

1 then close the public comment, have Board
2 discussion, and a motion, and further
3 discussion, if needed, and a second of motion.
4 Then we'll have the Board's final comments and
5 a vote.

6 Mr. Behar.

7 MR. BEHAR: Are you ready?

8 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Yes.

9 MR. BEHAR: Okay. Mr. Chair, I want to
10 recuse myself for item -- I guess it's 1 and 2,
11 E-1 and E-2, for the reasons that the developer
12 of this project is a client of mine, so not to
13 have a conflict with that either.

14 In addition, even though it's been cleared
15 before, my son is one of the attorneys on the
16 project, as well. So, in an abundance of
17 caution, I want to recuse myself for Item E-1
18 and E-2.

19 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Okay. But you're
20 recusing yourself not because your son is --

21 MR. BEHAR: No. No. I'm recusing myself
22 because --

23 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: He's a client.

24 MR. BEHAR: -- he's my client. I know that
25 I spoke to the City Attorney, and just in an

1 the minutes.

2 MR. PARDO: Okay.

3 THE SECRETARY: It was the applicant
4 requesting that the item be deferred.

5 MR. PARDO: I thought they had asked for
6 another deferral, and that's why the
7 attachment.

8 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: No.

9 MR. PARDO: Okay. Got it.

10 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Okay. Yes, Chip?

11 MR. WITHERS: Do we want to just go to the
12 Mediterranean Bonus, so Robert can stay and
13 then leave afterwards or --

14 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: That's a great idea.

15 MR. WITHERS: I don't know. I'm just --

16 MR. BEHAR: Thank you.

17 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: If everybody is okay
18 with that, I'll go ahead and move it.

19 MR. WITHERS: Is that okay with the Board?

20 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Fine. Sounds great.

21 MR. BEHAR: Thank you.

22 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Madam City Attorney.

23 MS. SUAREZ: Okay. So we will begin with
24 E-3. E-3 is an Ordinance of the City
25 Commission of Coral Gables, Florida, providing

1 abundance, you know, mentioned it, but that's
2 something that already -- it was a previous
3 City Attorney, it was clear, it was not an
4 issue, but just in case, I want to make sure
5 it's transparency, that there's -- you know,
6 there's that.

7 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you. And you'll
8 be here for the other items?

9 MR. BEHAR: I -- yeah, if you make it
10 quick.

11 MR. PARDO: Mr. Chairman --

12 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Yes, sir.

13 MR. PARDO: -- before Robert leaves, the
14 deferral of Riviera Country Club, did we
15 recognize that they've been deferred to the
16 public?

17 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: We did not, on this
18 one. There is no --

19 MR. PARDO: I received the letter there.

20 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Jill.

21 MS. KAWALERSKI: That was --

22 THE SECRETARY: Yes. That was an
23 attachment to the minutes, because it was
24 presented that day, at the last Planning and
25 Zoning Board Meeting, therefore, it was part of

1 text amendments to the City of Coral Gables
2 Official Zoning Code, Article 5,
3 "Architecture," Section 5-200, "Mediterranean
4 Standards;" Article 3, "Uses," Section 3-402,
5 Restrictions related to location;" and Article
6 16, "Definitions;" to enhance the quality of
7 Coral Gables Mediterranean design by requiring
8 a conceptual design review; removing
9 duplicative criteria; relocating inapplicable
10 standards; supplementing existing criteria; and
11 including additional Mediterranean building
12 examples; providing for severability, repealer,
13 codification, and for an effective date.

14 We have our Planning Official who will
15 present.

16 MS. GARCIA: Good evening, Jennifer Garcia,
17 Planning Official.

18 Could I have the PowerPoint, please?

19 So we discussed this at the last meeting.
20 There haven't been a lot of updates, but
21 there's been a few, so I want to go through
22 this, just so you feel comfortable in what
23 you're looking at today.

24 So, remember, we had discussion and
25 feedback with the Board of Architects several

1 times, the City Commission, as well as with the
2 Planning and Zoning Board, and now we're
3 starting on the actual adoption process, which
4 are the Planning and Zoning recommendation, and
5 then the City Commission for two Readings.

6 So the intent and the purpose is being
7 altered a little bit to strengthen the purpose
8 of the Mediterranean Bonus. Just a reminder,
9 there are redundant criteria in our Zoning
10 Code, that was copied during the Zoning Code
11 Update, from the Med Bonus criteria to the
12 underlying Zoning. So that's being stricken
13 through. There's relocation of some certain
14 criteria from Med Bonus to a more appropriate
15 section of the Zoning Code, as part of this, as
16 well, and then incorporating a lot of
17 provisions of the architecture standards from
18 Mediterranean Village Architectural Standards,
19 which created the Plaza, into these proposed
20 changes.

21 Expanding the list of architectural
22 precedent is also part of this, and the new
23 thing is actually including character defining
24 features of Mediterranean design, and I'll get
25 to that in just a second.

13

1 basically. We talked, last time, about
2 removing the San Sebastian Apartments. And
3 since then, we've had feedback from the public
4 to also remove Granada Shops, just because we
5 don't have a lot of good drawings and
6 elevations and plans and, really, any permit
7 drawings from Granada Shops. So the proposal
8 is to actually eliminate that as an example for
9 architects to follow when they're proposing
10 new buildings.

11 We talked about, last time, incorporating
12 some new buildings. These six buildings were
13 done by what we call founding architects.
14 You'll recognize names like George Fink,
15 Schultzer & Weaver, Phineas Paist. These are
16 our founding architects, that created a lot of
17 these good buildings in Coral Gables. So we
18 found some of those examples here in South
19 Florida and are incorporating that as examples
20 for architects to follow.

21 And then what's new are these three new
22 buildings, done by Martin Hampton, the Antigua
23 (phonetic) Hotel, which was demolished,
24 unfortunately, in the North Ponce area, the
25 Flora Garden Apartments Building, which is in

15

1 So, again, these are pages from the -- the
2 noise is quite loud.

3 MS. SUAREZ: We're contacting Facilities so
4 we can address this. So I'm doing that right
5 now.

6 MS. GARCIA: It's okay.

7 So these are pages from our Zoning Code
8 Update, highlights or sections that were copied
9 and pasted from the current status of our
10 Mediterranean Bonus, into the underlying Zoning
11 Districts, and other parts of the Zoning Code,
12 such Landscaping, Parking and such.

13 And, then, this is -- what you're seeing
14 right now on the screen is copies --
15 screenshots of the proposed changes to the Med
16 Bonus, and how some of these more, maybe not
17 architectural related criteria, is moving into
18 more appropriate parts of the Code.

19 And, then, these are just pages from the
20 Mediterranean Village PAD Architectural
21 Standards, and how some of these ideas and
22 standards are being incorporated into standards
23 for Mediterranean architecture bonus.

24 And, then, these are our current
25 precedents, architectural example buildings,

14

1 Hollywood, and the Spanish Apartment, which is
2 also called the Villa de Leon, in Tampa.

3 These are local examples we talked about
4 last time, that weren't done by our more common
5 architects of the 1920s, but they're still good
6 examples for precedence, as well as some other
7 examples outside of our City, Santa Barbara
8 City Hall, and the Vineta Hotel in Palm Beach.
9 And, then, what's new, Vizcaya was a good
10 example that came up -- there you are -- that
11 came up at the last meeting -- you did a little
12 switch. I see that -- as well as Everglades
13 Club in Palm Beach, Palm Beach Townhall, and
14 also Generalife Garden, which is in Granada
15 Spain, were other examples that came up.

16 We went through these additional examples
17 we got from the public to the Board of
18 Architects, and they agreed that having these
19 examples would be helpful for architects in the
20 future to follow during their building
21 development phase.

22 What's also new is what's called character
23 defining features. So I know that this is like
24 very small and hard to read, but I'll quickly
25 go through them. So asymmetry, projecting and

16

1 recessing bays, articulations, different
2 textures in the facade, ornate entrances,
3 towers, varied roof types. A lot of these
4 features that you see in those precedent
5 buildings are basically being kind of dissected
6 and put, line by line, and so the intent here
7 is that an architect, that's not familiar with
8 Mediterranean architecture, who's building a
9 Mediterranean building in Coral Gables, to be
10 able to highlight different character defining
11 features of the proposed building by using this
12 as sort of a start.

13 So the prerequisites table has not changed.
14 There's been some reorganization, but it hasn't
15 changed since the last time we went through it
16 during the last meeting discussion. And,
17 again, you have to fulfill the architecture
18 precedence, the building examples, as well as
19 that prerequisites tables that I just showed
20 you right here, and that basically allows you
21 to enter in the Med Bonus criteria, to be able
22 to apply for Med Bonus.

23 To actually get the Med Bonus, you have to
24 get -- fulfill Level 1 and Level 2. Level 1,
25 again, hasn't changed since we spoke about it

17

1 at the last meeting for discussion, and if
2 you're a multi-family building, you have to
3 fill six of the twelve of all of these
4 requirements, and if you're a mixed-use
5 building, you have to fulfill eight of the
6 twelve. That's standard. That's already in
7 our Code right now. It's not really changing.
8 So once you fulfill those requirements of a
9 Level 1, then you are -- may be granted, by the
10 Board of Architects, that additional story,
11 additional Med Bonus.

12 And, then, Level 2 hasn't changed since we
13 talked about it in the last meeting, as well,
14 and that would grant you the top, highest,
15 level of Med Bonus, by which it would be the
16 second level, or a third level, depending on
17 whether you're high-rise or high density. So,
18 again, you have to comply with the
19 architectural precedence. The prerequisites
20 compliance is part of the first table we went
21 through, Table 1 Med Bonus, and Table Two Med
22 Bonus, to be able to fulfill the whole Med
23 Bonus requirement.

24 That's it.

25 MR. BEHAR: Can you -- I have a question,

18

1 Mr. Chair.

2 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Yes.

3 MR. BEHAR: Can you go back to the bonus
4 Level 1 table?

5 MS. GARCIA: This one?

6 MR. BEHAR: Yeah.

7 MS. GARCIA: Uh-huh.

8 MR. BEHAR: In order to get the Level 1, if
9 do residential, you have to do six of twelve?

10 MS. GARCIA: Yes. It's not changing.

11 MR. BEHAR: Okay. But I see that you're
12 scratching out a lot of those. How am I
13 getting -- the proposed is on the right. So
14 vertical hierarchy, for example, do we have --

15 MS. GARCIA: Uh-huh.

16 MR. BEHAR: -- a more defined way to get
17 there or is that -- you know, because, that, to
18 me, sounds arbitrary.

19 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: I think that was part
20 of the discussion we had, as far as being
21 arbitrary.

22 MR. BEHAR: No. It's not specific. You
23 know, it's not like well -- who's going to
24 say -- argue yes or no? I mean, to me -- and I
25 see the changes, but that particular is one

19

1 that, how are we having a more defined
2 solution?

3 MS. GARCIA: So if you read the language
4 that goes with the vertical hierarchy, Number
5 3 -- we can go over it. I think it's here.

6 MR. PARDO: Mr. Chairman?

7 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Yes, sir.

8 MR. PARDO: I'd like to add something. I
9 understand what Robert is talking about, with
10 is, at this particular point -- at this
11 particular point, you're looking at words, but
12 the example, the specific example of those
13 elements, that have to be added to be able to
14 qualify, are not there. They're expressed in
15 words that are too loose and not tight enough.

16 And the other thing is that, you know,
17 we've struggled with this. This is supposed to
18 be able to enhance a specific style. The
19 examples are wonderful. Now they're all over
20 the State of Florida, all over the country, but
21 the specific elements are not followed by, in
22 any way, shape or form, and I think that's what
23 you're concerned with, and rightfully so.

24 MR. BEHAR: And out of all of them, that
25 was the one that caught my attention. I said,

20

1 how do we determine what is compliance from
2 that wording?

3 MR. PARDO: And the thing is, it is a --
4 it's a toolbox for the designer, but it's also
5 a toolbox, you know, that the Board of
6 Architects understands --

7 MS. GARCIA: Right.

8 MR. PARDO: -- because, if not, you know,
9 Robert is going to be hitting his head against,
10 you know, the table there, every time he comes
11 in, because the elements aren't specific.

12 So, when you say, "Vertical hierarchy,"
13 there's no example. You know, you're looking
14 at certain things, but it's too loose.
15 Obviously, in the hands of someone that's very
16 good at what they do, they understand it, they
17 could get there, but it's not made for everyone
18 to understand. It's very difficult to
19 interpret.

20 MS, GARCIA: All right. So this particular
21 one, I believe, was taken from the
22 Mediterranean Village handbook.

23 MR. BEHAR: And not so much for the
24 designer, but when the Board of Architects --
25 it's very subjective.

21

1 residents, who are going to see something that
2 is either good or not good and that qualifies
3 or doesn't qualify.

4 So, you know, we're almost like reinventing
5 part of the wheel here, because when we had the
6 Mediterranean Committee get-together, and they
7 were all architects and all kicking it around,
8 and Robert and I sat on that Board, and we were
9 looking at these things, we had examples of
10 things that were given Mediterranean Bonus
11 before, which were not specifically
12 Mediterranean, and that was one of the biggest
13 hurdles to get there. And philosophically, I
14 think you have an issue with this. I don't see
15 a betterment in this particular proposal, and I
16 think it needs more specific work. I'm not
17 saying it can't be done. I'm just saying, it
18 needs more specific work.

19 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Are you saying that
20 when somebody brings in a project to get
21 approved for Mediterranean Bonus, you're going
22 to show them that diagram and say it has to
23 look more like this?

24 MS. GARCIA: No. So the idea was that a
25 lot of these diagrams from the Appendix C be

23

1 MR. SALMAN: Sure is.

2 MS. GARCIA: Yes.

3 MR. PARDO: Yeah. And it's become more
4 subjective with this change. There's no doubt.

5 MS. GARCIA: But the idea is that this
6 update would be accompanied with some kind of
7 updated best practice manual, and to show
8 diagrams like this, that are basically
9 analyzing some of the precedent examples that
10 we're going through --

11 MR. PARDO: Right.

12 MS. GARCIA: -- and showing what the Board
13 of Architects should be looking for.

14 MR. PARDO: The other thing is that the
15 appendix, that was added to the Code by the
16 previous Planning Director, which was
17 specifically for The Plaza, they did a better
18 job there in explaining what they were doing,
19 but that doesn't necessarily apply to
20 everything. You mentioned it, but it's not
21 necessarily adaptable to this.

22 I think that this will create tremendous
23 confusion and frustration between the applicant
24 or the developers, the Board of Architects,
25 and, then, at the end of the day, the

22

1 incorporated into what's now being used as the
2 best practices manual, which is on our website,
3 that architects could use, as far as reference,
4 but it doesn't include all of these diagrams.
5 I only think it includes this one. This is to
6 kind of explain what this text is saying, when
7 it talks about the top, and middle, and bottom,
8 and where to put emphasis and where to put your
9 entrance. It's kind of illustrated here.

10 So the idea is that once this maybe gets
11 adopted, that this also include an update for
12 the best practices manual, to help architects
13 be able to illustrate and understand the intent
14 of this language.

15 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Aren't there
16 definitions -- I mean, I'm going to ask the
17 architects on the Board, is there a guide or
18 something that can be implemented into the
19 Code, that you have to put in "X" amount of
20 features, not just it has to look like this or
21 this is a picture of it, to qualify?

22 MR. PARDO: In the reference of the best
23 practice, there was an attempt. It was more --
24 it was more of a graphic interpretation of, you
25 know, these are the elements, but, you know,

24

1 when you're designing, it's very difficult to
2 look at this and be able to say to yourself,
3 well, it looks good, but on top of that, I'm
4 going to get that checked off, because the
5 whole point here is that, you know, this is all
6 about bonuses, and that's where I personally
7 have a philosophical issue with that, and that
8 is that I think that the Mediterranean Bonuses
9 have run their course.

10 I think that, if you really look at this
11 and you want to look in certain areas, you
12 know, and you're trying to promote, you know,
13 very good design, there are certain elements
14 that are very different than just based on a
15 specific style. And the other thing is that,
16 there are -- in my opinion, there are certain
17 areas where, if you wanted to look at a bonus,
18 you should be looking at those areas.

19 And my opinion, my personal opinion, is
20 that I think that the bonuses are discretionary
21 and I think that they've run their course, and
22 one of the difficulties that you're going to
23 get is that, you're going to have people that
24 are trying to design really nice projects, but
25 the safety blanket that we have in the City of

25

1 then, again, some of the architecture is
2 exceptional not being Mediterranean. So that's
3 the reason I say that I don't think that it's
4 needed anymore. I think it's more of a
5 pressing issue of finding a way to come up with
6 better architecture.

7 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: So what you're saying
8 is -- so you're advocating that we shouldn't
9 have a Mediterranei Bonus in the City or in the
10 Code?

11 MR. PARDO: Well, if you're going to
12 provide bonuses, in my opinion, there are
13 certain areas, you know, in the City,
14 Commercial areas, let's say, where maybe you
15 could incentivize it, by providing certain
16 things.

17 Not mixing apples and oranges, for example,
18 you know, much has been said about, well, if
19 you provide a park, we'll give you another
20 floor, you know, and that's an incentive,
21 especially in a certain area.

22 There are other areas, for example, in the
23 City, that require that you provide
24 Mediterranean architecture, with no bonuses.
25 So that is -- and that is because it's more of

27

1 Coral Gables is the Board of Architects and
2 their commitment to making sure that good
3 quality architecture is approved, whether it's
4 Modern, whether it's Mediterranean, whether it
5 is whatever, but it's all about very good
6 design.

7 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: What do you mean by
8 it's run its course?

9 MR. PARDO: I'm dating myself, but when we
10 looked at the Showroom on Ponce, and we had to
11 tear it down and come up with something, so the
12 Historic Board wasn't going to go crazy, we
13 came up with the first Mediterranean Revival
14 commercial building. And, then, the
15 Mediterranean Ordinance was written around it,
16 to be able to incentivize that, because it cost
17 so much more to build that, versus, you know,
18 other types of architecture. Not that other
19 types of architectures were worse, but it was
20 giving them an even playing field.

21 And I think, over time, you know, we've
22 seen that some of these buildings that have
23 qualified for the Mediterranean Bonus really
24 aren't necessarily Mediterranean or they're not
25 necessarily good. Some are exceptions, but,

26

1 a compatibility with the area, with the
2 neighborhood, and that kind of thing.

3 And I was criticized by Former
4 Commissioners about the word compatibility. We
5 all know what compatibility means, does it look
6 like it belongs here or not. There's no doubt
7 in my mind that any of the architects that are
8 sitting in this room today can do something
9 that looks really, really good, and doesn't
10 necessarily have to be that, but there may be
11 other reasons to provide an incentive, in other
12 parts of the City, but not necessarily where
13 it's going to usurp the surrounding
14 compatibility with the neighborhood.

15 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: So if I understand
16 correctly, what you're saying is that
17 Mediterranean Bonuses should not give
18 additional height, it should be part of the
19 aesthetics as to the compatibility of the area?

20 MR. PARDO: I think that there are already
21 certain areas that are deemed that they must be
22 Mediterranean. You can't touch those.

23 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: But you're saying, you
24 shouldn't have additional height?

25 MR. PARDO: Well, what I'm saying is that,

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1 sometimes it's counterintuitive, you know, to
2 the particular style, and, you know, after a
3 certain height, you know, you kind of lose the
4 perspective of the detailing and the style to
5 begin with.

6 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Then should that
7 detail maybe be at a lower level, so that, at
8 the height that it's at, you don't visibly see
9 it?

10 MR. PARDO: On the Committee, we had very
11 healthy discussions about that, about
12 providing, you know, areas that are more
13 pedestrian friendly, areas that are more
14 conducive to the scale of the pedestrian. It's
15 is a quality issue there. And you could
16 provide certain bonuses for that, but in my
17 opinion, though, the reason I said specifically
18 that it's run its course is, there are so many
19 buildings right now that are being built, that
20 it's very difficult to justify that they would
21 come close to that, but they're still being
22 given, you know, the bonuses, especially, you
23 know, the height bonus.

24 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: But then -- I would
25 think, then, you have to look at unfortunately

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1 hear, Julio, what's your thoughts on it?

2 MR. GRABIEL: I am not sure if the
3 Mediterranean potential bonus would result in a
4 positive environment for the City. I mean,
5 when you look at, not all, but some of the
6 buildings that have been built, which are
7 supposedly Mediterranean, they're not
8 necessarily the highest quality of
9 architecture. So I don't know how we solve
10 that.

11 And I think there is also the possibility
12 that you can have very good or great
13 architecture that's not Mediterranean. So why
14 are you penalizing the architects or the
15 clients who want to build a facility that is
16 not Mediterranean, but they're being forced to
17 go the Mediterranean route, because that's the
18 only way they can get the bonuses?

19 So there's a dichotomy there, which I have
20 difficulties with.

21 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Okay. Javier, what's
22 your feeling on that?

23 MR. SALMAN: I understand the issue with
24 regards to the descriptive words that we're
25 using, but I think that part of that is

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1 doing again a Zoning Code Re-Write, because
2 that's something that you've got to correct
3 within the Code, as opposed to talking about
4 how to arbitrarily or not arbitrarily determine
5 it.

6 MR. PARDO: Right. I just think that this
7 proposal before us today, in my opinion,
8 doesn't -- doesn't get to any place, as far as
9 improvement, but that -- I think that taking a
10 40,000 foot view of everything, you should be
11 looking at, you know, the possibility of
12 providing, in certain areas in the City,
13 certain bonuses, to be able to provide a
14 certain quality, that you normally would not
15 provide.

16 But, at the same time, I think that tagging
17 that bonus on a style, only one style, I think
18 is wrong. I think it should be different.
19 That's my personal opinion.

20 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: I mean, we have -- you
21 know, we're fortunate because we have four
22 distinguished architects that are sitting on
23 this panel, and it's good --

24 MR. PARDO: Thank you.

25 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: I mean, I'd like to

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1 answered by the exhibit you have up behind you
2 right now, where you give specific examples as
3 to what you're talking about with regards to
4 vertical hierarchy, emphasis, whatnot. So I
5 think that answers a lot of those questions, by
6 just citing the examples and the analytical
7 drawings that are provided. And, again, these
8 are analytical drawings of examples, but I
9 don't think that the examples were meant to be
10 a definitive list of examples. There are lots
11 of other Mediterranean buildings.

12 And, honestly, the proportioning and the
13 emphasis of vertical hierarchy are just as
14 relevant in modern architecture as they are in
15 classic or Mediterranean Revival or
16 Neoclassical or Beaux-Arts. Whatever style
17 you're going to analyze, the same rules apply.
18 And, then, the abstraction of those rules, in
19 the more modern language, can be some really
20 very beautiful buildings, that don't
21 necessarily fall within that line.

22 So I see your point. I think what the
23 problem is, is that we defined early on
24 Mediterranean being the nadir of beauty, when
25 it isn't necessarily the nadir of beauty. This

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1 is a city which has its history in the
2 Mediterranean Revival kind of architecture,
3 with the work of Mr. Paist and Mr. Fink and the
4 initial development work that was done, the
5 Ponce Building -- the Ponce Entrance building,
6 all of the bits of architecture that are part
7 of the original development of this, but it
8 also included, you know, the Normandy Village,
9 the French Village, the Chinese Village, all
10 done in very respectful, but derivative
11 versions of the original styles of the
12 architecture where they were being selective.

13 The Chinese Village had Chinese
14 architectural elements in them, with boom
15 gates, sloped curved roof pitches. And the
16 Normandy Village has their small windows and
17 large proportion of wall versus window and
18 their detailing with regards to the simplicity
19 of their eaves into the roofs, you know, very
20 much evocative, and, again, the word is
21 evocative, of the style, because there's no
22 replicant -- or replicated design that I don't
23 think -- that I think the Code is looking for.

24 But with regards to the Mediterranean
25 Bonus, we decided, early on, that it should be

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1 surround it, but then you have the same
2 classical architectural problem that Chicago
3 faced in the starting of the high-rises, where
4 we developed buildings as almost colonnades,
5 where the windows become the void spaces
6 between the piers of the column, and then we
7 put a dress roof on it, and articulated eaves
8 and whatnot, to then tie it all back together,
9 and that's a legitimate way of looking at it,
10 but the quality of the architecture, in some
11 cases, is such that it is treated much more as
12 a prestige, than it is a real architectural
13 conversation, and that's really -- and how do
14 you gauge that? How do you qualify that?

15 Well, the City set up a Board specifically
16 of peer architects to review, to be able to
17 challenge the person presenting to do his best
18 work, and in some cases, that's a very helpful
19 situation, but not always, and sometimes it
20 leads to better architecture, but not always,
21 and sometimes, it's just, okay, we've got to
22 get this thing approved, and let's make sure we
23 get the check. Here you go and then we get
24 things built that we then look at and wonder
25 and express, well, how did that get built?

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1 Mediterranean, was the design style for the
2 City, and the one that we would want to
3 promote, and if what we're doing is then
4 promoting a cartoon realization of that
5 Mediterranean revitalization, I think that's
6 what Julio is talking about, and his point of
7 growing objection.

8 Originally, it was brought up to help
9 bring -- pay for the increase in the detailing,
10 by awarding greater development rights to a
11 slightly larger building, or, in some cases, a
12 much larger building, to be able to compensate
13 for the extra cost. And what we're saying is
14 that we're not seeing the value of that extra
15 cost or that extra development being expressed
16 in the quality of the work that's being
17 presented as Mediterranean Bonus really
18 architecture.

19 So, for example -- sorry -- the level and
20 quality of the finishes on the ground floor as
21 they relate to the people, where you touch them
22 and where the people walk up to them, the
23 classic example is the Biltmore, where we have
24 a fairly rich band of architecture, at the low
25 level, and on the small scale buildings which

34

1 But I'm going to tell you what, I can give
2 you an example of the value of the Board of
3 Architects. During COVID, there was a couple
4 of projects that went through and didn't go
5 through the Board of Architects, and I can find
6 them, because I can see that the quality of the
7 design is really bad, and so, at least, you
8 meet a minimum requirement, and I think what
9 this Mediterranean Bonus and this language is
10 trying to do is establish what that minimum
11 requirement is, and whereas we're dealing with
12 people with different levels of talent and
13 somebody's best is not as good as somebody's
14 mediocre and somebody's mediocre is not as
15 good as somebody else's best, it's a very
16 subjective situation.

17 I think that the documents that you
18 presented with regard to the examples are
19 fairly clear in their analysis and in their
20 presentation, and it's a good basis from which
21 to judge and to create, because it does give
22 you the toolbox of things that the Board should
23 be looking at, and I think that with the forms,
24 as they're given, I think that we have made a
25 great stride in helping to define a better

36

1 architectural model to development.
2 So I think it's fine. I don't see it
3 necessarily as a problem.

4 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Robert.

5 MR. BEHAR: I respectfully disagree with
6 some of the comments, because in today's
7 environment, some of the comments that -- of
8 the examples that you gave, would not be able
9 to be done today. You mentioned the Chinese
10 Village, and you're not going to be able to do
11 that and get the bonuses.

12 And by the way, I kind of like the
13 diversity that was done at the time it was
14 done. I think that Julio, and I think that
15 Felix mentioned it, in order to get good
16 architecture, a lot of what's been mandated to
17 get to, discourage an architect to do that. I
18 think we could use some examples, that
19 buildings have done -- spent a lot of money,
20 beautiful buildings, in material that is being
21 utilized, but when you look at the
22 articulation, the massiveness of the projects,
23 to me, are not really the quality of standard
24 that deserve to do that.

25 And I'm going to use one, which is on

37

1 it, because you know this is going in that
2 direction. I'm not in favor of the
3 Mediterranean Design Amendment Improvement that
4 is being proposed. We sat on that Blue Ribbon
5 Panel, and Felix will remember that I was, a
6 lot of times, trying to be able to be more --
7 have a little bit more openness into that, you
8 know, Code or whatever we were doing at the
9 time. I think that we've got to be a little
10 bit more clear, because, to me, that one
11 particular item is very subjective. I could
12 bring something in, that any of the four of us
13 or any of the architects that we have -- and it
14 could be evaluated, viewed, differently, and
15 that's my concern. You know, what's good for
16 one, has to be good for the other. It cannot
17 be very subjective and that's my concern.

18 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Before we continue, do
19 we have any speakers for this item, Jill?

20 THE SECRETARY: No.

21 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: On either platform?
22 Okay. So let me go ahead and close it for
23 public comment at this time.

24 Chip, would you like to comment on this?

25 MR. WITHERS: Obviously, I'm not an

39

1 US-1 -- or two on US-1, okay, across from my
2 office. Well, that project is very massive.
3 It got all of the little gingerbread detail,
4 but at the end of the day, it's not a good
5 project. Look at the massing. Look at the
6 scale. Look at everything on that project.
7 But if you look at it, it probably went, on a
8 prescriptive basis, what this is asking for,
9 and I think that's the problem with -- and I
10 don't want -- don't get me wrong, I'm not
11 saying that you've got to give me more examples
12 of exactly what you need to do to get there. I
13 think that we are discouraging, and I think
14 Julio was probably alluding, you know, to good,
15 better architecture.

16 There was a comment by a colleague of ours
17 in the last meeting here that I find it -- and
18 I didn't mention anything last time, I found it
19 very troublesome, that we should be trying to
20 duplicate 1920s buildings, okay. It doesn't
21 mean that a 1920 building is what we should be
22 doing today. To me, that's not the right
23 approach, you know. And I think we've got to
24 look at it differently.

25 I'm not in favor -- I'm going to vote to do

38

1 architect, but I just have some basic questions
2 to the architect. When you say, "A good
3 building," are you saying functionally good or
4 aesthetically or both?

5 MR. SALMAN: Ideally, both.

6 MR. BEHAR: You have to do both.

7 MR. WITHERS: Okay. So when we look at our
8 twelve categories, which I have no idea why you
9 chose six, as opposed to eight or opposed to
10 nine, why six was the number --

11 MS. GARCIA: Just because that's what's in
12 the Code right now.

13 MR. WITHERS: It's what?

14 MS. GARCIA: So right now we have twelve
15 criteria in the Level 2 bonus --

16 MR. WITHERS: So you split it in half, six
17 and --

18 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: She's following the
19 Code.

20 MR. WITHERS: I know. I'm wondering where
21 that came from, though. Why six? Why not
22 eight or five or seven?

23 MR. BEHAR: Because you've got two levels,
24 you know.

25 MR. WITHERS: I get that.

40

1 MR. BEHAR: You could get -- and as far as
2 I remember, it's been like that for --

3 MR. WITHERS: I know, but are some more
4 important than others? Are some aesthetics and
5 some functional?

6 MS. GARCIA: Well, obviously, you don't
7 want the same building to come out of every
8 single Med Bonus. You want to have some
9 flexibility. Maybe we want to have an arcade
10 or we don't want an arcade.

11 MR. WITHERS: I get it, but are some of
12 those functional elements, that were looked as
13 being functional, and some of those were looked
14 at as being aesthetics?

15 MR. PARDO: Mr. Chairman, I can answer
16 that. I was there when it happened.

17 MR. WITHERS: Okay.

18 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Okay.

19 MR. PARDO: So the point is that --

20 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: And that's, Felix,
21 without dating yourself, right?

22 MR. PARDO: Right.

23 MR. WITHERS: Well, when you talked about
24 the Showroom on Ponce, it kind of dated him, I
25 guess.

41

1 reason that the Blue Ribbon Committee was
2 created, was because of what had been built,
3 and the examples of what had been given
4 bonuses, that were not -- were not worthy.

5 And so, to answer your question, they
6 started off this way, and then they started
7 throwing things in there.

8 MR. WITHERS: Right.

9 MR. PARDO: And the original one, which was
10 much better, started talking about, you know,
11 creating things at the pedestrian level, which
12 had to do with fountains and providing plazas
13 and providing these things, where good
14 architects, you know, would do that
15 automatically, because they knew that the
16 pedestrian was all important.

17 So, you know, this has morphed into, we
18 keep changing it and changing it and changing
19 it, and when I see the chronology that we see
20 in the bar chart, with all of the different
21 changes, you know, it really is -- it doesn't
22 look like anything.

23 And, then, after having the Blue Ribbon
24 Committee, implementing this now or trying to
25 implement this now, it's like, you know, take a

43

1 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Yeah.

2 MR. PARDO: So the way that this was
3 created was that, unfortunately, they tried to
4 put a point system on it, and, you know, it's a
5 check, check, check, that kind of thing, which
6 is, of course -- you know, that's the last
7 thing you want to do, when it comes to trying
8 to use creativity, but then you could only use
9 the crayons in the box.

10 And, then, it became obtuse, because they
11 started putting in bicycle racks --

12 MR. WITHERS: Right.

13 MR. PARDO: -- and they started putting in
14 these irrelevant things, that simply should be
15 required, but through another part of the Code.
16 It has nothing to do with whether it's
17 Mediterranei or not. I mean, it's not a
18 Mediterranean Schwinn bicycle rack. And, then,
19 it continued being obtuse like that. And,
20 then, you really didn't get into the meat of
21 it, until you got to the second level. So you
22 basically took the first level, it was a given,
23 and then you had the second level. It's very,
24 very disheartening.

25 And, then, just keep in mind that the

42

1 couple of steps back and really consider what
2 you really want to do, as far as the quality of
3 architecture in the City.

4 MR. WITHERS: So would you rather have a
5 functional building or an aesthetically looking
6 building? Now, I can tell you, as an untrained
7 eye, on a non-architect, when I look at a
8 building, I don't look at the functionality of
9 it. I look, and, hey, this is a really good
10 looking building and I like it. You know, I
11 think most people do. Don't you?

12 MR. PARDO: Yeah, but the thing is that
13 none of us here are going to be designing, you
14 know, just the elevation. You're going to be
15 looking at the site. You're going to be
16 looking at the floor. You've going to be
17 looking at the overall height of the massing.
18 You're going to be looking at all of these
19 elements. So, at the end of the day, then, you
20 know, what it looks like, it gets to that
21 point, and the Board of Architects can
22 recognize it and be able to evaluate and
23 provide opinions that are valuable to the
24 architects before them.

25 MR. WITHERS: Okay. So my last comment,

44

1 really, if compatibility seems to be a driving
2 issue --

3 MR. PARDO: Compatibility is a driving
4 issue, Chip, when you're looking at, you know,
5 the surroundings.

6 MR. WITHERS: Right, the aesthetics.

7 MR. PARDO: Well, but it's also the
8 surrounding. If you have, for example -- you
9 have Merrick Plaza, where, you know, Julio was
10 a major designer on it, and if you have now a
11 building next to it, you don't necessarily want
12 to replicate what Julio did there, but you
13 would want to then be able to take certain
14 elements, and add to it, where it becomes part
15 of the fabric of the area.

16 MR. WITHERS: So it complements it?

17 MR. PARDO: And it complements it and it's
18 compatible with it.

19 MR. WITHERS: Okay. And that's both, on
20 form and function and aesthetics, right? I
21 mean --

22 MR. PARDO: Yes.

23 MR. WITHERS: So why wouldn't this Code,
24 then, have certain points of bonuses based on
25 compatibility in one section and function and

45

1 Mediterranean, Old Spanish, nothing. To
2 shoehorn a Mediterranean into that, probably
3 would be incompatible. So why have bonuses to
4 begin with?

5 Just like these gentlemen are saying, let's
6 just have good architecture, but make it
7 compatible with the neighborhood, but I see no
8 reason to keep this bonus thing going. As you
9 said, it's run its course, and I can tell you
10 that when my neighbors look at the Zubi
11 Building and say, "That is Mediterranean?" So
12 even with guidelines and guardrails, even with
13 in the old, old Code, who decided that was
14 Mediterranean and passed it?

15 So where are the guardrail here? I mean,
16 it's just another bunch of suggestions, and
17 it's going to be a subjective decision anyway.
18 You know, it's all about subjectivity here, and
19 some of this, in the past, has been outright
20 abuse, taking advantage of certain architects
21 on that Board to get the okays, okay.

22 So the residents do not trust this
23 Mediterranean Bonus, as far as you can throw
24 it. So my suggestion would be that we have a
25 recommendation -- as opposed to voting on any

47

1 other things?

2 MR. PARDO: Compatibility is not addressed,
3 in any way, shape or form.

4 MR. WITHERS: Okay. That seems like a key
5 ingredient.

6 MR. PARDO: Of course, and that is -- when
7 I personally stood right there, and I was, you
8 know, basically that, well, define
9 compatibility, you know, it's a --

10 MR. WITHERS: I get it. Okay. Thank you.

11 MR. PARDO: You bet.

12 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Sue.

13 MS. KAWALERSKI: Well, I'm just a resident,
14 but I'll tell you, from a resident's point of
15 view, I mean, for years -- you know, I've gone
16 to the Board of Architects meeting. You
17 know -- I mean, I've gone to a lot of meetings.
18 And probably the number one issue that
19 residents have is this idea of a bonus. They
20 say, what do you mean, a bonus, for
21 Mediterranean? That should be up to the Board
22 of Architects to decide about compatibility and
23 context.

24 I live in a 1950s area in Coral Gables,
25 nondescript houses. Nondescript. It's not

46

1 of this, have the recommendation back to the --
2 I guess, the Commissioner who is suggesting
3 this, that maybe the discussion should be at
4 the level of eliminating the Mediterranean
5 Bonus altogether.

6 MR. GRABIEL: Just a point of order.

7 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Yes.

8 MR. GRABIEL: When the Zubi Building was
9 built, it was not Mediterranean. The way the
10 Code was written at that time was Mediterranean
11 inspired architecture, and that was eliminated
12 after that building was completed, and the idea
13 was that you have the tower, and you have the
14 break in the facade, and you have the arcade on
15 the ground floor, but it was never passed as a
16 Mediterranean project. It was -- Mediterranean
17 inspired was the word at that time in the Code.

18 MS. KAWALERSKI: All right. Well, thank
19 you for that insight, but I see no
20 Mediterranean inspiration in that building. It
21 was a subjective vote to give them the bonus.

22 MR. GRABIEL: You have to talk to the
23 Architect Board at that time.

24 MS. KAWALERSKI: Well, I know. Glenn Pratt
25 -- in fact, Glenn Pratt once said, looking at

48

1 the -- I was in a Board of Architects meeting,
2 and looking at what was before him as a
3 Mediterranean feature, railings, that were
4 supposed to be balconies, and he said, "Those
5 are paste up balconies." You know, I mean,
6 even he criticized something like that, and
7 that was a whole lot more Mediterranean than
8 what he designed. I mean, he designed the Zubi
9 building.

10 There's nothing inspirational and
11 Mediterranean in that building at all, and if
12 there is, please tell me what it is, but -- I
13 mean, this is the point of contention that the
14 residents have. They look at projects like
15 that, whether it'd be part of a bonus or it's
16 inspired or whatever, and they're saying, "This
17 isn't one bit Mediterranean."

18 And, you know, Robert brought up some
19 buildings on US-1. The Lifetime Building, I'm
20 sure you're referring to. The Lifetime
21 Building, come on, you know?

22 So we residents may not have your
23 credentials, but we've got a good set of eyes.
24 We can figure it out on our own. And what's
25 been passed under a Mediterranean Bonus, a lot

49

1 subjective, the way it's presented, Number One.
2 Number Two, personally, I like the idea of
3 the Mediterranean being more on the ground
4 level, as Felix has stated, than way up where
5 you don't see it or use it, but I don't see
6 that discussion taking place, at this point, to
7 do away with the Mediterranean Bonus, and
8 that's not what the City Staff is bringing
9 before us.

10 What is it that you're looking for from
11 this Board?

12 MS. GARCIA: Well, again, so this was
13 reviewed and kind of workshopped with the Board
14 of Architects. They're looking for more teeth
15 to review these projects. Right now, they have
16 a lot of criteria in the Med Bonus, that's
17 already required underneath the existing
18 Zoning. So they are looking for more -- to
19 strengthen their criteria, to be able to
20 analyze these buildings, and right now they
21 don't have that.

22 So they agree that there are some buildings
23 that are out there, that they probably wouldn't
24 have liked to give Med Bonus to, or maybe they
25 weren't on the Board at the time and they don't

51

1 of times has nothing to do with Mediterranean
2 architecture.

3 So, again, I'll reiterate, I think this
4 Board should recommend to the Commissioner who
5 brought this up to have a real serious
6 discussion about eliminating the Mediterranean
7 Bonus, period.

8 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: For me, I'm here to
9 analyze what was brought before us, which is
10 how to look at giving Mediterranean Bonuses.
11 If there are ideas or wishes of residents or
12 individuals, that want to do away with the
13 Mediterranean Bonus, I think that's a different
14 discussion, and that's something that has to be
15 brought up, to re-write the Zoning Code, not as
16 a discussion today.

17 There could be the recommendation, as Sue
18 says, if that comes about from this Board.
19 Obviously, that's based on a recommendation and
20 a second and a vote. To me, what I'm looking
21 at is, what was presented, and is that
22 sufficient or not to change the way
23 Mediterranean Bonuses are given? And that's
24 why I actually asked the four architects to
25 comment on it, because, to me, it's very

50

1 agree that it looks like it's Mediterranean,
2 but they don't really have much to go with.
3 They have what's in the Code right now, which
4 has bike racks and --

5 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: But when the Board of
6 Architects looks at the Level 1, is it a full
7 panel that looks at the Level 1?

8 MS. GARCIA: Yes, always. Yes.

9 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: So whether it's Level
10 1 --

11 MS. GARCIA: Basically, any new
12 construction is a full panel, but definitely,
13 any time they look at a Med Bonus, it's always
14 a full panel.

15 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Okay.

16 MS. KAWALERSKI: Mr. Chair, I do have to
17 take issue with something that you just said.

18 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: What's that?

19 MS. KAWALERSKI: You said, well, if a
20 resident doesn't want the Med Bonus, let them
21 like -- do it on their own.

22 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: No, I said -- that's
23 not exactly what I said.

24 MS. KAWALERSKI: You know, my
25 understanding, this is a quasi-judicial board,

52

1 this is where those suggesting should come
2 from. This is what we should be doing.

3 MS. SUAREZ: So just one point of
4 clarification. This item is not a
5 quasi-judicial item, because this is a proposed
6 amendment to the Zoning Code. So this is a
7 legislative item, just for clarification.

8 MS. KAWALERSKI: Right, and I'm just
9 saying, it's a quasi-judicial board. I didn't
10 say that it was an item that was
11 quasi-judicial.

12 MS. SUAREZ: Yes.

13 MS. KAWALERSKI: But if this Board has the
14 weight it's supposed to have, we should be
15 making these kinds of recommendations, not just
16 voting the up or down on a project here or
17 there. I mean, we haven't even addressed
18 issues like the Live Local Act that we've
19 brought up a number of times. You know, that's
20 my understanding of what this Board should be
21 doing.

22 We have professionals on the Board. We
23 have armatures on the Board, with good set of
24 eyes. We should be bringing this up for
25 suggestion to the Commission, not just up or

53

1 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: We have a motion. Is
2 there a second?

3 MR. PARDO: I'll make the second, for
4 discussion -- for discussion.

5 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: So we have second to
6 eliminate Mediterranean Bonus, and then we'll
7 get into discussion?

8 MR. PARDO: Correct.

9 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you.

10 Go ahead, Felix.

11 MR. PARDO: So I think you clearly said
12 that what's before us really is the
13 Mediterranean -- adjustments to the
14 Mediterranean Bonus Ordinance. So I think we
15 would do one of two things, clearly. It's to
16 (A) defer it, with the discussion and the
17 transcript going to the Commission or (B) vote
18 it up or down, the suggestions that are there,
19 that I feel total uncomfortable with.

20 So what I would like to do is either (A),
21 defer it, or vote it up or down, but I think
22 that the message, I think, is clear that the
23 bonuses themselves and what they're given for
24 has been a big subject of the discussion this
25 evening.

55

1 down votes on this project or that project, but
2 the real issues that matter to the residents.

3 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Well, the way I see
4 it, there are seven members and each one has
5 their own opinion. So if one member feels a
6 certain way -- that's why I said, if the
7 recommendation wants to be made, and then
8 seconded it, and voted upon, then that's a
9 vote, but that's not what I see that has come
10 before us.

11 MS. KAWALERSKI: Okay, but we're allowed
12 to --

13 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Let me ask you a
14 question.

15 MS. KAWALERSKI: Yes.

16 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Would you like to make
17 a recommendation?

18 MS. KAWALERSKI: I would love to make a
19 recommendation, and I'm assuming this is in the
20 form of a motion?

21 MS. SUAREZ: Yes.

22 MS. KAWALERSKI: I'd like to present a
23 motion to make a suggestion to the entire
24 Commission to eliminate the Mediterranean
25 Bonus.

54

1 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Understood.

2 Right now we have a motion and we have a
3 second. What I'd like to do first, is there
4 any other further discussion before I call for
5 a roll on it? No?

6 Call the roll, please.

7 THE SECRETARY: Sue Kawalerski?

8 MS. KAWALERSKI: Yes.

9 THE SECRETARY: Felix Pardo?

10 MR. PARDO: Yes.

11 THE SECRETARY: Javier Salman?

12 MR. SALMAN: No.

13 THE SECRETARY: Chip Withers?

14 MR. WITHERS: No.

15 THE SECRETARY: Robert Behar?

16 MR. BEHAR: No.

17 THE SECRETARY: Julio Grabiell?

18 MR. GRABIEL: No.

19 THE SECRETARY: No?

20 MR. GRABIEL: No.

21 THE SECRETARY: Eibi Aizenstat?

22 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: No.

23 MR. PARDO: Mr. Chairman -- sorry. Mr.
24 Chairman --

25 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Yes.

56

1 MR. PARDO: -- I'd like to be able to --
2 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: So that motion fails,
3 to be clear, for the record.

4 MR. PARDO: Correct.

5 I'd like to make a motion to defer this
6 item, with the specific discussion being
7 referred to the Commissioners, so they
8 understand exactly what was discussed and why
9 it was discussed, as far as the Mediterranean
10 Bonuses, et cetera.

11 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: But they read the
12 minutes --

13 MR. PARDO: Correct.

14 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: -- and the transcript,
15 either way.

16 What you're saying, just so I'm clear, that
17 you don't want to have any further discussion
18 for this item, with our Board, at this point,
19 to go forward?

20 MR. PARDO: Right.

21 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: But defer it with the
22 language that is there now?

23 MR. PARDO: Correct. I think it would not
24 be the tool set that the Board of Architects is
25 looking for. I think that the deferral would

57

1 so now there is a proposed Ordinance that you
2 are considering today, and generally the
3 Commissioners would -- or the Commissioner who
4 is sponsoring this would want a recommendation
5 from this Board, so it can go to Commission on
6 First Reading with a recommendation from this
7 Board, recommendation yes or no.

8 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: If it's deferred, as
9 the way --

10 MS. SUAREZ: Deferral means that you would
11 like it to come back to this Board. That's
12 what a deferral is.

13 MR. PARDO: Correct.

14 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: But for the Commission
15 to review our records first? Is that --

16 MR. SALMAN: No. No, it stops here and it
17 goes back to the Staff to reevaluate, based on
18 the comments we've been giving her.

19 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: That's what I
20 misunderstood.

21 MR. SALMAN: Which we've given her plenty
22 few.

23 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Yeah.

24 MR. SALMAN: All right.

25 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: That's what I

59

1 give Staff more time to be able to do something
2 different and better.

3 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: But you don't want to
4 give any recommendation to the Board of
5 Architects, you don't want to give any further
6 tools that they should consider, you just want
7 to go ahead and say, it should go directly to
8 the Commission, based on the discussion --

9 MR. PARDO: No. I think it should come
10 back here, with the deferral.

11 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: But to the Commission
12 first? In other words, normally we would send
13 this back to the Board of Architects. Am I
14 incorrect in that, that what we're doing there
15 is --

16 MS. GARCIA: I mean, for this item, it
17 makes sense, because this is a Board of
18 Architects kind of criteria that they look at
19 every week.

20 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: That's what I --

21 MS. SUAREZ: Well, the general process for
22 a text amendment is that you all -- you know,
23 it's gone through the Staff process. There's
24 been -- like Ms. Garcia said, it's been
25 workshopped with the Board of Architects, and

58

1 misunderstood. I thought you wanted to defer
2 so it goes straight to the Commission.

3 MR. PARDO: No. No. No. To give Staff
4 the opportunity to take the comments that were
5 made by the Board, to be able to refine, to
6 redo, et cetera.

7 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you for
8 clarifying.

9 MR. PARDO: Yes.

10 MS. SUAREZ: And so, just to be clear,
11 though, if there is a motion to defer by this
12 Board, Staff or a Commissioner can request that
13 it still be put on before the Commission, even
14 without a recommendation from this Board, just
15 so that's clear.

16 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Understood.

17 MR. PARDO: Let be clearer then with the
18 motion, the motion would be to defer and give
19 Staff the opportunity to provide a much more
20 comprehensive and more specific document to
21 come back to the Planning Board.

22 MS. SUAREZ: Understood. I'm just saying,
23 it's still within the Commissioner's
24 prerogative, if the Commissioner wants to --

25 MR. PARDO: That's fine, but I think this

60

1 way the motion has teeth to it.
 2 MS. SUAREZ: Understood.
 3 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you.
 4 Is there a second?
 5 MR. WITHERS: I'll second that.
 6 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Chip seconds.
 7 MR. SALMAN: For discussion.
 8 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Any discussion?
 9 MR. SALMAN: I have discussion.
 10 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Yes, sir.
 11 MR. SALMAN: You stated that the -- you
 12 were concerned that there was nothing having to
 13 do with context, and with appropriateness with
 14 regards to context as one of the criteria. Is
 15 that something you would want to add, because
 16 this is your time to do it?
 17 MR. PARDO: Well, and I think it was
 18 specific, and I think that the context is a key
 19 element for the Board of Architects to review,
 20 which includes also the massing, as with the
 21 examples --
 22 MR. SALMAN: The massing is in it.
 23 MR. PARDO: I'm sorry?
 24 MR. SALMAN: Massing is in there.
 25 MR. PARDO: No. No. The massing is in it,

61

1 but it's truly breathtaking, because the Board
 2 of Architects really has been informed, and I
 3 have been a witness to it, where they've been
 4 confirmed that, you know, you can't get into
 5 the plan, you can't get into the massing, you
 6 can't get into the compatibility.
 7 MR. SALMAN: Oh, sure you can.
 8 MR. PARDO: You and I know that.
 9 MR. SALMAN: Sure you can.
 10 MR. PARDO: But, you know, when you have
 11 someone giving them an opinion, you know, on a
 12 side bar, saying you can't do that, and then
 13 you end up with buildings like the one on
 14 US-1 --
 15 MR. SALMAN: You can set proportions for
 16 difference in elevations.
 17 MR. PARDO: I'm not disagreeing --
 18 MR. SALMAN: And that could be a very
 19 simple mathematical equation. If your neighbor
 20 is one story, you can't do more than two next
 21 to it.
 22 MR. PARDO: Well, I think Staff --
 23 MR. SALMAN: You know, and there's lots of
 24 ways that we can be very specific as to
 25 context, and if you're on an axial point of a

62

1 building, within a separate context, you have
 2 to have some sort of (Unintelligible) within
 3 the context of which you're creating a building
 4 within that axial view.

5 MR. PARDO: I feel comfortable --

6 MR. SALMAN: There's lots of very specific
 7 things that we can add into this Code with
 8 regard to compatibility, and I think what we
 9 need to do is give them the information and the
 10 tools of what we're going to be looking for,
 11 for an approval; isn't that correct?

12 MR. PARDO: I think --

13 MR. SALMAN: Okay. Then that's what you
 14 want. So let's give them that kind of specific
 15 direction.

16 MS. GARCIA: And in the table, there's
 17 something called context analysis, which came
 18 from the Board of Architects, they're looking
 19 for this, because they feel like people go and
 20 they present their building and they have no
 21 context with what's around them. So that is to
 22 propose the massing scale and height be
 23 compatible with adjacent buildings and add an
 24 analysis, contextually illustrated, to show its
 25 compatibility of the proposed building and

63

1 maintain the character of the existing --

2 MR. SALMAN: That's not true, because when
 3 you submit to Board of Architects, you have to
 4 present the buildings which surround your
 5 building, as part of your presentation.

6 MS. GARCIA: Yes, but their concern was
 7 that sometimes the images are picking and
 8 choosing what's around there, and they think
 9 there was not enough analysis being done.

10 MR. BEHAR: Yes, and let me throw something
 11 at you. And I remember when we sat on the Blue
 12 Ribbon Committee, if you -- you have a site.
 13 Let's say it's adjacent to the old Republic
 14 National Bank building -- I forget whatever the
 15 name of the building is today -- on the Circle,
 16 which is a building that Julio, with Mitch
 17 Alvarez had done, and you referred to a very
 18 good -- which I personally think is a very
 19 beautiful building, and that's my opinion.

20 MR. SALMAN: And it's Mediterranean
 21 inspired. It's not Mediterranean.

22 MR. BEHAR: But today, when you look at
 23 those guidelines, it would not be able to
 24 qualify for the inspiration part or -- you
 25 know. So that's compatibility. Well, the

64

1 building is going to be right next to that
2 site, and how do you -- how do you address
3 that?

4 MR. PARDO: This, again, when you used the
5 word compatibility or the word massing, you
6 have to provide certain examples, and my
7 problem right now with the way that what is
8 being shown us, is that the word may be there
9 once or twice, you know, each one, but there
10 isn't a better definition. There isn't -- it's
11 not explained in a better way, like the example
12 you just gave.

13 And the issue is, also, that -- on the
14 compatibility, sometimes it also depends on the
15 context of the area and when you're designing
16 it. Giving that tool to the Board of
17 Architects gives them the ability to do a
18 better job, what they're looking for.

19 MR. BEHAR: But, Felix, look, for
20 example -- and you're right on the Board of
21 Architects, but that building, if you look at
22 it, it's an office building, and that building
23 has a large opening, windows, and -- you know.
24 So that is a feature component of that design
25 that is critically important to make that

65

1 So this is complicated. This was part of
2 what the Blue Ribbon Committee discussed, as
3 you'll remember. We never got to that point.
4 We got cut off at a certain point. But this
5 doesn't continue or do anything to finish that
6 particular job, in my opinion.

7 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: We have a motion right
8 now for deferring.

9 MR. BEHAR: And a second.

10 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: And a second. Any
11 other discussion?

12 MR. WITHERS: I just have a question for
13 the architects. The number that was thrown
14 around to me, in order to encourage
15 Mediterranean, was an additional cost of 25 to
16 30 percent to build that building originally.

17 MR. PARDO: Back in the day.

18 MR. WITHERS: Back in the day. Is it
19 anything close to that now, with the new --

20 MR. PARDO: No.

21 MR. WITHERS: I don't know --

22 MR. PARDO: I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman, if I
23 could answer that.

24 MR. WITHERS; I'm just curious to know.

25 MR. PARDO: Back in the day, nobody was

67

1 successful.

2 Today, in order to receive those bonuses,
3 the example that I'm seeing, windows have to be
4 small windows. So how do you -- that, to me,
5 is an oxymoron, you know.

6 MR. PARDO: And, again, this is what is
7 wrong in the Code today. Me, I would give the
8 bonuses to that building, and I would not have
9 given the same bonuses simply because they went
10 overboard on the detailing on The Plaza,
11 because the massing is wrong. Everybody in
12 this room knows that the massing was wrong.
13 The same as the building that -- that cube on
14 US-1, the same thing. The massing is wrong.
15 We all understand that. And that's where the
16 compatibility, the contextual, all of these
17 different things go to.

18 And the other thing is, when you are next
19 to a historic building, the viewport is very
20 important for that historic building, where
21 you're not obstructing it or minimizing it or
22 destroying it, which is the 2901 building on
23 Ponce, which is the historic building, that
24 they couldn't touch, but instead of paying
25 homage to it, they basically just ignored it.

66

1 doing that. In fact, most of the times what
2 they were doing were a lot of glass boxes, a
3 lot of this, a lot of that, and then -- until,
4 for example, again, Julio worked on the bank
5 building, and then did the beautiful job on the
6 alley for the Colonnade, and then, you know, it
7 was different, because the scale was different.
8 So the cost was there, but it wasn't there. It
9 was less.

10 So the smaller the building, the more the
11 cost, but over time, with technology and means
12 and methods today, there's no way you could
13 justify that it's a 35 percent increase. It
14 will be more, but more compared to what, and
15 will that be approved by the Board of
16 Architects? And that's also a part of the
17 formula.

18 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Any other questions?
19 No?

20 Jill, call the roll, please.

21 MR. GRABIEL: Define the motion again.

22 MR. PARDO: To defer, to give Staff the
23 ability to come back before us.

24 MR. GRABIEL: Okay.

25 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you.

68

1 Jill.
 2 THE SECRETARY: Felix Pardo?
 3 MR. PARDO: Yes.
 4 THE SECRETARY: Javier Salman?
 5 MR. SALMAN: Yes.
 6 THE SECRETARY: Chip Withers?
 7 MR. WITHERS: Yes.
 8 THE SECRETARY: Robert Behar?
 9 MR. BEHAR: Yes.
 10 THE SECRETARY: Julio Grabiell?
 11 MR. GRABIEL: Yes.
 12 THE SECRETARY: Sue Kawalerski?
 13 MS. KAWALERSKI: No.
 14 THE SECRETARY: Eibi Aizenstat?
 15 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Yes.
 16 MS. GARCIA: Thank you.
 17 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: So you have your
 18 direction.
 19 MR. SALMAN: Some.
 20 MR. BEHAR: A lot.
 21 MS. GARCIA: Yes.
 22 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Let me ask the Board,
 23 should we continue on Number 4 and 5, so Robert
 24 can stay?
 25 MR. BEHAR: Look, I think -- I'll go

1 outside. I appreciate it, but in fairness to
 2 the applicant, I'll sit out for a little while.
 3 MR. GRABIEL: Thank you.
 4 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you very much.
 5 I just wanted to get a consensus.
 6 Madam City Attorney, if you'd please read
 7 -- let the record state that Robert Behar has
 8 left the dais.
 9 MR. WITHERS: Elvis has left the building.
 10 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Elvis has left the
 11 building.
 12 Thank you.
 13 MS. SUAREZ: So E-1 is a Resolution of the
 14 City Commission of Coral Gables, Florida
 15 approving Conditional Use Review of a Site Plan
 16 pursuant to Zoning Code Article 14, "Process"
 17 Section 14-203, "Conditional Uses," for a
 18 proposed townhouse development referred to as
 19 "The George" on the property legally described
 20 as Lots 29 through 41, Block 10, Coral Gables
 21 Biltmore Section, Coral Gables, Florida;
 22 including required conditions; providing for a
 23 repealer provision, severability clause, and an
 24 effective date.
 25 E-2 is a Resolution of the City Commission

1 of Coral Gables, Florida approving the
 2 Tentative Plat entitled "The George" pursuant
 3 to Zoning Code Article 14, "Process," Section
 4 14-210, "Platting/Subdivision," being a re-plat
 5 of 36,634 square feet into 13 platted lots for
 6 thirteen residential townhouses on property
 7 assigned Multi-Family 4 District zoning, the
 8 property legally described as Lots 29 through
 9 41, Block 10, Coral Gables Biltmore Section,
 10 Coral Gables, Florida; providing for a repealer
 11 provision, severability clause, and an
 12 effective date.
 13 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: So E-1 and E-2, we'll
 14 look at together, but have separate votes on
 15 them.
 16 MS. SUAREZ: Correct.
 17 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you.
 18 MR. GARCIA-SERRA: Good evening, Mr. Chair,
 19 Members of the Board, Mario Garcia-Serra, with
 20 offices at 600 Brickell Avenue, here this
 21 evening representing The George, LLC, the
 22 applicant and owner of the assemblage of
 23 property located at 711 to 741 Valencia Avenue.
 24 And I'm accompanied this evening by Alirio
 25 Torrealba, the principal of MG Developer, the

1 parent company of The George, LLC, my client,
 2 as well as Jenny Ducret and Jose Mata, from MG
 3 Developer, and our project architects, Maria
 4 del la Guardia and Kegan Marshall.
 5 So, as I mentioned earlier, The George, LLC
 6 is a subsidiary of MG Developer, which is one
 7 of the City's most successful and recognized
 8 developers. Just in the vicinity of this site,
 9 as is indicated on the aerial photo, they have
 10 built four other projects, Biltmore Park,
 11 Althea Row, Beatrice Row and Biltmore Row. All
 12 of these projects have been very well received
 13 and recognized for their architecture and
 14 sensitive scale.
 15 The project under review tonight -- Kegan
 16 is going to show you a few more images of each
 17 of those projects. The project under review
 18 tonight, The George, named on in honor of our
 19 City founder, who is literally looking upon us
 20 this evening from behind you, continues that
 21 great tradition of those other projects. It is
 22 a thirteen-unit, three-story townhome,
 23 incorporating the best of Coral Gables
 24 architecture.
 25 In a demonstration of how this developer