think all of that can come together in a really positive discussion, that we don't have to have the developers' attorneys ramp up thinking we're trying to take; instead, we're trying to create a great neighborhood, and they will be very important in achieving that. So...

Mayor Cason: Thank you.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: I'm excited about it. I'm sure we can come up with some great incentives that will work for the developer and really work for the neighborhood.

Mayor Cason: We have 20 more minutes before the 5:01 budget, so would you like to give us your thoughts?

Dean Warhaft: Sure. Thank you. Dean Warhaft, Florida East Coast Realty, owners of TWJ Alhambra, which is the target pinned on my back today, 33 Alhambra. We also are the owners



of the other parcel that was mentioned, which is the 1505 site, former Buick site; again, another target. And the third parcel that we have in the North Ponce area that was also circled as a potential park is the 44 Zamora site that we also own. So, first off, I just -- I want you all to know, one of the things that I love so much about not just today and this is that I have the opportunity on a daily basis to work with brilliant people like Ramon and his staff, and the same thing in the other municipalities that are in and around Coral Gables, because that's my life. That's the only place that I'm at. That's the only places that I work. So, born and raised here, fourth generation Miami. My concern and belief is in making a better Miami-Dade County, which includes the City of Miami, the City of Coral Gables, and City of Miami Beach somewhat, but more the areas that we're in. And this is what's important to me and this is what's important to both -- everybody that I work with at Florida East Coast Realty and Tibor Hollo in general. So, I think it's important to understand that going forward with this discussion is that there's never an ill intent -- and Commissioner Keon touched on this -- that everybody is trying to do the best thing, and there are different opinions that come into play throughout this process and competing interests. And even in public policy between the City of Coral Gables and Miami-Dade County when it comes to traffic and driving through the City, when you want to keep people that are here in the City being able to utilize these streets and get where they want to go that are your own citizens, as opposed to everybody that's just passing through. And these are all competing problems that we all deal with every day. And development is really at the heart of having to deal with all of that. In saying that, you know, our position and belief is that the North Ponce area is -- it's a gold mine for the City of Coral Gables, for the people of Coral Gables, for the future, not just for today while this Commission is sitting there, but for the next 30, 40, 50, 60, 100 years, when we get away from the conversations about transit and cars because we're using things like BRT or ADT, where we've got, you know, automated cars on a path and they're in the center lane of the road on one side and the other, and there are four-passenger cars. Or, you know, buses that are on a similar type of rail system, things that are not even thought about today that'll be utilized in the future that are going to make the parking spaces that we have now in these buildings go away. And then, all of a sudden, we have these parking plinths that have ramps in them and essentially become unusable space in these buildings of the future. And that's not that far off. Those types of issues are going to happen, and

everybody that's in this room is probably going to be able to see that in their lifetime, where those issues are going to be our issues. We're going to have to deal with this excessive size of the parking plinths in these buildings and how we deal with that is going to be a whole new issue. And I say that to you kind of digressing little bit only because the transit conversation was a big one at the beginning. So, the other thing that I'd like to say about 33 Alhambra, and then I won't say anything else about it, I'll just talk about North Ponce, is there were a few things that were mentioned here. Historic buildings, midblock paseos of some sort, creating areas where people could go and have a coffee, sit, have an open area space that's available for the public. We designed all of those things into that project, and we worked directly with Historic from the beginning before the building was actually designated to help us to assist Historic in designating the historic building that's part of the project and stepping the building back significantly on its main sides of Alhambra and closest to the school. And we did all of those things in working with a lot of smart people that are part of this City staff. And whatever happens with Alhambra, I know that we worked really hard to create a great project, even if we're not going to have the discussion about it today, and I know that we worked really hard with everybody that is in the City in order to try and do that. Like I said, opinions, we'll work our way through the process and what will be will be. So, I'm not going to stick to 33. In general, what I believe and what we've been looking at as an office with regard to the North Ponce area is we believe this is the greatest play for the City of increasing the size of the CBD in the future. Our position is we believe that the CBD should probably be moved to Zamora, that that should be the boundary line of the CBD. That's our opinion. We believe that you don't have space anywhere else for your CBD. And because of the North Ponce's proximity to the City of Miami, to 8<sup>th</sup> Street, which, in future plans, could very well have a light rail system, that there could be interconnectivity between the City of Miami and Coral Gables via the North Ponce area, that that's an opportunity for the City going forward. Again, this is that 30, 40 years into the future and thinking about where is the growth going to be. The housing side of it we believe, based on -- and this is beyond my age, but because of Mr. Hollo's experience in building housing for people to rent and live in an urban environment, which is what he's been doing since 1958 in this City and in the City of Miami, that if you build a certain type of building and it has the right mix of mixed-use on the ground, it's got the right sized units that are in the building, that you attract the type of

tenant that you're going to get, where you've got somebody who lives in the area. They go downstairs to get some groceries. They walk down the street to go eat dinner. They walk out of their house to go to work, whether it's taking the trolley, or whether it's walking down the street to go to another building, but the point being that you create that urban lifestyle that, in the City of Miami, in the City of Coral Gables, everybody is starting to look at that, and it's a regional concept. We, obviously have to deal specifically here in the Gables with what's going to happen in the Gables, but it's all interconnected. And how does it all flow from one piece to the other and how do you make it where it all works? We believe that the higher density and the higher heights become a key element of that. There's a happy medium. This is what we believe. We believe the happy medium is, obviously, you know what we believe with 33 Alhambra, so again, it is what it is. But we believe that the step down process and the way that the mix works is that there's a blended effect. And Commissioner Keon and I were both at the North Ponce study, both days. And one of the things that came up in that discussion, which to some effect, I somewhat disagree with, was a building height ratio to the right-of-way. And this discussion that is actually -- it's a part of Miami 21. It's in Miami 21. And it's actually a more complex concept than I think was described during the charrette that took place. Because there are architectural tricks that go into something like that, where you're dealing with height ratios. So, you have a building, and the building is -- this is the way that it works, in brief. You have a right-of-way that's 100 feet wide, and so, if you have a 1 to 1 ratio, the building can't be any higher than 100 feet. If it's a 1.5 ratio, the building can't be any higher than 150 feet. So, over time -- and if you look at the cities around the world, the way that that's been dealt with is that there are architectural tricks. And I actually ended up having the opportunity, because of this charrette, to have a very long conversation with Norman Foster. Foster and Partners is a world-renowned architecture firms. He is probably one of the most -- best-known architects in the world. And we ended up spending about two hours discussing this concept. And what he explained to me was that the ratio works, but the point of it is the pedestrians' appreciation of their surroundings, and that's really what you're trying to create. And when you are looking at the pedestrians' appreciation of their surroundings, the articulation of the buildings is one thing that has an impact. And the other thing is where the plinth of the building, that first step,

whatever it is, whether it's retail or parking, whatever it may be, where it steps back and how much it steps back.

Commissioner Keon: That's what we were just talking about.

Mr. Warhaft: This is exactly where I'm going. So, the point being that you could have a building that is extremely tall -- I'm not going to try and put numbers to heights because I don't want to get into the minutia of the details of the different heights in North Ponce. The point being that if you have a building that goes 40 feet in the air and the right-of-way is 100 feet, and then the building steps back 70, 80 feet because of the size of the site, whatever it may be, so they, you know, put their pool, they put something else, that they put the amenities and they allow the building to step back further. What that does to the pedestrian that's on the street or the building that's across the street, it makes it where their view, the angles then change. So because that ratio changes, it completely changes the environment that they're enjoying and appreciating, whether it's the person across the street or the person on the street because they don't see the same thing. So, there are means by which to do that. The interesting thing is that -- not talking about the project -- 1505, we've actually been working with (INAUDIBLE) again, same kind of scenario. From the very beginning, that's what we've been looking at doing. We know that that's a site where we can prevent the canyon effect, if we're allowed to do it, and that's what we've been looking at. But that project, the reason -- speaking about projects coming and more projects coming, that project hasn't come because we've been stuck with this other one. And we, at one point, were trying to get all three projects coming to the City at the same time and because of the things that have happened, which hopefully turns into a good thing for the long-term of Coral Gables because everybody's talking about it, it made us step back and wait on these other projects. So, the question of are more projects potentially coming, I can say emphatically, yes. Do we want -- as developers, do we want to work with the City to try and make it a better environment? Yes. And I think that the last thing that you should also know is that from this charrette, one of the things that came out was this concept of the midblock breaks. And where that came from, in case some of you didn't hear this part if you weren't at the

charrette is that it's -- the walking distance is about a quarter of a mile, a little bit over that in those North Ponce blocks. And that distance is further than what's considered appropriate for pedestrian traffic in order to get people to live and work and walk in their area. So, we have this particular parcel of land that goes all the way back to midblock. And from day one when we first started working on the design, we have looked at taking the most easterly portion of that property and creating a midblock paseo. So, the point is that developers do think about what's beneficial to the City at large because if we build buildings that nobody wants to live in, then it doesn't do us any good either.

Commissioner Keon: Right. But that's why I said to you, you know, I really believe on this Commission we don't look at developers as the ones or zoning attorneys or architects or anything else, you know. Everybody's trying to do their job.

Mr. Warhaft: Right.

Commissioner Keon: So...

Commissioner Slesnick: The building at 1505 Ponce, what are the border streets on that? Do you know?

Mr. Warhaft: Menores and...

Commissioner Slesnick: Menores?

Mr. Warhaft: Right?

Commissioner Keon: No. What's the other one?

Commissioner Slesnick: Salamanca?

Commissioner Keon: No.

Mr. Warhaft: No, (INAUDIBLE) south.

Commissioner Slesnick: Mendoza.

Mr. Warhaft: Mendoza.

Commissioner Keon: Oh, Mendoza.

Commissioner Slesnick: And you own all the commercial high rise for that site?

Commissioner Keon: He owns a lot.

Commissioner Slesnick: Do you own any of the midrise below that?

Mr. Warhaft: We do, we do. We own the condemned building that's directly to the east on Menores.

Commissioner Slesnick: What do you think of Vice Mayor Quesada's idea about starting low in the front, or lower in the front and going back higher?

Mr. Warhaft: That's actually what we...

Commissioner Slesnick: What you're planning on doing.

Mr. Warhaft: Want to do. We want to bring a design that essentially, you know, once you get beyond a certain height of the building, which is not very high, that the tower of the building is stepped back so that what we're doing is we're creating a situation where we're not increasing the canyon of Ponce. You know, we have that ability because of the size of the site. And when

we do show up before Planning and Zoning and then before this Commission, that's what we hope to be able to present.

Commissioner Slesnick: And were you talking about a paseo at that site or the 33 Alhambra site?

Mr. Warhaft: No, we have a paseo built into the 33 Alhambra site.

Commissioner Slesnick: But for this one also?

Mr. Warhaft: And at this one, we're talking about instead of doing the paseo through the building, doing it at the far east end of the site, so essentially, stopping the building sooner. In other words, stopping the actual structure west of our property line so that we could create a paseo on that easterly most portion of the property so that people could get through midblock.

Commissioner Keon: And you know, I'm very comfortable that we will come up with a plan that everyone can live with, including the developers and all -- but I think it's important that developers are -- you understand that it isn't -- the most important issue within our City is not the income that we derive from new development or whatever, that there is a quality of life aspect to this city that really is the overwhelming issue that we address and deal with. We -- you know, the City, the property values are good. We have adequate income, as long as we're prudent in our spending. And you know, and the likelihood is we will grow this city through annexation before we will grow this city by expanding the CBD or having higher buildings or anything else. But I think it is the livability and the scale and all of those issues that are the most important elements that are going into this North Ponce area. And it really isn't, you know, the dollars that are derived from development in that area. That is not the driving force. And I don't think...

Mayor Cason: Yeah. No one's ever...

Commissioner Keon: And I don't think it ever will be.

Mayor Cason: No one's even heard us, any of us ever mention the word...

Commissioner Keon: Never. And I don't think that this City ever...

Mayor Cason: Tax base. That's...

Commissioner Keon: I would hope that we never will. The tax base is not an overriding issue here. It really is quality of life.

Mayor Cason: We have two minutes left, if anybody has one more question before we have to, by law, go to the budget. Can you do it in two minutes?

Mr. Warhaft: Thank you.

Commissioner Keon: Thank you.

Commissioner Slesnick: Thank you.

Vicky Rua: Hi. My name is Vicky Rua. And normally, I don't like to get up and talk even though I do attend different meetings. I live in 50 Alhambra, and I have been a resident of Coral Gables since 1978, and I just hope that what you said that you don't want Ponce to be a canyon - - I think it's Commissioner Quesada -- I hope you do the same thing for 33 Alhambra. And I like the city aspect. I want to do an aspect of city, but please keep in mind that it's a neighborhood and keep it in scale, okay.

Mayor Cason: Thank you.

Ms. Rua: Thank you.



Commissioner Keon: Thank you. Mayor, can we...

Mayor Cason: Okay. We need five minutes between meeting by Gables TV to get set for the budget so we have to go.

Commissioner Keon: Okay, can we – alright, can we give direction to Ramon, through the Chair – through the Mayor. What direction are we giving to Ramon as a result of this discussion?

Mayor Cason: Yes. You're going to come back with scenarios, hopefully, by December.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: By December, we'll have some scenarios for you to review (INAUDIBLE)...

Commissioner Keon: It is to create an overlay for Ponce?

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yes.

Commissioner Keon: Okay.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: For the overlay.

Commissioner Keon: Thank you.

Vice Mayor Quesada: You know, I was trying to find examples now online, and I couldn't find anything. But I'll – if I find anything, I'll email you.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Thank you, thank you.

Mayor Cason: Alright.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Thank you very much.

Mayor Cason: So that ends the workshop, and we've got -- as soon as TV's ready, we'll do the budget and then go home for dinner.

Commissioner Keon: And then we'll go home.