

1 MS. MENENDEZ: Because that's a challenge,  
2 as you know.

3 MR. MARRERO: Yeah. Yeah. No, we've done  
4 all our due diligence with FDOT. We've had  
5 several pre-application meetings with them. We  
6 meet all of their requirements for curb cut  
7 distances from the street and from abutting  
8 neighbors, and we felt like taking one of the  
9 driveway entrances off of Galiano and moving it  
10 to Eighth Street would promote traffic on  
11 Eighth Street rather than on the residential  
12 neighborhood.

13 MS. MENENDEZ: Sure. Good idea. That  
14 helps.

15 MR. TRIAS: Mr. Chairman, what I mentioned  
16 is, we have the ability to coordinate further  
17 and analyze things. If we discover an issue,  
18 we can bring it back to you, if we need to, but  
19 I think we have enough information to make some  
20 progress.

21 MR. BEHAR: Okay. So the motion will be  
22 for you to allow -- instruct you to coordinate  
23 further with the traffic study done for the  
24 other property, and if it's an issue, you bring  
25 it back. If not, it continues forward.

65

1 MR. BEHAR: I'm okay with that.  
2 MR. GRABIEL: I'd like to second.  
3 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: We have a second.  
4 Any comments? Questions? No?  
5 Call the roll, please.  
6 THE SECRETARY: Marshall Bellin?  
7 MR. BELLIN: Yes.  
8 THE SECRETARY: Julio Grabiell?  
9 MR. GRABIEL: Yes.  
10 THE SECRETARY: Maria Menendez?  
11 MS. MENENDEZ: Yes.  
12 THE SECRETARY: Maria Velez?  
13 MS. VELEZ: Yes.  
14 THE SECRETARY: Robert Behar?  
15 MR. BEHAR: Yes.  
16 THE SECRETARY: Eibi Aizenstat?  
17 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Yes.  
18 Thank you. Thank you very much.

19 MR. BEHAR: Good luck.

20 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Let's give them a  
21 minute to go out, before we do the next item.

22 MR. COLLER: Yeah, we can take a minute.

23 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: We have a second item  
24 on the agenda that we'd like to go ahead and  
25 read into the record, please.

67

1 MS. MENENDEZ: Or just address it, really.  
2 We're not traffic engineers.

3 MR. KERBEL: Bringing it back to you before  
4 the City Commission would be problematic, from  
5 a timing issue.

6 MR. BEHAR: The motion --

7 MR. COLLER: To address any issues that may  
8 result from that.

9 MS. MENENDEZ: Anything that could improve  
10 the area.

11 MR. KERBEL: Mr. Chairman, the only other  
12 thing, since we're going through line by line  
13 on the conditions, I just wanted to make a  
14 tweak to Condition Number 2. Based on what Mr.  
15 Trias had said at the beginning about allowing  
16 more flexibility in deciding how to handle the  
17 on-street parking bulb-outs and the  
18 landscaping, right now it says, "Coordinate  
19 with Public Works to reallocate;" if it instead  
20 said, "To address whether space for additional  
21 on-street parking," et cetera, et cetera, "can  
22 be provided."

23 MR. TRIAS: That is acceptable.

24 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Robert, you're okay  
25 with that?

66

1 MR. COLLER: I apparently have buried my  
2 agenda.

3 MR. BEHAR: Here you go.

4 MR. COLLER: Sorry.

5 Item Number 6, a Resolution of the City  
6 Commission of Coral Gables, Florida approving  
7 the Final Plat entitled "Almeria Square"  
8 pursuant to Zoning Code Article 3, Division 9,  
9 "Platting/Subdivision," being a re-plat of an  
10 approximately 0.2754 acre (12,000 square foot)  
11 property into four platted lots for four  
12 residential townhouses on property assigned  
13 Multi-Family Special Area District zoning, on  
14 the property legally described as Lots 29 and  
15 30, Block 13, Coral Gables Biltmore Section,  
16 according to the plat thereof as recorded in  
17 Plat Book 20, Page 28, of public records of  
18 Miami-Dade County, Florida, providing for an  
19 effective date.

20 Item Number 6, public hearing.

21 MR. TRIAS: May I get the PowerPoint,  
22 please?

23 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Mr. Trias.

24 MR. TRIAS: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.  
25 Almeria Square is a four-unit townhouse

68

1 project that didn't come before you as a  
2 project, but it's coming to you as a re-plat.  
3 The condition is right on Almeria Avenue, west  
4 of Segovia. There's another townhouse project  
5 very close by, right next to it, existing.

6 So that area is Zoned MFSA, which allows  
7 this type of project. It's an infill site.  
8 It's within a neighborhood. It was a project  
9 that went through the Board of Architects.  
10 Those are existing units on the site. And,  
11 again, the request is to subdivide that -- or  
12 re-plat that parcel from one into four,  
13 according to the dimensions allowed by the  
14 Code.

15 MFSA Zoning, nothing is being changed in  
16 terms of Zoning and Land Use, and here you can  
17 see the way that -- the lots' layout, in terms  
18 of the plat within the block. The rendering of  
19 the project includes a lot of the trees, and  
20 once you remove the trees that are twisting,  
21 you can see that the project went through a  
22 significant re-design in the process and Board  
23 of Architects review and this was the final  
24 project.

25 The time line, we had the DRC meeting in

69

1 July 2015, some time ago, for the project, and  
2 right now we are -- it takes a while, because  
3 of the different requirements of the County to  
4 do the replats.

5 Well, three times letters to property  
6 owners were sent. The property was posted  
7 three times also, and three times on the  
8 website, and we had two newspaper  
9 advertisements.

10 The Staff finds that the application is  
11 consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, and  
12 different Staff have reviewed it and there are  
13 no objections.

14 Staff recommends approval with conditions.  
15 I believe the Applicant has a presentation.

16 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you.

17 MR. NAVARRO: How are you? Good evening.  
18 Jorge Navarro, Offices at 333 Southeast 2nd  
19 Avenue.

20 This application is not as exciting as  
21 bringing a world class medical facility to  
22 Coral Gables, but these are four very nice  
23 townhomes that we're very excited to be  
24 developing. We're continuing the townhome  
25 development that exists along Almeria Avenue.

70

1 You know, the project went through a  
2 vigorous Board of Architects process and now  
3 we're just coming in, basically, to determine  
4 the form of ownership that these townhomes are  
5 going to be sold in.

6 Everything in the neighbor has been  
7 basically platted and sold in fee simple. We  
8 think that that really brings a lot of value to  
9 these townhomes, rather than selling them as  
10 condo. People tend not to want to be married  
11 in a condo format, especially with a townhome,  
12 and we want to preserve that property value  
13 that Coral Gables is known for. So we're  
14 coming in with a re-plat, even though it's more  
15 timely and more expensive, and all we're doing  
16 is coming and subdividing the individual  
17 townhomes into four separate lots.

18 MR. TRIAS: Mr. Chairman, I said,  
19 "Approval with" -- it's approval without any  
20 conditions. That's the recommendation.

21 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you.

22 MR. NAVARRO: And I'm here to answer any  
23 questions that you have.

24 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Are these zero lot  
25 lines? Are they --

71

1 MR. NAVARRO: Sure. They're wall to wall,  
2 but there's no shared utility facilities within  
3 those walls. What we've done in dealing with a  
4 lot of townhouse projects over the years, we  
5 used to put all the plumbing, electrical  
6 fixtures in between the walls of the units, and  
7 what happens is that in the event a waterline  
8 breaks, the homeowners tend to have a  
9 disagreement as to who has to repair that wall.

10 So what we've done is, we're running all of  
11 the lines through the individual lots and  
12 there's nothing in between those shared walls,  
13 only, you know, insulation. They're all  
14 separate. If we could cut them out, we could,  
15 and take them away.

16 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: So the walls are  
17 solid, with no cuts?

18 MR. NAVARRO: Yeah. Yeah.

19 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: And what about your  
20 roof lines?

21 MR. NAVARRO: The roof lines, also, as  
22 well. We've had issues with pitched roofs.  
23 Half the roof breaks, the owners disagree as to  
24 who has to build what, the roof doesn't get  
25 fixed. These are all flat roofs. They're all

72

1 -- these units -- and that's a great question,  
2 because we've thought about this, these units  
3 can be taken out individually and the other  
4 ones would still be able to exist.

5 MS. MENENDEZ: Does it have two walls? Is  
6 it one wall and then one wall? Or is it one  
7 wall that's shared?

8 MR. NAVARRO: There is a combination that  
9 occurs. I'm not sure if there's two separate  
10 walls or if they come to a point and share a  
11 common point, but there's nothing in between  
12 those walls that would have to be maintained,  
13 which tends to be the big issue when you do  
14 this stuff. Then you need a shared wall  
15 agreement.

16 MR. BELLIN: It looks like there's a common  
17 wall, and that wall is block.

18 MR. NAVARRO: Yeah.

19 MR. BELLIN: And it goes through the roof.

20 MR. NAVARRO: Correct. It's all of the way  
21 up, yeah.

22 MR. BELLIN: Okay. I have a question.

23 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Marshall.

24 MR. BELLIN: There's a lot of oak trees on  
25 this property, and all of the issues with

1 because I think it really adds to the character  
2 of the street, and luckily those trees  
3 withstood the hurricane. So they're still  
4 there today and we've re-designed our plan to  
5 maintain those oak trees.

6 MS. MENENDEZ: Can I ask a question of  
7 Staff? Can you just briefly describe what a  
8 Multi-Family Special Area District is? How  
9 high can they build in that area?

10 MR. TRIAS: Forty-five feet, if they are  
11 facing Single-Family. They can go a little bit  
12 higher beyond 100 feet. The MFSA is designed  
13 to do two things, townhomes like this on or  
14 small apartment buildings. So there are some  
15 small apartment buildings that are zoned MFSA,  
16 also.

17 MS. MENENDEZ: A townhome like this one,  
18 how high can they go?

19 MR. TRIAS: Forty-five feet.

20 MS. MENENDEZ: Okay.

21 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: How are you dealing  
22 with your ingress and egress for parking for  
23 your garages?

24 MR. NAVARRO: So all of the townhomes --  
25 this is right next to Almeria Row -- all of the

1 respect to those oak trees have been addressed?

2 MR. NAVARRO: Yes. Correct. So, actually,  
3 if you look at the Site Plan, the townhomes  
4 used to go -- let me see here, if I can get a  
5 little dimension for you, because we were very  
6 sensitive to the trees. I believe we had a  
7 five-foot set back. If you look at the western  
8 portion of our property, which is actually on  
9 the bottom part of that exhibit that's up  
10 there, there are these oak trees that basically  
11 hug our western property line.

12 We originally had proposed to try to remove  
13 them, because it had a very long arm, you know,  
14 tree branch, that went over through the  
15 property. We were appealed by some of the  
16 residents in the area regarding the removal of  
17 the tree, and we worked with them to actually  
18 set back our building an additional fifteen  
19 feet, which cost the developer some square  
20 footage, because it was on three floors, so we  
21 lost that square footage, but we were able to  
22 preserve the trees. And there's an exhibit  
23 here which actually shows the existing tree  
24 superimposed on the elevation, and we're  
25 actually very happy that we kept those trees,

1 townhomes access through the alley. So we've  
2 maintained that. All of our townhomes come in  
3 through the access alley. I think it's a  
4 twenty-foot alley that runs along the rear of  
5 the property.

6 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Okay.

7 MR. NAVARRO: And that prevents all of the  
8 cars from being parked in the front. We  
9 actually went a step further and these are  
10 four-car garages. So if you have kids or  
11 guests coming over, most of the garages only  
12 have two spaces. We went ahead and provided  
13 four, just because we know that families are  
14 growing, and even though people are going away  
15 from cars, because I know my cousins, they  
16 turned 16 and didn't want to get a car, which  
17 at 15 I was already trying to plan for that,  
18 we're still providing for it, just in case.

19 MR. TRIAS: Now, the only request is the  
20 re-plat. The project has already permits and  
21 everything.

22 MR. NAVARRO: Yeah, we're into the  
23 permitting process and now we're going into the  
24 plat process.

25 MS. MENENDEZ: In these properties that are

1 townhouses, are they required to have like an  
2 urban look, like the curbing and the sidewalk  
3 or are they able to continue with the swale as  
4 it exists in the adjacent lots?

5 MR. TRIAS: They're not required to -- on a  
6 case by case basis, we'll look at the context.  
7 If there's a swale, we try to keep the swale.  
8 In some of the cases, more urban, and then the  
9 sidewalk and the very narrow front yard becomes  
10 one public space.

11 MS. MENENDEZ: Who makes that decision? Is  
12 that discretionary by the Board of Architects  
13 or by your Department?

14 MR. TRIAS: Board of Architects and Staff  
15 both participate in that decision.

16 MS. MENENDEZ: Okay.

17 MR. COLLIER: Could you pick up the mike,  
18 because you're not going to come through? You  
19 can do the remote mike, if you want.

20 MR. NAVARRO: I always mess that up, so I  
21 try to -- I try to stay away from it.

22 But I know we're not -- the plan, you know,  
23 has gone through its process, but one of the  
24 things that we did -- because that was a great  
25 question, and our architect was very sensitive

77

1 sidewalk.

2 MR. TRIAS: Yeah. And in Valencia, if you  
3 look at some of the more recent townhomes, that  
4 is the design choice that was made, because  
5 that's the way that the street is designed,  
6 with bulb-outs and parking, et cetera.

7 MS. MENENDEZ: Right. But are you saying  
8 that it's flexible?

9 MR. TRIAS: It depends on the street. Yes,  
10 it's flexible, depending on the character of  
11 the street.

12 MS. MENENDEZ: Okay.

13 MR. NAVARRO: And in this case, the on-site  
14 trees kind of restricted us from going all of  
15 the way up. We lost fifteen feet, for three  
16 stories. So the square footage was sizable,  
17 and the units are sold on price per square  
18 foot. So it was very costly, but it ended up  
19 in a very nice design and I think it will blend  
20 in nicely.

21 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Is there going to be a  
22 perimeter wall around?

23 MR. NAVARRO: No. Not that we're expecting  
24 and it's not planned, no.

25 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Any other questions?

79

1 to that, and we worked with your Planning  
2 Director on it, is that we wanted to create a  
3 very pedestrian environment, right. People  
4 walk their dogs a lot. So we created these  
5 front porches, in the front, and there's a  
6 front yard, as well. So we created that kind  
7 of pedestrian environment. That, with  
8 preserving the trees, I think it's going to  
9 create a very nice frontage.

10 MR. TRIAS: Yeah, in this particular case,  
11 as the applicant said, they've set back two of  
12 the four units further, so that created more  
13 green space, and that saved one of the trees.

14 Now, I have to compliment the applicant,  
15 because they went through many, many months of  
16 re-design through the appeals process and  
17 multiple meetings with the Board of Architects,  
18 et cetera. So that was a significant work  
19 effort that I think was very successful at the  
20 end.

21 MS. MENENDEZ: I thought we had developed  
22 like a look for townhouses that involved the --  
23 I'm not advocating for it, I'm just asking,  
24 that involved the curbing, the sidewalks and  
25 the buildings themselves being up against the

78

1 Robert? Anybody?

2 MR. GRABIEL: I would like to move for  
3 approval.

4 MS. MENENDEZ: I'll second it.

5 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: We have a motion for  
6 approval. A second. With conditions?

7 MR. TRIAS: No, no conditions, sir.

8 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: No conditions.

9 MR. NAVARRO: Thank you very much. Have a  
10 nice rest of the evening.

11 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Do we need a vote?

12 MR. BEHAR: We haven't called the roll yet.  
13 You're not approved yet.

14 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Any comments or --

15 MR. COLLIER: You're getting ahead of yourself.

16 MR. GRABIEL: We might change our minds --

17 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Call the roll, please.

18 MR. NAVARRO: Have I told you how nice you  
19 all look today?

20 THE SECRETARY: Julio Grabiell?

21 MR. GRABIEL: Yes.

22 THE SECRETARY: Maria Menendez?

23 MS. MENENDEZ: Yes.

24 THE SECRETARY: Maria Velez?

25 MS. VELEZ: Yes.

80

1 THE SECRETARY: Robert Behar?  
 2 MR. BEHAR: Yes.  
 3 THE SECRETARY: Marshall Bellin?  
 4 MR. BELLIN: Yes.  
 5 THE SECRETARY: Eibi Aizenstat?  
 6 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Yes.  
 7 Thank you. And we have -- the next two  
 8 items --  
 9 MR. COLLER: You know, let the record  
 10 reflect there's no one in the room, I believe,  
 11 that was here for this item --  
 12 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: -- to speak.  
 13 MR. COLLER: Let me thank my colleague to  
 14 the right of me for reminding me of that. So  
 15 the record should reflect there's no one here  
 16 for this item.  
 17 MS. BERMUDEZ: I'm the neighbor.  
 18 MR. COLLER: On this item?  
 19 MS. BERMUDEZ: Yes.  
 20 MR. COLLER: Do you have a speaker card for --  
 21 Okay. Well, then, I think what we're going  
 22 to do is, do a motion -- I think, since we've  
 23 had the vote, we need to have a motion for  
 24 re-consideration.  
 25 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: I'd like to make that

81

1 motion, yes.  
 2 MS. MENENDEZ: I'll second it.  
 3 THE COLLER: So the motion for  
 4 reconsideration. We have a motion and a  
 5 second. We apologize.  
 6 MR. GRABIEL: So I'd like to make a motion  
 7 for reconsideration.  
 8 MR. BEHAR: Come on up.  
 9 MR. COLLER: So let's get us back to where  
 10 we're back to the public hearing.  
 11 MR. BEHAR: All right. So we have a motion  
 12 to reconsider it.  
 13 MS. BERMUDEZ: No, I'm here, because I'm  
 14 the next door neighbor of the project and I  
 15 feel the project is beautiful.  
 16 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Excuse me, can you  
 17 give us --  
 18 MS. MENENDEZ: Can we have your address  
 19 please?  
 20 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Your name and address.  
 21 MS. BERMUDEZ: My name is Maria Bermudez.  
 22 I live in 609 Almeria Avenue, Unit 201.  
 23 MR. COLLER: Have you been --  
 24 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: You may be sworn in,  
 25 please.

82

1 (Thereupon, Ms. Bermudez was sworn.)  
 2 MS. BERMUDEZ: Yes.  
 3 MR. COLLER: Can we get us back to where we  
 4 need to be? So we had a motion on the floor  
 5 and a second for re-consideration. We can do  
 6 it as a voice vote.  
 7 MR. BEHAR: All in favor?  
 8 (All Board Members voted aye.)  
 9 MR. COLLER: Okay. So now we're back and  
 10 we're going -- so that we can take her  
 11 testimony as part of the public hearing, and  
 12 then we make a new decision.  
 13 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you.  
 14 MS. BERMUDEZ: No, I'm just telling you, I  
 15 live next door and I feel this project is  
 16 beautiful, and they did a great job. I was  
 17 there in the meeting before they came over  
 18 here, and I looked at everything, and I'm very  
 19 happy to be the neighbor.  
 20 MR. COLLER: Okay. Is anybody else here  
 21 for this item?  
 22 Okay. I think you can close the public  
 23 hearing now and we can actually have the vote  
 24 again.  
 25 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Let's go ahead and

83

1 close it. If we could call the vote, again,  
 2 please.  
 3 Thank you.  
 4 THE SECRETARY: And the motion was made by  
 5 Julio Grabiell and second by Maria Menendez?  
 6 MS. MENENDEZ: Yes.  
 7 THE SECRETARY: Julio Grabiell?  
 8 MR. GRABIEL: Yes.  
 9 THE SECRETARY: Maria Menendez?  
 10 MS. MENENDEZ: Yes.  
 11 THE SECRETARY: Maria Velez?  
 12 MS. VELEZ: Yes.  
 13 THE SECRETARY: Robert Behar?  
 14 MR. BEHAR: Yes.  
 15 THE SECRETARY: Marshall Bellin?  
 16 MR. BELLIN: Yes.  
 17 THE SECRETARY: Eibi Aizenstat?  
 18 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Yes.  
 19 Thank you. Sorry about that.  
 20 MR. COLLER: My apologies to the Board for  
 21 not picking up on that.  
 22 MS. MENENDEZ: Keeping us on track.  
 23 MR. COLLER: Yes.  
 24 Well, the last two items are connected, so,  
 25 Mr. Chairman, I'm going to read both items in.,

84