

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item F-1
May 9, 2023
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Vince Lago
Vice Mayor Rhonda Anderson
Commissioner Melissa Castro
Commissioner Ariel Fernandez
Commissioner Kirk Menendez

City Staff

City Attorney, Cristina Suárez
City Manager, Peter Iglesias
City Clerk, Billy Urquia
City Planner, Jennifer Garcia

Public Speaker(s)

Sue Kawalerski
Maria Cruz

Agenda Item F-1 [3:15 p.m.]

An Ordinance of the City Commission providing for a Text Amendment to the City of Coral Gables Official Zoning Code by amending Article 10, “Parking and Access,” Section 10-110, “Amount of Required Parking,” adding parking exemption for newly enclosed roof deck on existing office buildings built as of February 9, 2021, and providing for severability clause, repealer provision, codification, and providing for an effective date. (03 08 23 PZB recommended approval, Vote 4-0) (Sponsored by Commissioner Menendez)

Mayor Lago: Let’s move onto item F-1.

City Attorney Suarez: F-1 is An Ordinance of the City Commission providing for a Text Amendment to the City of Coral Gables Official Zoning Code by amending Article 10, “Parking and Access,” Section 10-110, “Amount of Required Parking,” adding parking exemption for newly enclosed roof deck on existing office buildings built as of February 9, 2021, and providing for

City Commission Meeting

severability clause, repealer provision, codification, and providing for an effective date. City Planner.

City Planner Garcia: Good afternoon, Jennifer Garcia, City Planner. There have been a few changes since first reading. There are some friendly amendments by Commissioner Anderson. This is a sponsored amendment for Commissioner Menendez. So those changes include adding authority for the city to inspect the enclosed rooftop amenity for the office for compliance. If it's found to be complaint, then the building will have to find parking somehow. If there is failure to provide parking, then it's clarified in the code now that it would result in Code Enforcement proceedings and removal of...Those are all the changes.

Commissioner Anderson: Alright. And the only basis for – well, the reasons why I asked for those amendments is because covenants can change as time goes on. If it's clearly stated in the ordinance itself, then there is clear direction.

Commissioner Menendez: I appreciate the work that you all did adding that layer. That was obviously needed, and I appreciate the Commissioner bringing that up.

Commissioner Anderson: I'll move it, if you don't mind.

Commissioner Menendez: Yes – and I'll second it.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Clerk.

City Clerk Urquia: Mr. Mayor before we vote, we do have members of the public requesting to speak on the item. First speaker is Sue Kawalerski.

Mayor Lago: Okay.

Commissioner Castro: Quick question. Is this site specific?

City Attorney Suarez: No, it's not. It's a text amendment, so it's not site specific.

Ms. Kawalerski: Good afternoon again, Sue Kawalerski, 6830 Grecian Street. I would like some clarification on this. Would this include, for example, the Bacardi Building, which is an office building on Sunset where they have built an enclosed rooftop restaurant?

City Attorney Suarez: It would not. The City Planner can explain, but it would not. It's an existing use that's been permitted as of that date on the rooftop, but nothing that would change the occupancy on that roof deck.

City Planner Garcia: Right. That's a restaurant, they wouldn't include a restaurant, only the office amenity.

City Commission Meeting

Ms. Kawalerski: What is an office amenity?

City Manager Iglesias: It would be like an area for lunch or things like that, that's externally open; you would close that, it would be maintained as an amenity for that building and therefore no increase in parking. The use cannot change.

Commissioner Menendez: Only for the employees that work in the building.

Ms. Kawalerski: Okay. Like Fiola, Fiola is an existing restaurant on the ground floor of the Bacardi, right.

City Planner Garcia: Yes, but this is only for office buildings; office amenities and office buildings, so it wouldn't apply to them, because...

Ms. Kawalerski: I understand that, but the Bacardi Building which is where...rents space from is an office building.

City Planner Garcia: On the level, yes, but it's just the amenity deck that it is being proposed for.

Ms. Kawalerski: I just want to make sure that a lessee in an office building doesn't have that privilege of building something else on top and enclosing it without additional parking.

City Planner Garcia: Its only if its already being used as an open-air amenity, it's not enclosed on all four sides, three sides.

Commissioner Menendez: And the original concept was folks have their lunch break on the roof, which is great in February and January, but come July, August its pretty brutal, so the concept is let's give them – we're getting the workforce back in the office and create an environment that's pleasant for them to reward them for coming back.

Ms. Kawalerski: Okay. Got you. And this was your, I believe Commissioner Menendez, this was your...

Commissioner Menendez: I sponsored it.

Ms. Kawalerski: Is there a building specifically that you said, hey, we should do this for?

Commissioner Menendez: I had residents reach out to me and on a broader scale made a lot of sense to me, because if you just pick up the paper, it's hard-to-get people back in the office and let the employees have a nice area where they can have lunch.

Ms. Kawalerski: Okay. But there was no specific building that said, hey, let's make this happen?

Commissioner Menendez: This applies to citywide and its specific. Just like if Rip Holmes calls me on something regarding Miracle Mile, if I think it's a good idea for all of Miracle Mile, then I'll support it.

Ms. Kawalerski: Okay. I just want to make sure it wasn't one building specifically that lobbied you and said, let's do this and it became citywide.

Commissioner Menendez: [Inaudible]

Commissioner Anderson: And there's a date that's specifically mentioned in here, February 9, 2021, it had to be something that was being used as an office amenity to an office use permitted as of February 9, 2021.

Mayor Lago: Can we do something, Mr. Clerk.

City Clerk Urquia: Yes sir.

Mayor Lago: I don't want to have the back-and-forth engagement on – let's allow for public comment, have a public comment and then we move onto the next item. There is a sponsor of an item here, we've discussed it thoroughly. I want to understand it. We have a huge agenda; we'll be here until 12 o'clock at night. I'm just trying to make sure that we respect everybody's time. As the sponsor, have you, Commissioner, are you good?

Commissioner Menendez: Yes.

Mayor Lago: Any other questions?

Commissioner Anderson: No questions.

City Clerk Urquia: We still have more members of the public.

Mayor Lago: We have other people that want to speak.

City Clerk Urquia: Deborah Register and on Zoom we have Ms. Maria Cruz.

Mayor Lago: Perfect. Ms. Cruz, the floor is yours.

Ms. Cruz: Okay. Can you hear me?

Mayor Lago: Yes ma'am.

Ms. Cruz: Alright. Maria Cruz, 1447 Miller Road. I just want to make sure that I understand this. This is for people that have office space and use the rooftop for their breakout, coffee, lunch,

whatever. Since they are already in the building, they will go up to the rooftop and do that, but there will not be other people coming from the outside to use that, is that correct?

Commissioner Menendez: Correct.

Ms. Cruz: Okay. Thank you.

City Clerk Urquia: That's it for the public hearing, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Do we have a motion; do we have further comment?

Commissioner Anderson: Yes

Commissioner Castro: Yes

Commissioner Fernandez: Yes

Commissioner Menendez: Yes

Mayor Lago: Yes

(Vote: 5-0)