

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item F-3
May 28, 2019
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Raul Valdes-Fauli
Vice Mayor Vince Lago
Commissioner Jorge Fors, Jr.
Commissioner Pat Keon
Commissioner Michael Mena

City Staff

City Manager, Peter Iglesias
City Attorney, Miriam Ramos
City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Item F-3 [10:09:07 a.m.]

A Resolution of the City Commission of Coral Gables, Florida, pursuant to Zoning Code Article 1, “General Provisions,” Section 1-104, “Jurisdiction and applicability,” to grant approval of modification of existing government facility known as Fire Station No. 2, legally described as Lot 1 thru 17, re-subdivision of a portion of Block 28, Coral Gables Riviera Section Part 2, (525 S. Dixie Highway), Coral Gables, Florida; to provide for construction of trolley maintenance facility, providing for a repealer provision; severability clause, and providing for an effective date. (Modification of existing Fire Station and construction of new trolley maintenance facility).

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: F-3.

City Attorney Ramos: F-3 is a Resolution of the City Commission of Coral Gables, Florida, pursuant to Zoning Code Article 1, “General Provisions,” Section 1-104, “Jurisdiction and applicability,” to grant approval of modification of existing government facility known as Fire Station No. 2, legally described as Lot 1 thru 17, re-subdivision of a portion of Block 28, Coral
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Gables Riviera Section Part 2, (525 S. Dixie Highway), Coral Gables, Florida; to provide for construction of trolley maintenance facility, providing for a repealer provision; severability clause, and providing for an effective date. This is the first time we have this resolution approving a project under the ordinance that was adopted by the City Commission a couple of months ago, Ordinance No. 2019-13. I would like to just state the standard on the record, this is a stating of a government facility, it's a Fire Station as well as the trolley building. The standard on what the Commission should be looking at is, this is a public hearing, and this is a public hearing item. You should consider the following factors. The type of function involved, the public need thereof, the existing land use pattern in the area, alternative locations for the facility, and the nature and impact of the facility on the surrounding property. Mr. Trias, if you could talk about notice as well.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yes – absolutely. The location is around U.S.-1 and is very slender thin site. Its an existing site in many ways and that is one of the justifications, there is already a facility there in that location. The land use is a public building and the existing zoning map is special use. That if it were to go through the regular process of the zoning code that would create some technical issues with conditional use. That is the reason why this additional new process that the City Attorney mentioned was about the value. It allows you to look at the standards or the existing conditions and the opportunities for locations as the City Attorney explained, and then make a determination if this is the right place for this use. The conceptual rendering, as you can see, includes an existing building, an existing building that has been renovated; a new building which is a Fire Station, an extension of that Fire Station and then a new building which is a trolley facility. So, they are clearly City projects. The numbers on the site is about two acres, the FAR is point 45 (.45), the height is 48 feet, and the program includes as is listed their existing Fire Station, addition to the Fire Station, and new trolley facility, and there are 32 parking spaces. As you can see, the site is a little bit difficult. It doesn't have the underline on the other side, so you can see that there is a zero setback there on that back area. There is also a 12-foot front setback from U.S.-1 and the parking spaces are 32, which is reasonable here in this location, but the code would require more than that. The landscape of that space is 14 percent. Now the project, even though it has this special use, its special process, it is reviewed by the Board of Architects. There was a neighborhood meeting some time ago and also there is the public hearing today for the Commission. In addition, letters were sent to property owners within 1,000 feet. So, there was notice, there was an effort to explain the project, there were four letters to property owners, three times the property was posted. We had four times website posting and then two newspaper advertisements. And staff recommends approval with conditions in the staff report, which is basically approval of the site plan as proposed; and we believe that the standards of review have been met.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Comments?
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Commissioner Keon: The only question that we or the only thing that we received at all was some question about how the back of the building would be landscaped or whatever, for people that are living across the street from it.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: I understand that they were satisfied.

Vice Mayor Lago: Yes. We met with that neighbor, Peter and I that we reviewed; and the other issue where they had a concern about was the issue of the curb-cut, which is going to be used as a third means of ingress and egress if an emergency. The neighbors were fine with what was proposed, correct?

Commissioner Keon: I think it was just the landscaping. Just as long as they are happy about the landscaping plan you have available, I think that's...

Vice Mayor Lago: They were fine with the landscaping and also the fence. Their main concern was that curb-cut and the trees.

City Manager Iglesias: Yes, Vice Mayor, we are going to replace the fence, we are going to plant some landscaping, we are going to paint in the back, the same color as the building and I think they were satisfied with that. The issue for the secondary, tertiary exit in the back is just in case there is an accident on Riviera which closes up U.S.-1 and Riviera and that would be the tertiary exit. So, I expect the use of that would be extremely limited. However, we should have a tertiary exit because of the amount of traffic on U.S.-1.

City Attorney Ramos: And because this is a quasi-judicial hearing that has been made part of the record.

Commissioner Keon: I think that the third exit is understood. I just want to make sure...

City Manager Iglesias: Let me say also, the second floor of the trolley building, we are probably going to be adding our temporary 911 center there as a backup center. Its currently in one of the warehouses at 72nd Avenue, which we are not happy with from a flood and hurricane resistant perspective, so we are going to be adding it to that second floor on our new building built to the current building code. So, I think the current building will be a great backup to our new Public Safety Building.

Commissioner Keon: OK. Thank you. I'll move the item.

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Vice Mayor Lago: This is a long time coming.

Commissioner Mena: I just want to make sure that we sort of hold ourselves accountable on this issue of this being a third and only sort of emergency option as an exit. I really don't want to see a situation where two years from now we are hearing this has now become sort of the primary ingress and egress because you know, its just become more convenient that way.

Vice Mayor Lago: So, what do you recommend? What can we do to make sure...?

Commissioner Mena: That's what we are representing to the residents that, that's going to be...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: I think we should wait for the resident to complain before we...

Vice Mayor Lago: We met with them.

Commissioner Mena: I met with the head of the association.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: If we are using it as a regular...

Commissioner Mena: Right – but we are making that representation to them and that commitment that we are only going to use this as a third option; and so, I don't know how to legislate that, but I want to make sure that we have policies and procedures in place that control that and I don't want to hear that that changes. I don't want to speak for all of us, but we are holding ourselves out to our residents that I'm making a commitment that that's how its going to be handled and let's be careful that we don't fall short.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Do I hear a motion?

City Attorney Ramos: If aside from the written communication, there were verbal communications you should state those on the record, in order to comply with the quasi-judicial process and make sure that this is not challengeable.

City Manager Iglesias: Let me just say with discussions with the Fire Chief, its understood that that would be just a tertiary exit and in addition to that our Fire Department is very used to working around our residential areas and are very good with that with our use of sirens and so forth. So, normally they will be used as tertiary exits, but they are excellent in working around residential neighborhoods.

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Commissioner Mena: Just for the record, I wanted to say, I received a call from the President from the Bermuda, is it the Bermuda Association, last name Sternstein, I think its Jerry Sternstein, months ago, before this was even an agenda item, and/or I knew what capacity I would be sitting in on this item. So, that's the call I had, and he told me he had spoken to the City Manager.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Do I hear a motion?

Vice Mayor Lago: Just to put on the record also. I had several conversations with Mr. Sternstien, I know I copied many of you on it and then I ended up meeting with Mr. Sternstein and the City Manager last week. And what I represented, after having a conversation with staff that this would be a final option, an emergency option if our first and second options are in one way or another obstructed.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: The point is we've made very, very clear...

City Attorney Ramos: Thank you both.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: The City Manager, I think has taken note of it.

City Attorney Ramos: Mr. Clerk there's no public comment cards?

City Clerk Urquia: No ma'am.

Commissioner Keon: They would add that to their SOP, is that right, it would be in writing.

City Manager Iglesias: Of course, Commissioner.

Commissioner Keon: OK. As long as...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Do I hear a motion?

Commissioner Keon: I'll move it.

Vice Mayor Lago: Second.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Second – OK. Will you call the roll please?

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Commissioner Fors: Yes
Commissioner Keon: Yes
Vice Mayor Lago: Yes
Commissioner Mena: Yes
Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yes
(Vote: 5-0)

[End: 10:18:12 a.m.]

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[Date]

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“General Provisions,” Section 1-104 – Fire Station No. 2*