

Planning and Zoning Board Meeting

The City of Coral Gables

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1
2 Does any Board member have such
3 communication or site visit to disclose
4 at this time?
5 I guess not. Okay.
6 Soaring ahead, everyone who speaks
7 this evening must complete the roster on
8 the podium. We ask that you print
9 clearly so the official record of your
10 name and address will be correct.
11 Now, with the exception of
12 attorneys, all persons physically in the
13 chamber who will speak on the agenda
14 items before us this evening, please rise
15 to be sworn in.
16 **THE COURT REPORTER:** Do you
17 solemnly swear or affirm the testimony
18 you will be giving today will be the
19 truth, the whole truth, and nothing but
20 the truth?
21 **PARTICIPANTS:** I do.
22 **MR. BEHAR:** Zoom platform
23 participants. I will ask any person who
24 wishes to speak on tonight's agenda items
25 to please open your chat and send a

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2 direct message to Arceli stating that you
3 would like to speak before the Board, and
4 include your full name. Arceli will call
5 you when the time is on.
6 I ask you to limit your
7 communication to two things. Phone
8 platform participants. After the Zoom
9 platform participant, again, I will ask
10 for you to -- for the phone participant
11 to communicate, and you will have a full
12 two minutes for communication.
13 Approval of the minutes. I ask for
14 a motion to approve the minutes of
15 April 13, 2022.
16 **MR. BUCELO:** So moved,
17 **MR. TORRE:** Second.
18 **MR. BEHAR:** Can you please call the
19 roll.
20 **MS. ARCELI REDILA:** Mr. Withers.
21 **MR. WITHERS:** Yes.
22 **MS. ARCELI REDILA:** Mr. Torre?
23 **MR. TORRE:** Yes.
24 **MS. ARCELI REDILA:** Mr. Bucelo?
25 **MR. MR. BUCELO:** Yes.

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2 **MS. ARCELI REDILA:** Mr. Mahon?
3 **MR. MAHON:** Yes.
4 **MR. BEHAR:** For procedure we will
5 use tonight, we will identify the agenda
6 provided by Mr. Coller. There will be a
7 presentation by staff, presentation by
8 the applicant or agent. We will open to
9 public comments in the chamber followed
10 by Zoom platform and phone line platform.
11 I will close the public comments,
12 open it up to Board discussion. At that
13 time, the Board will make a motion and
14 discussion, followed by a second motion
15 and we will do final voting.
16 We will now start with Mr. Coller,
17 if you please.
18 **MR. CRAIG COLLER:** Mr. Chairman, I
19 think there's a housekeeping measure,
20 since items E-1 through E-5 need to be
21 deferred, there should be a motion to
22 defer items E-1 through E-5 to the June 8
23 meeting, can be done as a voice vote.
24 **MR. WITHERS:** So moved.
25 **MR. BUCELO:** Second.

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2 **MR. BEHAR:** Call the roll, please.
3 **MS. ARCELI REDILA:** Mr. Withers?
4 **MR. WITHERS:** Yes.
5 **MS. ARCELI REDILA:** Mr. Torre.
6 **MR. TORRE:** Yes.
7 **MS. ARCELI REDILA:** Mr. Bucelo?
8 **MR. MR. BUCELO:** Yes.
9 **MS. ARCELI REDILA:** Mr. Behar?
10 **MR. BEHAR:** Yes.
11 **MR. CRAIG COLLER:** Okay. Moving on
12 to E-6. Item E-6, an Ordinance of the
13 City Commission of Coral Gables, Florida
14 requesting Conditional Use Review for a
15 previously approved but expired Building
16 Site Determination pursuant to Zoning
17 Code Section 14-206.6, "Building Site
18 Determination to separate into two
19 single-family building sites on the
20 property zoned Single-Family Residential
21 (SFR) District, legally described as Lots
22 13 through 18 Block 236, Coral Gables
23 Riviera Section Part 11 (601 Sunset
24 Drive) Coral Gables, Florida; one
25 building site consisting of Lots 13, 14,

3 (Pages 6 to 9)

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2 and 15 (East Parcel) and the other one
3 building site consisting of Lots 16, 17,
4 and 18 (West Parcel); including the
5 required conditions; providing for a
6 repealer provision, severability clause,
7 and providing for an effective date.
8 E-6 public hearing.
9 **MALE SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr.
10 Chairman, is --
11 **MR. RAMON TRIAS:** Excuse me,
12 Mr. Chairman, before we start, we might
13 reflect on this.
14 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
15 This item was before you in 2019
16 and it was approved. Since then, the
17 request expired and basically we decided
18 to do a different design for the
19 buildings. Today we have a different
20 design that is exactly the same request
21 number of lots, the location, as you can
22 see, is right on Sunset. It's basically
23 a well-developed single-family
24 neighborhood, as you will see, but that
25 parcel is much larger than the parcels

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1
2 that -- in the neighboring area, and is
3 much larger because it had six lots, and
4 what they're trying to do is separate it
5 into two building sites.
6 So the existing area that is 0.71
7 acres and the two building sites will be
8 larger than the sites said in the city.
9 So you can see the two building sites
10 facing Sunset, and then some access from
11 the sides.
12 The single-family zoning remains,
13 of course, and the land also remains, and
14 the side view as you can see is two
15 separate, different buildings designed to
16 maximize the elements of the site, and
17 the applicant will explain it in some
18 more detail.
19 The development you are seeing was
20 in September 2018, it was September of
21 2018. The Board (inaudible) April and
22 today we are having the planning and
23 zoning meeting.
24 There was an April meeting, as
25 required. There was a courtesy

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2 notification mailed. The property was
3 posted and the legal was also posted.
4 This is the area that was notified.
5 This is the site planning information,
6 and the applicant can explain in some
7 more detail. And the review for here
8 were satisfied, all of the items, except
9 one. But like I said, all of this was
10 basically, the same exact. The only
11 thing that they don't satisfy is the
12 tenure of ownership.
13 So that recommends approval with
14 conditions, and the applications are very
15 typical of the total square footage of
16 the residential lots would equal less
17 than the total, should the property be
18 developed as one, and also the condition
19 of the proposed designed, as submitted
20 today. So with that, I end the
21 presentation and the applicant will give
22 his presentation.
23 **MR. ANDRES MEJIA:** Good evening, My
24 name is Andres Mejia, 6901 -- Coral
25 Gables, Florida.

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2 **MR. TORRE:** May I ask what your
3 relationship is to the applicant?
4 **MR. ANDRES MEJIA:** Yes. I am the
5 owner of the house. This is my wife. We
6 are both residence in Coral Gables. We
7 have -- we live down the street from this
8 house, from this property. We have been
9 walking past this property for the past
10 15 years and it has always been our dream
11 to purchase it and build our dream home.
12 We have seen it go through being
13 abandoned, to having squatters, to
14 being -- nothing really being done to the
15 property. We were lucky enough to
16 finally, in 2019, we were able to
17 purchase the property. We knew that that
18 property was already approved to be
19 split.
20 So we went to the city, we
21 presented our new plans and they said
22 that ultimately that property was
23 approved only with the plans that were
24 submitted at the time to this date, so we
25 had to start the whole process again.

4 (Pages 10 to 13)

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2 We just to continue with those
3 plans, but like I said, we want to build
4 our dream home and the other property
5 over there, which we are going to sell.
6 I thought that I could do a better
7 design, so we went ahead and we scratched
8 the original plans and just decided to
9 start from the beginning, and, two years
10 later, I am here in front of you,
11 presenting what we would like to do.
12 So here's a rendering of the two
13 houses. The one on the right is the east
14 side. That will be our home. The one on
15 the left is the home that we would like
16 to sell.
17 **MR. BEHAR:** Excuse me. Is there a
18 mike that he can use?
19 **MR. ANDRES MEJIA:** Is this better?
20 **MR. BEHAR:** I want to make sure the
21 court reporter can hear.
22 **THE COURT REPORTER:** I can.
23 **MR. ANDRES MEJIA:** So the one on
24 the left is transitional. The one on the
25 right is we are using keystone. We feel

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2 that as time goes by, age and weather,
3 and look even prettier. Here you have
4 the side view for both houses. As you
5 see, we are going to have a driveway and
6 the garage is facing the side streets,
7 Almansa and Tordera. We are not removing
8 or relocating any trees. Everything was
9 designed around the trees so we didn't
10 have to touch them. In fact, we are
11 keeping the side that has the bigger
12 orchard. I think they're beautiful. I
13 wish I could keep them all on my side.
14 Okay. So the side lot, like we
15 said, we have 100 feet on the front for
16 each lot and 150 feet on the side of each
17 house, and we have the garages and the
18 driveway facing that side street, not
19 Sunset. We're not relocating, we're not
20 moving any more trees. We designed the
21 house around that -- the trees so we
22 wouldn't have to do that.
23 This is an aerial view from the
24 top, as you can see. Lots of green.
25 This is going to be the east side. We'll

1
2 go a little more in detail. There it is
3 here on the plan. This is the entry,
4 looking at the front of the house from
5 Sunset. This is looking from the back
6 towards the front, the back yard. And
7 this is looking from that side street.
8 This is the side for this individual
9 home. As you can see, this is the first
10 floor plan. You come in, to the right
11 you have a living room. To the left you
12 have a kitchen, a dining room, and you
13 have -- you have the family room, a
14 covered terrace, home office, pantry
15 service, their room, and we're building
16 my mom a bedroom. And as you can see on
17 the second floor, you have the family
18 den, the kids' rooms, and then you have
19 the master bedroom, and then you have my
20 wife's closet.
21 These are the elevations. This is
22 the front elevation. Then we have the
23 side elevation from Almansa at the
24 bottom. And then we have the rear
25 elevation, looking from the back towards

1
2 the front, and then the other side, the
3 other house on the west side.
4 These are as you can see you can
5 see there on that square footage, and in
6 the building site and the landscaping,
7 we're well above the minimum.
8 So the west side -- this is the
9 side we're going to sell, transitional,
10 and the second house. This is the view
11 from the left, from the side street.
12 This is the front view from Sunset on the
13 corner. This is the aerial view, and
14 this is the side view of the west home.
15 When you come in, you have a living room
16 on the left. When you go to the right,
17 you have a guest room, stairs to the
18 upstairs, open, you have a living room,
19 kitchen, then you have the dining room,
20 and you have a service pantry, cabana
21 bathroom, covered terrace, garage.
22 Second floor, go upstairs, kids'
23 bedrooms, kids' rooms, and master
24 bedroom.
25 These are the elevations, from the

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 2 front. The bottom one is from there,
 3 from the side street, and then the top is
 4 from the rear of the house, and the
 5 bottom one is from the side.
 6 Same thing. We were about to
 7 access the grass and landscape coverage,
 8 and now we're under the ground coverage.
 9 These are just some pictures of the
 10 -- right now it's vacant.
 11 **MR. BEHAR:** Thank you. At this
 12 point I'm going to open it up to the
 13 public comment. If anybody from the
 14 public who wishes to speak on this item
 15 at this time.
 16 Seeing none, I'm going to close it.
 17 We will open up the Zoom platform.
 18 Arceli, is anybody on Zoom that wishes to
 19 speak?
 20 **MS. ARCELI REDILA:** None on Zoom.
 21 **MR. BEHAR:** Okay. We'll close the
 22 Zoom platform.
 23 Are there any folks on the phone
 24 who wish to speak?
 25 So there's none here, so we'll

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1
 2 close the public commenting at this time.
 3 At this time I open it up to Board
 4 discussions.
 5 Mr. Withers, if you would like to
 6 speak.
 7 **MR. WITHERS:** I just have a
 8 question on it. So in 2018 a previous
 9 owner had it -- requested it; is that
 10 what happened?
 11 **ANDRES MEJIA***:** In 2018, Code
 12 Enforcement ordered demolition of
 13 existing house.
 14 **RAMON TRIAS***:** In 2019 the
 15 previous owner was a very wealthy
 16 individual and he had no plans.
 17 **MR. BEHAR:** If you could just
 18 answer my question.
 19 **MR. ANDRES MEJIA:** Oh, I'm sorry.
 20 **MR. TORRE:** Were you the applicant
 21 in the previous design?
 22 **MR. ANDRES MEJIA:** No. I was not
 23 the applicant.
 24 **MR BEHAR:** Okay. So that was the
 25 answer. That was a separate design.

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 2 **MR. WITHERS:** So what was the
 3 previous design? What was the previous
 4 design? Was it two homes or one home, or
 5 do you remember?
 6 **MR. ANDRES MEJIA:** Yes. The
 7 previous design was two homes, just
 8 completely different.
 9 **MR. WITHERS:** That's what I
 10 thought. Okay.
 11 (Crosstalk).
 12 **MR. BEHAR:** If you don't mind
 13 letting him --
 14 **MALE SPEAKER:** Yeah.
 15 **MR. BEHAR:** Have a seat. I close.
 16 Let these --
 17 **MR. RAMON TRIAS:** So Mr. Withers,
 18 the previous design was two houses.
 19 **MR. BEHAR:** It was a more
 20 contemporary design, if I remember.
 21 **MR. WITHERS:** I remember. I
 22 remember that. Okay. Yeah.
 23 I'm done. Thank you.
 24 **RAMON TRIAS:** Except for the
 25 design, everything was the same, just the

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1
 2 design was different.
 3 **MR. TORRE:** I have a simple
 4 question.
 5 **MR. BEHAR:** Sure.
 6 **MR. TORRE:** What came out of that if
 7 anything?
 8 **RAMON TRIAS:** Would you like to
 9 explain?
 10 **MR. ANDRES MEJIA:** Yes. Only one
 11 person showed up, Mr. Rodano, Oscar
 12 Rodano, and he said that he was a good
 13 realtor and he said that he knows the
 14 property, that it was a nicer aesthetic
 15 for the neighborhood.
 16 **MR. BEHAR:** Anything else?
 17 Nothing?
 18 **MALE SPEAKER:** Motion for approval.
 19 **MR. BEHAR:** Before you do, there
 20 was a covenant -- I remember a covenant
 21 being with --
 22 The commissioner's the authority to
 23 change the covenant, if they choose to do
 24 so. That was done the last time, so --
 25 **MR. ANDRES MEJIA:** It was.

6 (Pages 18 to 21)

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2 Correct.
3 **MALE SPEAKER:** Okay.
4 **MR. TORRE:** I'll continue my
5 motion.
6 **MR. BUCELO:** I'll second.
7 **MR. BEHAR:** The motion is in
8 accordance with department
9 recommendations, correct?
10 **MR. ANDRES MEJIA:** Yes.
11 **RAMON TRIAS:** Correct.
12 **MR. BEHAR:** Please call the roll.
13 **MS. ARCELI REDILA:** Mr. Withers?
14 **MR. WITHERS:** Yes.
15 **MS. ARCELI REDILA:** Mr. Torre?
16 **MR. TORRE:** Yes.
17 **MS. ARCELI REDILA:** Ms. Miro?
18 **MS. CLAUDIA MIRO:** Yes.
19 **MS. ARCELI REDILA:** Mr. Bucelo?
20 **MR. MR. BUCELO:** Yes.
21 **MS. ARCELI REDILA:** Mr. Behar?
22 **MR. BEHAR:** Yes.
23 Motion passed, five to zero.
24 Congratulations.
25 **MR. ANDRES MEJIA:** Thank you very

1
2 much.
3 **MR. BEHAR:** Next item please, Mr.
4 Coller.
5 **MR. CRAIG COLLER:** Item E-7, an
6 ordinance of the City Commission of Coral
7 Gables, Florida amending the City of
8 Coral Gables Zoning Code, Article 8,
9 "Historic Preservation" and Article 14
10 "Process" to address inconsistencies in
11 the Zoning Code and revise the Historic
12 Designation process; providing for
13 severability clause, codification, and
14 providing for an effective date.
15 Item E-7 public hearing.
16 **MR. CEBALLOS:** Good afternoon,
17 Mr. Chair. Fellow Board Members,
18 Assistant City Attorney Gus Ceballos. I
19 believe all of you have the staff report.
20 Did all of your staff report print out
21 with all the information highlighted? I
22 noticed that in some of the staff
23 reports, it didn't show up, or at least
24 in this area was blank.
25 If you don't know and it doesn't

1
2 matter, we can hand you some new copies.
3 So this item is a little odd
4 because, although it is in the zoning
5 code, this deal strictly, predominantly
6 with historic preservation, so most of
7 these items will go before the Historic
8 Preservation Board, but as the zoning
9 code requires, any changes to the zoning
10 code come before planning and zoning for
11 a recommendation.
12 Specifically, I will try to go as
13 quick as possible. So if you notice on
14 the very first page on the flowchart,
15 basically what we're doing there is
16 currently, the way that the designation
17 moves forward is an applicant can bring
18 it forward. If the Historic Preservation
19 Board determines -- not the Board -- my
20 apologies. The department determines
21 that it does not meet the minimum
22 eligibility criteria an applicant can
23 choose to move forward and present before
24 the Historic Preservation Board
25 themselves without a staff

1
2 recommendation. This basically just
3 creates the requirement that the notice
4 is provided by that applicant and that
5 the report is also provided by that
6 applicant. It was just simply an
7 inconsistency in the flowchart, so
8 further on in the body of the text, we
9 have some changes. I'll go -- try to go
10 one by one.
11 The eligibility determination, we
12 are adding a 45-day timeline for
13 determination to be completed, meaning if
14 you have a home in the City of Coral
15 Gables, regardless of when it was built,
16 you need to go to the Historic
17 Preservation Department and get an
18 eligibility to demolish that structure.
19 That eligibility will now have a
20 timeline. It won't be indefinite; it
21 will be 45 days. Before, there was no
22 timeline in the code, so this kind of
23 gives people --
24 **MR. BEHAR:** 45 days to get a
25 response from the department?