

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item H-15
August 26, 2025
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Vince Lago
Vice Mayor Rhonda Anderson
Commissioner Melissa Castro
Commissioner Ariel Fernandez (Absent)
Commissioner Richard D. Lara

City Staff

City Attorney, Cristina Suárez
City Manager, Peter Iglesias
City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Public Speaker(s)

Maria Cruz
Maria Magdalena Estupinan
Lisa DeTournay

Agenda Item H-15

A Resolution of the City Commission pursuant to Section 26 of the City Charter and Section 2-51(e) of the City Code removing Sue Kawalerski as a member of the Planning and Zoning Board.

Mayor Lago: Final item is H-15, correct. Alright, H-15. Mr. Manager, yes sir.

City Manager Iglesias: Just for the record. The matter before the Commission is not about silencing a voice or punishing a vote. It's about upholding the standards of integrity of the Planning and Zoning Board, a quasi-judicial body whose decisions must be fair, impartial and defensible. Board members are expected to ask difficult questions and represent residents, but they must also conduct themselves with professionalism and respect. When the conduct falls short of these standards it jeopardizes the city's credibility, undermines the resident's ability to challenge incompatible projects and ultimately harms the community we serve, quasi-judicial role and standards. The

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Planning Board is a quasi-judicial body. While not a court it must act like one in applying existing policies to specific facts. Decisions must be based on evidence not prejudice and must allow and must follow principles of procedural fairness. Actions of the board are subject to judicial review, meaning the process and conduct must meet a high standard of integrity, impartiality and professionalism. Cause for removal. This resolution has nothing to do with how Ms. Kawalerski voted on any issue. Board members are free to interpret facts and cast votes according to their judgement. The concern here is her conduct and comments at recent meetings, which are prejudicial, disrespectful, and derogatory. Directed towards individuals, including County Commissioner Raquel Regalado, who was publicly berated. This is not about Commissioner Regalado needing protection. This is about a standard of professionalism expected in quasi-judicial proceedings regardless of the individual involved. Including derogatory remarks towards the University of Miami, one of the city's most important community partners and economic drivers. Continued baseless prejudicial statements about Chinese students. These behaviors fall short of standards required of a quasi-judicial officer and undermine the city's credibility. Consequences for the city. Because of her actions a developer determined that they could not receive a fair hearing before the city's Planning and Zoning Board. As a result, the project was shifted to the Miami-Dade Rapid Transit Zone process, by passing the city's review. This decision has serious consequences. The project can become larger and more massive in scale under the RTZ process. The city lost the ability to manage the permitting process or have meaningful input. The city can no longer impose usage or signage limitations. The outcome is detrimental to the City of Coral Gables and its residents. Resident voice and fairness. Residents deserve to have their voices heard in a process that is fair, credible and defensible. When board members act with bias or make prejudicial statements, it jeopardizes the city's legal standing and weakens the resident's ability to challenge incompatible projects. Ensuring impartiality and professionalism is the best way to save the residents' interest and preserve the city's authority over development. Prior briefings. Ms. Kawalerski was briefed by Assistant Director of Planning and the City Attorney's Office regarding this project and was aware of what was at stake. An overlay alternative plan was presented to try to retain the project in the City of Coral Gables versus the RTZ process, which brings greater density and would allow a project to be higher and bypasses our signage and use limits. She has been advised of the standards expected of board members. I met with her personally to bring these issues to her attention, as I thought it was important to emphasize the standards expected of board members and why I was placing her removal on the agenda. I did not want to blindside her. Despite this, she has acted in a prejudicial and derogatory manner, comprising the city's ability to conduct fair hearings and affecting the final project result, which I again must stress is detrimental to the city and the Riviera neighborhood. In conclusion, this decision is not about one individual, it's about the responsibility we all share to preserve the integrity of our city's processes and protect the interest of Coral Gables residents. The Planning and Zoning Board plays a vital role in ensuring fair hearings and defensible outcomes. Maintaining high standards of professionalism is essential

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to safeguarding our authority, preserving residents' trust and ensuring that development in Coral Gables reflects the values of our community. Removal is a difficult but necessary step to restore credibility, fairness and the effectiveness of the board.

Mayor Lago: Thank you, Mr. Manager.

City Manager Iglesias: We have a presentation, Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Please.

Planning and Zoning Director Garcia: Pull up the slides please.

City Manager Iglesias: First slide. This is the Mark, the original proposal. Its eight stories, and by the way, has a 50-foot linear plaza through the entire project. Second slide please. The zoning of the Mark is on the left. It was 97 feet; 3.13 FAR, and 25-foot 8-inch setbacks. The proposed RTZ has a maximum height of 150 feet, has no limits in FAR, and zero setbacks. Also, we have our residential parking, the RTZ has zero parking for residential units. In addition to that, the uses are per the city, the uses under RTZ are per the RTZ code; signage is per the city on that proposed project; signage is under it would be now under the RTZ code. The second is the massing study that shows what the Mark was proposing on the right what the RTZ massing can be on that project. We have no control over that. And now we have a montage showing some of the issues that we have just discussed. The Clerk could play that please. Thank you.

Mayor Lago: While we wait for that montage, I think it's very clear when the Mark came before the Planning and Zoning Board, the code allowed six stories, they were requesting eight, is that correct, Madam Director. I just want to put on the record.

Planning and Zoning Director Garcia: The current zoning of that property right now is MX1, so it's only allowed to have six stories including Mediterranean Bonus.

Mayor Lago: And they came to us asking for eight.

Planning and Zoning Director Garcia: They were requesting MX2, which is a total of eight stories.

Mayor Lago: And how many feet – 97 feet?

Planning and Zoning Director Garcia: 97 feet, correct.

Mayor Lago: So instead of negotiating – so instead of having a thorough and thoughtful conversation, we had this back-and-forth battle where the developer decided instead of negotiating with the city after being insulted, they are just going to go the RTZ route and go to the county, which is 150 feet. I just want to put it on the record, because everything seems so funny and you have entities like the Coral Gables Gazette, Political Cortadito, the blogs, that spew all this

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misinformation because they have an agenda, confusing the residents. Are we in a better position today, Madam Director, with the RTZ or we would have negotiated with the developer we would have had a smaller building, with a smaller massing, as a result of less FAR. What is your opinion on that?

Planning and Zoning Director Garcia: So, it's always better for the city to exercise our own authority over properties within our city. Unfortunately, with RTZ subzone as proposed by the county, we would lose that control over the signage, setbacks, lighting.

Mayor Lago: But when the applicant came to you and said, look, this is what we would like to put on this project, let's negotiate. Why did they decide to go towards the county and RTZ after their first meeting with the Planning and Zoning Board. What was your inkling, what was the reasoning why they decided to go the county route?

Planning and Zoning Director Garcia: I'm assuming because of remarks made to them at that public hearing.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Through the Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Yes.

Vice Mayor Anderson: I can provide you an answer because I was told because they were deferred and they couldn't move forward and why go through this process if they can go to the county.

City Manager Iglesias: Through the Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Yes sir.

Cit Manager Iglesias: Commissioner Regalado asked them to come through us first and they did not take the RTZ initially. The project went through the Board of Architects and went to the Planning and Zoning Board. At that point, is when they decided to go to the RTZ process. We had Commissioner Regalado come at our invitation to explain and to see if we could negotiate some things through the overlay and that was a disaster in that meeting. And at that point is when the Commissioner and the developer decided to go strictly through the RTZ process.

Commissioner Castro: Through the Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Yes.

Commissioner Castro: Question – For it to be deferred, it's not Sue alone that deferred it, right. It was a board deferral.

Mayor Lago: No, no, no. It was Felix Pardo who played a major role, major role and obviously not wanting to negotiate or not wanting to do their part and then there was one additional vote, right. How many votes were there that day, Mr. Manager? The people who were not willing...

City Manager Iglesias: It was deferred because of the traffic study. However, they decided not to come back because of the insults over the University of Miami and so forth. So, it was the feeling that they could not, that it was not a fair process and that was what the Commissioner also felt after the over three hours of being – three hours and twenty minutes of being in the Planning and Zoning Board for one item, for that one item.

Commissioner Castro: So, what you're saying is that this – through the Mayor – so what you're saying is that it wasn't deferred just because of Sue, it was deferred by the board, and they decided not to come back because of the deferral. Because it's really hard to say because of Sue and because of Felix, because they don't have the majority. That said, we did have another extra person, and it was deferred, okay, maybe I'll take the blame for that, but just to go ahead and put the blame, to say that Sue has that much power for them to not come back, I think that's over-reaching.

City Manager Iglesias: Through the Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Yes.

City Manager Iglesias: Commissioner, it's not the deferral that got, it's the insults and the feeling that they were not going to get a proper process. The Commissioner felt exactly the same way after being at that meeting berated and badgered for three hours and twenty minutes in that Planning and Zoning meeting. That was the problem. They went to the Board of Architects. They went multiple times to the Board of Architects without incident. They wanted to do the project with us. Commissioner Regalado asked them to do the project with us. So, it was being badgered and believing that you were not going to get a fair process, and that's what happened. Because they went to the Board of Architects and they went multiple times to get the project through the Board of Architects.

Mayor Lago: So, you're ready to go Mr. Clerk. Perfect. How long is the video?

City Clerk Urquia: Eighteen minutes long.

Mayor Lago: Alright. Let's go.

City Clerk Urquia: So, Cable TV has the video ready to go.

[Video Presentation of Planning and Zoning Meeting 4/10/2024]

Sue Kawalerski: So, you weren't present at that vote, correct. You were not here. You had to recuse yourself from that vote.

Eibi Aizenstat: If I may. What I ask is, Robert has made a statement which he's entitled to...

Sue Kawalerski: Then I'm commenting.

Eibi Aizenstat: You are. I understand, but what I ask is let him speak, let him finish. Once he's done, please do so. But I do want to point out my understanding is that the members do not have to be present to make the statement on the minutes.

Sue Kawalerski: Excuse me. When he says, "we" and he wasn't even here, that is an inaccurate statement.

Robert Behar: That's not correct. I read the minutes that I'm entitled to read as a board member, and I see that there is a mistake that is a false statement. I want to make the correction for the record, so the record is set correctly, that we did not, this board did not move the boundary, the CBD boundary line.

Sue Kawalerski: Okay. Are you done, because I'd like to comment. Are you done?

Eibi Aizenstat: Go ahead please.

Sue Kawalerski: Okay. First of all, the statement that I made was that this board subjectively and arbitrarily was trying to change the CBD boundary. That is a statement of fact. I didn't say that this board has the purview to do that or not. I said that that's apparently what was happening with the three votes on this board.

Robert Behar: There was no vote to move the CBD line.

Sue Kawalerski: And as I said in my statement, the vote apparently, the intention of that vote from three members was to arbitrarily and subjectively move the CBD line. I never said that this board had the purview or didn't have the purview to do this. I said three members of this board on their own subjectively tried to move the boundary.

Eibi Aizenstat: Sue, I'd like to move the meeting along.

Sue Kawalerski: Okay. But I do have a comment on recusal. Did Mr. Behar ever fill out one of these forms when he recuses himself from these meetings? This is part of the law, and I have never seen him fill out one of these nor has it been made available to this board.

Eibi Aizenstat: We'll ask the Legal Department.

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Attorney Colliar for the Board: I believe that you just simply get it from the Clerk's office. It's available to you.

Sue Kawalerski: Well, it doesn't say that we have to ask for it. It's supposed to be given to us. It says right here what the rules are.

Attorney Colliar for the Board: I'll ask the Clerk to provide copies so that you have them available to you, so that if and when you need a recusal, you'll have the form.

Sue Kawalerski: Yes, but I mean, the filled-out form is what we need per the rules.

Attorney Colliar for the Board: No, you have to ...

Sue Kawalerski: Not my rules. The rules set forth in this form.

Attorney Colliar for the Board: Right. You're to fill out that form.

Sue Kawalerski: I'm not saying if I want to recuse myself. Any board member that recuses himself or herself has to fill out a form and it has to be made available to the board members. We've never received this.

Attorney Colliar for the Board: Well, my understanding of the matter of course is that if you do recuse yourself, you go to the Clerk's office, you get the form.

Sue Kawalerski: But Mr. Colliar, I'm saying whoever fills out this form, I know it should be on the record, but by this form it says it has to be distributed, the completed form has to be distributed to the board.

Eibi Aizenstat: He will do that.

Sue Kawalerski: Okay. He is saying if we want to recuse ourselves. I'm saying if somebody else recuses himself, that form completed must be provided to the board. We've never gotten one from Mr. Behar.

Attorney Colliar for the Board: It comes from the Clerk.

Sue Kawalerski: Whoever it comes from we never got it.

Eibi Aizenstat: Mr. Colliar will look into it.

Sue Kawalerski: Okay.

Eibi Aizenstat: Make sure the board gets it.

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Sue Kawalerski: Thank you. I don't know about you people, but I didn't see anything on the news about adding more capacity for sewers. I think we are putting band-aids on an old system. So, when you're saying, we're going to add another 830 bed rows, that's a lot of toilet usage. Okay, to put it bluntly, and that's one building. That's one building. And these are students, right. They drink a lot; you need a lot of capacity for them. Okay. So, thank you for bringing that up because I think we need to discuss this a little further, this board should discuss it. It came across my computer right after that project was approved, was a flyer, "Hey students come here and be part of our project, and it had a big University of Miami logo on it. So, with the questions about, you have discussions with University of Miami regarding – well, let's put it this way, are you the straw man for UM, because on the other side of US-1, my side where I live in Riviera, we now have the Venera, now called The Standard, its dormitories. That's all it is. They are dormitories. Now we have the Paseo that I heard was designed specifically for Chinese students and the hotel for the Chinese parents to come and visit, and guess what happened when they opened, the pandemic. No Chinese students, no Chinese visitors, but now you're seeing a lot of Asians. And my understanding is that UM actually solicited that developer to build this for the Chinese students. Now we have another dormitory going in or wanting to go in, where the Bagel Emporium Plaza is, another dormitory. So, what's happening, you had this beautiful residential area and what's overshadowing the residential area with no buffer, we've got a bunch of dormitories. When did we become the strawman for University of Miami. Why are we building dormitories in a residential area? So, we are turning the Riviera neighborhood where Chip lives, where I live, or Henry lives, where a lot of people here live, into basically a very transient neighborhood. And I don't know if you've been to the Publix. My Publix on Manza, which is where the Standard is, it looks like the locust came there, because you can't find anything, because the students have come in, especially on game day, and you can't find anything on the shelves. It's like locusts have invaded a residential area. We can't shop at Publix anymore. I can't get to my house. I was stuck in traffic the other day for 20 minutes trying to get to my house on South Alhambra, and it's not just this school. So, I'm just saying, you add another project and then another project, the UM Building is, I think sold, what's going to happen there, and all of a sudden, we are literally home-locked. We are not going to be able to move. Love your project. Not here, sorry.

[Planning and Zoning Meeting 7/2/2025]

Sue Kawalerski: Alright, but we're hearing tonight residents that are saying, first I heard about this. It was within a couple of days. So, now you're actually hearing from the people that are going to be directly impacted. Forget the Commissioners, forget the city administrators.

Commissioner Regalado: Sue, I hear from people all the time and I'm happy to sit here and listen to them and I spoke to them during the break and we're happy to receive their calls and their

emails, but if we were to stop a governmental process just because someone says that they did not know about it, government would not function, and you should know that as a county employee.

Sue Kawalerski: So, I mean, you are going to take these comments and say, tough luck.

Commissioner Regalado: No. We have public hearing, and we welcome them to attend the public hearing at the county, and they have their right to speak here, they have their right to speak to the Coral Gables Commissioner. The Manager is sitting here. There are plenty of opportunities to speak to all the stakeholders. The only time where they will not be allowed to speak to stakeholders is if this developer decides to go Live Local and then we are all out of the conversation.

Sue Kawalerski: Okay. So, the answer to my question is, no, you're not going to slow down the process.

Commissioner Regalado: Your characterization is incorrect, and I disagree with you.

Sue Kawalerski: Okay. We can agree to disagree, but that's what I heard. I don't know. Do you still sit on the TPO, the Transportation Planning Organization.

Commissioner Regalado: We all sit on the TPO. Yes. And I am the Chairman of Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety.

Sue Kawalerski: Fantastic. Okay. So, to your point, its conflict – the cart before the horse. We are forcing all these people into a dense area to use Metrorail that isn't going to be expanded for 10, 20, 30, 40 years, okay. And if we did force them to use Metrorail, guess what they are saying to us, guess what the TPO is saying, they are not using Metrorail – headline. Headline – Transit ridership has declined steadily. So, all the TPO studies, these are studies from 2022 all the way up to this year.

Commissioner Regalado: That includes buses, and it is not true of Metrorail. Actually, Metrorail is being used more now than ever, because of the development in part of the Rapid Transit Zone, and the investment that we have made in upgrading our stations, which were 30 years old before the development.

Sue Kawalerski: Well, I don't know what I'm reading here, because I have a pre-pandemic to current study here and it says that levels of ridership are down 14 to 26 percent.

Commissioner Regalado: That includes Covid.

Sue Kawalerski: I know it includes Covid. This is 2019. Covid started in 2020.

Commissioner Regalado: The decline that you are talking about includes Covid.

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Eibi Aizenstat: Sue. Sue. If we can. Allow the Commissioner to answer the question.

Robert Behar: Correct. Because I don't think this is...

Sue Kawalerski: Okay. There's a point I'm getting to, because we're pushing RTZs and yet, we have – why are we pushing RTZs when there is no transportation plan to allow these people to go wherever they want to go.

Commissioner Regalado: Respectfully, the RTZ item was passed over four years ago, and is the law on the books for the county and has been the marker for our Comprehensive Master Plan. So, as far as any issues with the RTZ, respectfully, that ship has sailed.

Sue Kawalerski: Okay. So, again, the TPO, again all studies from TPO, you sit on the TPO. It says, the transit use decline is attributed to Uber, Lyft, and taxi use by age group. The biggest groups that you are trying to attract to an RTZ, which would be a student population.

Commissioner Regalado: Those studies are county-wide studies, Sue, that is not District 7.

Sue Kawalerski: Pardon me.

Commissioner Regalado: That is not District 7. That is the entire county and there are parts of the county that have no transit, as you yourself just pointed out.

Robert Behar: If I may Mr. Chair. That may not be facts in evidence, so I don't know if that should be continued to push on something that the Commissioner is saying to the board member that's not factual. I think we should respect.

Sue Kawalerski: All I'm doing is quoting from the Transportation – you can have this. I can put it into the record.

Robert Behar: You can put anything on record that could be not factual.

Commissioner Regalado: That's a county-wide, that's a county-wide.

Sue Kawalerski: Are you saying that the Transportation Planning Organization which the Commissioner sits on is creating false documentation.

Robert Behar: County-wide.

Commissioner Regalado: That's county-wide. We are not talking about county-wide. We are talking about District 7.

Sue Kawalerski: Okay.

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Commissioner Regalado: Those are different facts, very different facts.

Sue Kawalerski: Okay. Okay. Fair enough. But by the way, I do have a breakdown of the Douglas Station, and the Douglas Station has gone up two percent, okay, has gone up two percent.

Commissioner Regalado: It was under construction.

Sue Kawalerski: Pardon me.

Commissioner Regalado: It was under construction. It was closed for eight months.

Sue Kawalerski: I understand that, but its only gone up two percent, so we are not seeing a massive amount of people going to use Metrorail.

Commissioner Regalado: It's not true.

Sue Kawalerski: And the TPO says, in fact, ridership...

Commissioner Regalado: We were shuttling them to Grove Station because the Douglas Station was closed, because we were repairing it.

Eibi Aizenstat: If you have an issue that is with the county and the overall, then that would be something to bring up and actually attend that transportation meeting at nine in the morning and bring up your issues.

Sue Kawalerski: Well, it's not my issue. It's the residents' issues.

Robert Behar: Let them go then.

Sue Kawalerski: But they don't know – they don't know the meeting is happening.

Eibi Aizenstat: Sue, I understand, but I think in this process, in our process, I'd like to deal with what is the city's issue, which is important as opposed to what the county's issue is.

Sue Kawalerski: Okay. Alright Chairman. With that said, what is the City of Coral Gables going to do between now and Tuesday and 9 a.m. to notify the impacted residents that that is going to be their only opportunity to speak to the county. What is the city going to do?

Commissioner Regalado: It's not their only opportunity. They will also have second reading.

Sue Kawalerski: Are we doing this for naught because the Commission's going to do it anyway. Are we here just because.

Commissioner Regalado: I have no way of knowing what the Commission is or is not going to do. It's a process.

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Sue Kawalerski: Okay. But the Commission voted unanimously with two absent members, unanimously for this, right.

Commissioner Regalado: On first reading, yes. But we cannot discuss it at first reading and that's why we have a committee process.

Sue Kawalerski: Okay. And Commissioners usually vote for each other's projects, so it's probably going to be another unanimous vote, won't you say.

Commissioner Regalado: I have no way of knowing that.

Sue Kawalerski: Okay. So let me ask you this. Are we wasting our time here?

Eibi Aizenstat: Sue, that's inappropriate, sorry.

Robert Behar: You're crossing the line there.

Eibi Aizenstat: I'm not saying that you're right and I'm not saying that you're wrong. But to interrogate somebody as if they are on trial, to me, it's just not appropriate.

Sue Kawalerski: Well, I'm sorry you don't like my line of questioning, but we need answers because we haven't gotten them, okay. The residents – we are here to protect the residents, okay. We're not here to protect anyone else except the residents.

Commissioner Regalado: Respectfully Sue, I am elected by the residents, and I also represent the residents, and I am happy to discuss with them whenever they want to.

Sue Kawalerski: I'm glad you do.

Commissioner Regalado: If you have any specific concerns and by the way, you are asking me about an item that isn't even on the agenda. I'm here to help you navigate an item on the agenda that is a potential change to your Comp Plan that seeks to mirror the RTZ. I'm not here to discuss the RTZ item that is before the County Commission. That will occur on Tuesday, and you are welcome to attend.

Sue Kawalerski: Okay. But because you have all this knowledge, I'm asking you things like the Smart Plan RTZ to have...

Commissioner Regalado: And I'm happy to answer them. I'm just not in the mood to be berated by you at 8:34 in the evening.

Sue Kawalerski: Well, I'm sorry if you feel I'm berating you. I didn't intend to do that. I'm not doing that.

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Eibi Aizenstat: Sue, if we can.

Commissioner Regalado: You don't have a question. You are just making a statement. You are within your rights to make your statement. It's just that you have other board members that actually have questions, and we can do that, and then you can go back to saying whatever you would like.

Eibi Aizenstat: We have a motion, and we have a second. Any other discussion. Let's call the roll please, Jill.

Felix Pardo: Yes

Robert Behar: Yes

Alex Buscelo: Yes

Sue Kawalerski: No. With a caveat that this is a waste of time. I have a question. Commissioner, can we have some kind of assurance that what is being discussed will end up in the actual plan of that developer.

Commissioner Regalado: What do you mean?

Sue Kawalerski: The step-backs we're talking about, right. We are talking about the massing towards the front.

Planning and Zoning Director Garcia: Right now, the legislation the city is doing for the overlay district that we are proposing to be consistent with what the county is proposing.

Commissioner Regalado: Yes.

Planning and Zoning Director Garcia: We're not controlling where the developer will go. They may come to the county, or they may go to the county, or they may go to the city.

Sue Kawalerski: I'm not talking about that. We were talking about your proposal and Mr. Felix proposal to have...

Robert Behar: It will be part of our regulations.

Commissioner Regalado: Overlay – That's the Coral Gables...

Robert Behar: We cannot control if they go directly to the county. We are hoping that those three properties will go through the Gables proposed RTZ program.

Felix Pardo: And our recommendations are going to go to the Commission anyway where they may tack on other things or even...our own Commission.

Eibi Aizenstat: We are limited on time right now. We have a motion and a second. I'd like to call the roll please.

Robert Behar: Yes

Alex Buscelo: Yes

Sue Kawalerski: No

Nestor Menendez: Yes

Felix Pardo: Yes

Eibi Aizenstat: Yes

Eibi Aizenstat: Thank you, again.

Robert Behar: Thank you, again.

[Planning and Zoning Board Meeting 8/13/2025]

Robert Behar: I want to bring something up that's been bothering me since the last meeting. I apologized to our visiting elected official, Commissioner Regalado, and I want to bring something up that, and Sue, I have come to like you over the last two years, but I think that we as a board, we need to be more respectful to guests and to elected officials. The last meeting I felt, I still feel that you went after an elected official in a manner that, in my opinion, was disrespectful and actually berated Commissioner Regalado to the point that she even brought up. I tried and I wish I would have done more at the time to stop you, because we as a city look really bad, as a board we look terrible, as an individual and speaking for myself, terrible. When I ran into her two days later, it was like I felt like we failed to convey to this member of the County Commission that we were appreciative of what she was trying to do for the city, and I think that we have to be held to a higher standard, and we cannot do that again. I think that unfortunately, it really – we have tarnished the city, and I hope that we as a board do better in the future.

Sue Kawalerski: She is allowing a developer who is denied by us to jump us and go directly to the county. She is allowing that. And it's a carpetbagger developer from Athens, Georgia.

Robert Behar: Listen Sue.

Sue Kawalerski: Let me finish.

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Robert Behar: You can't insult people like that.

Sue Kawalerski: Excuse me.

[End of video presentation]

Mayor Lago: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. I think that montage speaks for itself. And Mr. Manager, if I may.

City Manager Iglesias: Yes Mayor.

Mayor Lago: I wanted to use an example of what happened today. The Commissioner was gracious enough to give us probably about three hours of her day. She said very clearly that she had pre-arranged date with her daughter, and if you know her daughter, these dates are very important and she's very – she said she's going to do this, she's going to do this. And she came here, and she told me, Vince, I've got to leave by 10 o'clock. I think she ended up leaving by 11 and change probably. She came to talk about another issue that was again, an issue that we had a thorough robust discussion on, but the secondary issue that she came to talk about was with Coley, in regard to the county's need to extend their lease for the transfer station on 72nd Avenue. We could have gotten into an argument on why we may not want to extend it. We had just given a presentation in regard to the city heading in a different route, but we as a Commission took a different position than Sue. We decided to put our concerns and our position on the record, and I requested, along with my colleagues on the Commission, for her team in the county to negotiate with the Manager and staff to find a resolution. We are very clear what we want. I don't know if the Commissioner can provide us with a cost-savings that we are looking to get as a result of this new technology we are thinking about bringing on board. But we had a conversation, and we disagreed and there was an impasse, if you noticed at one moment there, where we agreed to say, let's talk off-line, Mr. Manager, have conversations with the county. We understand that you have six months left on your lease and let's see if we can find a resolution. I think that's the appropriate way of handling yourself, especially when you are dealing with any resident, any business owner, and especially a County Commissioner, who you have to negotiate, and sometimes things become a little bit contentious. What I just saw right now to me, again, doesn't shine a good light on the city, doesn't shine a good light on the city, and I commend Robert Behar for apologizing on the record, just like when I walked in and I saw the Commissioner this morning, I apologized to her in private, because I think it just shined a horrible light on the city. And there's a way to make your point without having to attack anybody. So, at the end of the day, I'm disappointed in the way that things turned out, and this video only solidifies my opinion that the City of Coral Gables, this Commission needs to take a stand, and we need to apply and I'm going to ask the Manager and the City Attorney to work on standards for boards, for decorum. The idea of name-calling and calling somebody a liar on the Commission floor, you know just gets thrown around so easily that again there's no repercussions

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for that. So, moving forward, this Commission has to make a decision, and if it doesn't make a decision, it basically says that that type of behavior is permissible. So, I want to hear from my colleagues. I don't know if the Manager wants to add some additional comments.

City Manager Iglesias: Through the Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Yes sir.

City Manager Iglesias: May I say something Mayor. It's not only the Commissioner, its staff that's being berated.

Mayor Lago: Of course.

City Manager Iglesias: We have to be civil. These boards have to be civil. We've got very good people working for our city and the respect needs to be mutual.

Vice Mayor Anderson: So, do we need to make a motion to extend?

Mayor Lago: That will be in – I'll do it five minutes before. We still have a little bit of time. I have to do it before 9 o'clock (p.m.). I'd like to see if we can end before that.

Vice Mayor Anderson: I'd like to through the Mayor, just set the stage here for a moment.

Mayor Lago: Okay.

Vice Mayor Anderson: For those who are not aware of what the meeting was on July 2nd, it was an opportunity and at my request the Commissioner appeared to the Planning and Zoning Board meeting for them to try to reach a compromise with the Commissioner so that the city could have its own RTZ zone itself. So, it was incumbent upon members of the board to utilize that time to have that conversational discourse with the County Commissioner to try to reach a compromise that would be in the best interest of the residents and try to avert a county RTZ zone, which will cost us dearly – permitting fees, impact fees, higher density, less control over the project. We heard that matter earlier today, so I'm not going to reiterate it. So, we all received a lot of emails over the past few days, other than the ones received late last night and today, I responded to them all. And many people when they realized what happened, when I provided the response, said, "Oh, I had no idea." Because the topic on each one of these emails was silencing your voice. And my response dealt with the fact that the voice that was silenced was silenced by the individual herself, Ms. Kawalerski. Representatives of the Planning and Zoning Board have a responsibility to be aware and navigate all zoning choices developers have when issuing an opinion on whether a zoning application should be approved as written, or with an alternative sought. When an opportunity to have a voice instead is used in such a manner that it hurts and is not sensitive to our residential zoned areas, it is incumbent upon the elected officials to take action, hear the choice in

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Ms. Kawalerski to engage in discourse with the architect and developer of the Mark, a then eight-story building with less density and intensity facing US-1 in a manner that caused the developer to abandon its application with the city and exercise the preemptive power of the county's Rapid Transit Zone (RTZ), Ms. Kawalerski should have understood we would have dire consequences. But instead of acknowledging the fact that the county has a goal of providing housing within walking distance of the county Metrorail, at a subsequent meeting that the County Commissioner appeared, Ms. Kawalerski chose to berate the Commissioner other than seek compromises in the RTZ zone, scope and impact on a single residential family homes. As a result, the person that silenced the residents' voice was Ms. Kawalerski. Instead of productive discourse, Ms. Kawalerski chose to speak in a manner that resulted in the developer making choices that are not in the best interest of the residents. The higher height and density of the projects in the RTZ zone are the result. Options available for developers are very different than what we had four to five years ago. We must be mindful of that when reviewing projects and make sure that we respectfully and efficiently review projects in a manner that makes it clear that the projects will receive a fair review. In an effort to increase efficiency, I, together with my colleagues, add conceptual reviews for Planning and Zoning and the Board of Architects. The conceptual reviews decrease the cost at PNZ level, where zoning changes are being sought and at the Board of Architects level when design bonuses are desired. Ms. Kawalerski will have the right to continue to make comments and bring suggestions to the board and this Commission. Her First Amendment Right have not and will not be silenced by removing her from the board, so she cannot do further harm to the city's residents by failing to professionally and competently address difficult issues. These are the reasons why it is necessary for her removal. We cannot have a repeat performance of this in our city again. So, yes, I will be voting for her removal, and I received all those emails. You didn't need to waste the paper.

Commissioner Castro: Through the Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Yes.

Commissioner Castro: Okay. So, when I first got elected, one of the main issues that we were facing was over-development. And I think now after the whole show of the salaries and the election, now residents are seeing again that the big problem here is over-development. So, for me to make things easier and for me to lead a government that is residents first, my best appointee to that board was going to be Sue. Why? – Because Sue knows how to stand up for the residents. Sue is resident focused, and she is not afraid of no developers and she's not in bed with any special interest, and I felt she was the best one there to represent me as a resident first approach. Just so you know, Sue is the only one there that is a resident, that is genuinely not an architect, not an engineer, not a developer. She is a resident, and she just wants the best interest of the residents. Now, does she comes off strong sometimes? – yes. Do I like it? – 90 percent of the time I do. Now,

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do I agree that she interrupts people – that we can work on, but whatever she says, she’s entitled to say it. That’s my belief. Okay. Now, I do have a statement from her. Unfortunately, she couldn’t be here.

Mayor Lago: If I may, can I just interrupt you. I apologize. Madam City Attorney, we need a motion from one of my colleagues, its getting close to 9 o’clock and it has to be done before 9.

City Attorney Suarez: Yes, that’s correct sir.

Mayor Lago: For an extension.

City Attorney Suarez: To continue beyond 9, you need a motion and setting a time until when you want to continue.

Mayor Lago: 9:15 p.m.

Commissioner Castro: I’ll second that.

Vice Mayor Anderson: I’ll move it.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Clerk.

City Clerk Urquia: All in favor.

All: Aye.

City Clerk Urquia: Thank you.

Commissioner Castro: So now I have a statement from Sue, she wasn’t able to be here today, and it says. *I regret that I cannot be at today’s Commission meeting. I am attending an all-day mandatory supervisory training meeting that was scheduled for more than two months ago. I first want to thank Commissioner Castro for appointing me to the city’s Planning and Zoning Board than two years ago. Having her support to serve another two-year term. Commissioner Castro is a residents first elected official and recognized my desire to represent the residents in that board’s capacity. During my term, many development projects have come before me, the board, and I’ve always evaluated them based on two criteria. Do they comply with our Zoning Code and the Comprehensive Plan, and have the residents directly affected by the projects been effectively informed, consulted and satisfied with the project. I have voted for the majority of the projects that came before me based of those criteria. I voted against the projects which did not satisfy the criteria. Most if not all of those were not compatible with the neighborhood and received very negative responses from residents. Many residents may not know this, but not every project comes before the Planning and Zoning Board, only projects that require approval for bonuses, like the Med Bonus, which adds more height and other additional requests that’s covered in the code come*

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before the board. In other words, developers come to Planning and Zoning to ask that they be allowed to build something that they normally do not have the right to build. Far too often, I have witnessed board members showing unrestricted enthusiasm over projects, not asking critical and necessary questions or staying silent, and then voting yes. I was not one of them, neither was fellow board member Felix Pardo. But today you will hear from the Manager and the Mayor, and the Vice Mayor try to frame me and Felix Pardo as the bad guys. In fact, in an email response to the residents writing him protesting my removal from the Planning and Zoning Board, Mayor Lago claimed this whole thing quote, “an example of constant misinformation by Casto and Fernandez” end quote. He goes onto say quote, “the Bagel Emporium site is no longer under our control, due to the behavior of Sue and Felix Pardo” end quote. First, the Mayor doesn’t have the respect to call me by my full name. He is laying blame on the two of us who are fighting for residents. Why isn’t he, the Mayor? If he truly believes that Felix Pardo and I have so much power to control the outcome of the US-1 corridor, then maybe Felix and I should be the Mayor and Vice Mayor. In closing, the residents of Coral Gables are smart and will see through the lies and smear campaign the Mayor, the Vice Mayor and City Manager have raged to get rid of anyone who stands in the way of developers. The residents are not falling for it. Thank you, Commissioner Castro and the residents of Coral Gables for allowing me to serve on the city’s Planning and Zoning Board and represent the will of the people. I’m also going to put something else on the record. This is an email that was forwarded to me. This is an email exchange between resident Antonio and Mayor Vince Lago. We were talking about respect. Well, respect goes both ways. Let me put this on the record. This is from Antonio to the Mayor what you are planning to do in Tuesday’s Commission meeting to remove our strongest resident’s voice in the Planning and Zoning Board is not acceptable. Ms. Kawalerski’s letter to the residents provided us with details about a project and a process that we have never known about and that will forever change the character of Coral Gables if approved. We are against the removal of Ms. Kawalerski from the Planning and Zoning Board and considered that the voice who will speak out against projects will destroy the uniqueness of our city and the tranquility of our neighborhood. We will be watching your actions on Tuesday and hope that you take proper course on behalf of residents. Then Mayor Lago responded with Antonio – Thank you for your email and I will use it as an example the constant misinformation campaign by Castro and Fernandez. Miami-Dade County implemented an RTZ on the US-1 corridor and the situation was made worse by the behavior of Sue K. and Felix Pardo. I hope you can watch the Commission meeting on Tuesday so that you witness the Bagel Emporium site is now no longer under control due to the behavior of Sue and Felix Pardo. I ask you to read the following Miami-Dade RTZ ordinance and Aesop’s article to understand the truth and not fall for the political theater. Then he goes ahead, and he puts a link of the RTZ ordinance and then he puts a link of Aesop’s article. I’ve copied the office and the Clerk. It continues, well, I didn’t know you were advertising Aesop’s, but okay. Vince, the purpose of my email this morning was only in response to certain indications of alleged intent to remove Ms. Sue from her seat on the Planning

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and Zoning Board for simply voicing the opinion of most Coral Gables residents. In my opinion, Ms. Kawalerski is the reason why Bagel Emporium's site is now no longer under control of the City of Coral Gables Commission is at best a cheap shot and a poor reflection of your authority as a mayor. Unfortunately, during my last 15 years as a Coral Gables resident, I have experienced many biased decisions by different Coral Gables Commissions in favor of high-density developers when their projects were clearly against the then existing and long-established Planning and Zoning requirements. For example, The Thesis, The Mark, The Waterway, for sure for short. I will be watching attentively your leading vote on Tuesday and compare it with your recent and persuasive reelection campaign promises to defend the residents of Coral Gables versus the developers and special interest. Truly yours. And then the Mayor says, Antonio, just to be clear, I will vote to remove Sue K. Please become educated – very disrespectful. Don't let your underlying bias side with a group of individuals who intentionally mislead you for their own benefit. The proof will be provided on Tuesday. I hope you write me an email after the Commission meeting. He writes back, Vince, I never thought you would act differently now in this matter. Your past speaks for itself. No sense in changing now your well-earned negative legacy. I find disrespectful on your part you're arrogant and condescending attitude and suggesting I become educated and cautious about my underlying bias. No need to patronize me. Just do your job defending the interest of the residents of Coral Gables versus the developers and special interest. That's what I've been saying almost the whole Commission meeting today, but apparently, I'm the one that's wrong. To end my conversation, I want to go ahead once again, tell this Commission, residents have spoken. This is over 70 emails that everybody has gotten, 70, asking for us to please not remove Sue from the Planning and Zoning Board. This does not include all the ones I received today and late last night that I haven't been able to reply to. But once again, let's see if we act on behalf of the residents or other self-serving reasons.

Mayor Lago: Okay. I'd like to respond. Thank you. First and foremost, I was very respectful with the gentleman, the way he responded to me at the end. There was another response that she didn't read where I told the gentleman thank you for his guidance or something to that effect. I wasn't going to share this story.

Unknown Speaker: [Inaudible – off mic]

Mayor Lago: You are going to be able to speak. Thank you. No worries. Its become commonplace to just blurt things out in the middle of a Commission meeting. Okay. I was not going to talk about this because I thought at the end of the day, we would handle this professionally. Sue was referred to the Asian American Advisory Board because of her racially charged comments in regard to Asians, that was heard at the Miami-Dade County. I had my own experience with Sue, and this was in front of my staff. When I had a meeting with her in my office and we were talking about an issue, and she stood up in front of me and basically threw the papers at my face when she was

done. That's the type of behavior and that's the type of relationship that Sue and I have had. She has for years and years and years the propaganda, the CGNA, and we control 30,000 votes, and the community, and sending out emails where she says that elected officials steal millions of dollars. Again, my voting record speaks for itself. If you continue to use the scare tactics about developers and developers and developers. For the love of God, you make money off of developers. You run permits in the city. You are talking about developers; you make money off developers. So, my voting record speaks for itself. I will reiterate it again, Gables Station, I voted no; The Plaza I voted no; the parking garages on Andalusia, I voted no; to increase the height of Miracle Mile from three stories to ten, I voted no. I'm very proud of my voting record. So, you continue to mislead people and talk about development and development and pro-development and anti-development and you're in the pocket of developers. It didn't work in the last election; people see through it. It's enough. The bottom line is that you have somebody who is ill-prepared and is an activist and can't be unbiased, who insults somebody and badgers somebody, as you see the other members of the Planning and Zoning Board. It's not about standing firm. You can stand firm on your issues. At the end of the day, Felix Pardo stands firm on his issues, and we disagree on certain issues, but he's not disrespectful. He doesn't badger an elected official or a person who is applying, an applicant for a rezoning, or for approval. So, at the end of the day, the development rhetoric its just non-stop. It worked in your election, congratulations, but it's not what people are talking about. People are concerned about development, but don't use it as a scare tactic, because I'll stand on my voting record any day of the week. What we're talking about here today is a level, a lack of professionalism on the most important board in the city, which I sat on. I sat on that board for almost two years. I voted against projects. I voted against people that I knew. At the end of the day, I voted my conscience, just like when I stand here and vote my conscience. So, you can attack me all you want, but at the end of the day, this is an issue that's a repeat offender. I've had it done to me in my office where I've had papers thrown at my face. So, you can scream all you want and get upset because I responded to a resident. Yes, I respond to every single resident. I meet with every single resident. If we disagree, we disagree. But what I'm not going to do is play political theater every single day just in hopes that you'll garner support for your reelection campaign. I have to be true to my conscience. I have to vote for what I believe is correct. So, you can splice, you can add this to your next social media campaign. Commissioner, do you have anything you'll like to say.

Commissioner Lara: At what point, Mr. Mayor, were you planning to allow public comment.

Mayor Lago: Well, we can allow public comment if you like now.

Commissioner Lara: Yes, I'd like to and then I want to reserve.

Mayor Lago: Perfect. Let's do this. I need a motion. This is my last motion, and we'll end the meeting at 9:30 (p.m.). Okay. Can I get a motion to end the meeting at 9:30 (p.m.)

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Commissioner Lara: Move.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Second.

City Clerk Urquia: All in favor.

All: Aye.

Mayor Lago: We'll hear public comment.

City Clerk Urquia: First speaker, Mr. Mayor, Mrs. Maria Cruz.

Mrs. Cruz: Mrs. Maria Cruz, 1447 Miller Road.

Mayor Lago: Excuse me, Ms. Cruz. Mr. Clerk, will you please start the clock.

City Clerk Urquia: I will.

Mayor Lago: Thank you, sir.

Mrs. Cruz: We talk about respect. This resident just said something and then you were very sarcastic to her. That's part of being respectful. Let me tell you, you're talking about Sue throwing a paper at you. Let me tell you when you came to my ear and said I was no longer a Catholic. That was not respectful either. If you could only listen to yourself, you would know what disrespect, patronizing the way you talk to Ms. Castro. Well at least now you talk to her. You don't turn your back to her. We have improved. At least you don't embarrass her in public, I mean all the time, only some of the time. You are such a respectful person. You treat everybody with such respect. It's amazing, amazing, amazing, amazing. I think we're here because you know what, we talk about the abuses in Cuba all the time, you know, we're a democracy, but you know what Sue was doing, Sue was speaking for the people, because you know what, this was a project, this was a presentation that came in at the last minute that most of the residents found out at the last minute and they had questions. I was not aware of the fact that our boards were supposed to listen to the city and do what the city wants them to do and not necessarily what the residents want them to do. I was not aware of that. And let me tell you, Robert Behar, perfect example. He could be a good person in Cuba because his rapid response brigade is wonderful. He can do a good job there. It's amazing. No wonder he wants to be on that board, even though his term has already expired. Doesn't say that. Let me tell you, you're talking about disrespecting the Chinese students. So, when I talk about the Cuban community that's disrespectful. The Columbian community, that's disrespectful. The fact is that the University of Miami did encourage the builders to have housing for the Chinese students. The students that came from China, that's what Chinese students mean, and their parents. Okay. There's nothing discriminatory, there is nothing abusing there. There are

many names that people get called, that was respectful. So, let's not be so critical about what others do and look at ourselves in the mirror.

City Clerk Urquia: Maria Magdalena Estupinan.

Mayor Lago: Good evening.

Ms. Estupinan: Good evening. Maria Magdalena Estupinan, 21 Maleda. I just came here to clarify something. We are sick and tired of the internal wars, okay, and I think that what you are doing right now is taking Sue as an excuse and I'll tell you why. So, you don't have to really fight for the people, so the developer doesn't have so much, I don't know, maybe the height, whatever. So, now Sue is the scapegoat and it's not your fault. You don't have to face the developer. You are absolutely wonderful because, you know, it's Sue's fault. Okay. So, let me tell you, you have never been fighting for the residents. We are so sick and tired of the over-development in Coral Gables. Its looking like Brickell. So, it's not Sue. Sue is an excuse for you to have like, okay, you know we didn't have the chance to fight for you guys because you know what, it's Sue's fault. Now, Raquelita, I saw the video, she did not do anything wrong. The only thing that you repeated over and over and over again was the people that are going to be affected by this don't know about it and they haven't been able to say anything to voice their opinion. So, that was basically her mantra. So, I don't see why you have to be firing Sue. It's just a very poor excuse and it speaks very badly of you, all of you. Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Thank you.

City Clerk Urquia: Mr. Mayor, I'm going to go to Zoom next. The speaker is Lisa DeTournay, and I'm going to ask Ms. DeTournay to please unmute her computer.

Ms. DeTournay: Good.

Mayor Lago: Yes ma'am.

Ms. DeTournay: Okay. Thank you. After spending the entire twelve hours with you guys today, listening to all this, I have a few things to say. In this matter, I saw several of you making decisions or comments on things you weren't even involved in. For example, Sue Kawalerski had been fighting this battle with us before she was even on the Planning and Zoning Board. We've been going to Town Halls since May of 2023. All the neighbors are very upset. The project we felt that we were making headway with the developer when we asked for one story less, and the project got, I guess, delayed and the next thing we heard one year later is it went to Rapid Transit Zone. Had nothing to do with Sue. If you recall, Commissioner Regalado came to that meeting to say that the developer had already gone to Miami and requested that zoning. I found Sue because I was at the July 2nd meeting. She, in my opinion, she did nothing wrong, Ms. Regalado, has run in

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many elections in her career, felt that she was being berated, I found that a little bit of pity me type of statement, because I'm sure she's been involved in much worse verbiage in her running for office. So, anyway, I think that you're taking Sue off the board is purely to make her look like it's her fault that the City of Coral Gables didn't have more to say about this development. I'm sorry, but you guys never got involved in this before we did as residents, never. I've never seen a single one of you at a Town Hall meeting and for the meeting that I was at about the Waterway Committee with Mayor Lago at the Residence, which was just before the election, you made a phone call to a lawyer right in front of us on speaker phone and said, there's Live Local Act and there's nothing we can do about it. So, the job is done. You guys didn't try and stop it when it came out a couple of years ago. You didn't fight like the City of Doral did, and now here's its coming down to it, and that's what I've heard all along, is that we have nothing to do about it. It's too late. I'm sorry, but honestly, when I listen to especially you, Mayor Lago, and secondly, Mr. Lara, you guys talk so poorly to Ms. Castro, its far worse than anything Sue said to Ms. Regalado. So, I am embarrassed, and I cringe when I hear some of the things you say. You may not be raising your voice, but it's what you say that's so embarrassing that you would speak to somebody else like that. That's it.

Mayor Lago: Thank you.

City Clerk Urquia: That's it, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Lago: We'll close the public comment. If I may clarify, so people understand what the lady mentioned on the phone right now. We had a public meeting for residents, and they invited me over to their house on the waterway talking about the other project that's on the waterway, and several members that were there were a little bit confused in regard to, and it's a confusing topic, in regard to RTZ and Live Local and what are the differences. So, I called an attorney that I know who happens to be one of the most respected individuals when it comes to the RTZ, a gentleman by the name of Tony De Yurre, so he could explain. I'm not an attorney and I wanted him to explain in detail what was happening with the RTZ and what were the new standards in the Live Local. And as you know, the Live Local standards were changing at the state at that moment, they were in flux. Previous legislation that had been passed was being changed also. So, we discussed the issue. My advice to the residents was, unite and do everything you can to negotiate with the developer, make a request, visit your elected officials. If not, the worst-case scenario is Live Local, that we want to avoid at all costs, due to the height and also because of the 40 percent workforce housing. So those were my comments on the record. Mr. Clerk, public comments closed.

City Clerk Urquia: Yes, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Commissioner, Commissioner Lara.

Commissioner Lara: Yes, I'll be brief because we are running up against the time constraint. There's been so much misinformation and I'm going to start with the emails that we received initiated by Sue Kawalerski, I guess she drafted a form letter for everyone to send out. I responded to everyone I could as well, other than those that came in during today's twelve-hour meeting. The truth of the matter is, to put it succinctly the people who commented today, as well as the letter that Commissioner Castro read, written by Sue Kawalerski is that she speaks for the people. I don't know who she's speaking for, because I couldn't imagine engineering a plan more calculated to promote developers to seek maximum height and density than what she did, because she telegraphed again, over and over to anyone who would listen and I'm putting it charitably, because its more like shouting at people that any development basically is over-development and that's a fundamental disconnect with what the law and what the facts are. If a developer comes and asks for two-stories more than what is permitted by the code, we can say that that's the beginning of a negotiation. What they are asking for at most is eight stories or two more that's permitted by the code. That was shot dead by her on sight. We could have locked that up right then and there and had control over it. Its not so much the decision she made, but rather the thinking or the ethos behind it which is, I'm not going to agree no matter how reasonable the request is relative to what the law permits for the people, speaking on behalf of the people, that seems to be another way of saying, by any means necessary, I'm going to repeat the same mantra. Rather than be entrusted with the position which is a privilege to sit on the PNZ. It is not a right and no one's getting fired. It's not a paid position. It's public service, right, and she serves at the pleasure of the majority of this Commission. Cause is not needed to be given but cause more than exists in this instant because there can be no reasonable person who's going to say that there wasn't berating of an elected official. Nobody can reasonably say that what she did was an attempt to try and work with somebody so we can maintain some control over this development. When people say they never got notice is, she saying she didn't get notice of a law that's existed for several years. If she sits on the PNZ, is it not reasonable that she should be appraised on her own of the notice that given out pursuant to statute regarding not only RTZ matters, but specifically that affect District 7, which affects specifically Coral Gables. In any event, professing that I didn't know and then using that as an excuse to berate an elected official is only calculated to signal, as she sits in a quasi-judicial capacity, anything other than fairness, anything other than impartiality, both of which are critical, critical in order for the process to succeed. Somebody mentioned Felix Pardo. Well, Felix Pardo, from what I've been able to observe throughout these meetings, takes a position but has never breached the line where passion becomes pure disrespect. That is not Coral Gables. That is not what this Commission or its board appointed by these Commissioners adhere to, subscribe to aspire to. In sum, because there's very little more, I could add given what we've seen. The record itself on the video that was displayed and as put by the Vice Mayor in her concise and eloquent words, is something that I cannot condone and that something that if I were to take a different position today would in fact be saying that this is acceptable behavior. Let's be clear, what has happened

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both with the decision and the manner in which she conducted herself, which was indefensible in my view, not even a close call, is the opposite of what the residents who wrote me profess to want someone who can effectively stand up against over-development. As a result of that interplay between the decision and the manner in which the message was delivered by Sue Kawalerski, she has handed over all the control potentially to the RTZ and out of the hands of Coral Gables. That does not bode very well and that is not something that I've heard anyone discuss today is defensible, but I'm willing to listen if anybody thinks that is defensible.

Mayor Lago: Commissioner, are you done.

Commissioner Lara: I am.

Mayor Lago: Thank you, sir. We have six minutes. Anything you'll like to add Commissioner Castro before we make a motion.

Commissioner Castro: No, no. Go for it.

Mayor Lago: Perfect. Do we have a motion.

Vice Mayor Anderson: I'll make a motion for removal of Ms. Kawalerski. Her conduct is, I think, on the video speaks for itself and the lack of non-productive advocacy on behalf of the residents also speaks for itself.

Commissioner Lara: You moved.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Yes.

Commissioner Lara: I'll second and I want to add. As one of the residents stated, Sue Kawalerski has been, as she put it, fighting against over-development since before she was appointed to the PNZ. She may continue to do so as often and as loudly as she likes, but not within the confines and within the parameters of a Planning and Zoning Board member. She can be as vociferous and as loud and as spirited as she wants. That voice isn't being silenced by anybody here, but when we have the Mayor, the Vice Mayor, the City Manager, another member of the PNZ and myself apologizing to a County Commissioner because of what occurred during that meeting without even the slightest hint of contrition on her part is not politically driven. It is not even a close call. The behavior and the words speak for themselves and when you act that way there are natural and expected consequences. So, I second the motion.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Clerk, we have a motion and a second, please.

Commissioner Castro: My answer to this motion is going to be no, but I also want to add that now I'm not going to have an appointee to this board, and I've thought about it a lot. So, for the next

City Commission Meeting

[Date]

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August 26, 2025

*Agenda Item H-15 – Resolution pursuant to Section 26 of the City Charter and Section 2-51(e)
Of the City Code removing Sue Kawalerski as a member of the Planning and Zoning Board*

Commission meeting, I would like to appoint someone who I trust, is resident focused, who has the best interest of this city and who I believe is fair. So, you can go ahead and please for the next Commission meeting appoint Kirk Menendez.

City Clerk Urquia: Yes ma'am.

Commissioner Castro: Thank you.

Commissioner Lara: Yes

Vice Mayor Anderson: Yes

Mayor Lago: Yes

(Commissioner Fernandez: Absent)

(Vote: 3-1)

Mayor Lago: Just to clarify my colleague's request, that has to be brought before the Commission and placed on the next agenda, correct Madam City Attorney.

City Attorney Suarez: Yes.

Commissioner Castro: That's what I asked.

Mayor Lago: I just want to make sure.