

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Items F-2 and F-7 are related
April 12, 2022
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Vince Lago

Vice Mayor Michael Mena

Commissioner Rhonda Anderson

Commissioner Jorge Fors

Commissioner Kirk Menendez

City Staff

City Manager, Peter Iglesias

City Attorney, Miriam Ramos

City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Planning and Zoning Director, Ramon Trias

Public Speaker(s)

Jorge Navarro

Agenda Items F-2 and F-7 are related [1:38 p.m.]

An Ordinance of the City Commission granting approval of a Planned Area Development (PAD) pursuant to Zoning Code Article 14, "Process," Section 14-206, "General Procedures for Planned Area Development" for a mixed-use project referred to as "Alexan Crafts" on property legally described as lots 5 thru 27, Block 28, Coral Gables Crafts Section (340, 330, 322, 314, 310, 300 Catalonia Avenue, 301, 309, 317, 323, 325, 333, 341 Malaga Avenue), Coral Gables, Florida; including required conditions; providing for a repealer provision, severability clause, and providing for an effective date. (02 09 22 PZB recommended approval; Vote 4-0)

Lobbyist: Jorge Navarro
Lobbyist: John McWilliams

A Resolution of the City Commission granting approval for Conditional Use Mixed-Use Site Plan pursuant to Zoning Code Section 2-200 "Mixed Use Districts" for a mixed-use project referred to as "Alexan Crafts" on property legally described as lots 5 thru 27, Block 28, Coral Gables Crafts Section (340, 330, 322, 314, 310, 300 Catalonia Avenue, 301, 309, 317, 323, 325, 333, 341 Malaga Avenue), Coral Gables, Florida; including required conditions; providing for a repealer provision, severability clause, and providing for an effective date. (02 09 22 PZB recommended approval; Vote 4-0)

(This Resolution is not for consideration at this time and will be included with the above ordinances on Second Reading if approved on First Reading.)

Lobbyist: Jorge Navarro
Lobbyist: John McWilliams

Mayor Lago: Hello. I'd like to welcome everyone back to the Commission meeting. Again, thank you for joining us, either on Zoom or in person. We're moving on to our time certain agenda item, F-2. Commissioner Menendez.

Commissioner Menendez: Yes. For purposes given in the first reading, I'm going to recuse myself.

Mayor Lago: We'll call you back in. Thank you.

City Attorney Ramos: F-2 is an ordinance of the City Commission granting approval of a Planned Area Development pursuant to Zoning Code Article 14, "Process," Section 14-206, "General Procedures for Planned Area Development" for a mixed-use project referred to as "Alexan Crafts" on property legally described as lots 5 thru 27, Block 28, Coral Gables Crafts Section, Coral Gables, Florida; including required conditions; providing for a repealer provision, severability clause, and providing for an effective date. Mr. Mayor, with your permission, I'll also read F-7.

Mayor Lago: Yes.

City Attorney Ramos: So we can have one consolidated public hearing.

Mayor Lago: Yes, thank you.

City Attorney Ramos: F-7 is a resolution of the City Commission granting approval for Conditional Use Mixed -Use Site Plan pursuant to Zoning Code Section 2-200 "Mixed Use Districts" for a mixed-use project referred to as "Alexan Crafts" on property legally described as lots 5 thru 27, Block 28, Coral Gables Crafts Section, Coral Gables, Florida; including required conditions; providing for a repealer provision, severability clause, and providing for an effective date. This is a public hearing item. And Mr. Clerk, if you could please swear anybody in that's going to be testifying.

City Clerk Urquia: Those will be participating in this item, please stand, raise your right hand. Do you swear or affirm that the testimony you'll provide today will be the truth and nothing but the truth?

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: I do.

City Clerk Urquia: Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Clerk, do we have anybody in the public comment?

City Clerk Urquia: Not at this time, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Okay. I'd like to close the public comment.

City Clerk Urquia: Okay.

City Attorney Ramos: Mayor, because it's quasi-judicial, we should technically hear the item first and then have the...

Mayor Lago: Not a problem.

City Attorney Ramos: Public hearing.

Mayor Lago: I don't have a problem hearing it. We're on second reading, so thank you for clarifying that. Mr. Trias, the floor is yours.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Mayor, there were some minor improvements in the conditions of approval. One deals with the trees that will have to be preserved. That's clearly spelled out. A few of them dealt with traffic calming. The attorney is reviewing the actual language to make sure that it's appropriate, but we have those two on page four, and I think they reflect the comments from the Commission accurately.

Mayor Lago: Thank you, Mr. Trias. Mr. Navarro, at the last Commission meeting, we memorialized the trees, which the applicant has been very amicable and ensuring that they're preserved and that we move those trees. Something that came up was also anything that's dealing with traffic calming for the neighborhood. Has everything -- has all those issues been taken care of them and been considered?

Jorge Navarro: Yes. So, Mr. Mayor, for the record, Jorge Navarro, with offices 333 Southeast 2nd Avenue. Since our last meeting, we are happy to report that we've actually commenced the tree relocation efforts. We've worked with your department. We're working on the applicable

permits. We started some of the root pruning, so we're already in process of getting the trees ready to be relocated, that way we have everything ready before construction commences, which I think is important. We want to thank the Manager for working with us on that. We've also had a chance to review the traffic calming language that was proposed by staff, which we're okay with.

Mayor Lago: What traffic calming are you proposing?

Mr. Navarro: So, we're proposing to install -- and if you have the...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Six speed cushions within the area bounded by Malaga, Palermo, Segovia, and Le Jeune. And there will be further analysis of the traffic depending on what happens, but that has to be done first. And then later on, there's the three-year traffic monitoring requirement.

Mr. Navarro: Yes. And one of the concerns or -- well, from the residents on the west side of Le Jeune was potential cut-through traffic. I think it's more -- the traffic study that was done by the City -- you know, the City has this unique program where the City actually chooses their consultant to do the traffic study. But that traffic study didn't show that we were impacting that neighborhood, but to be a good neighbor, we do understand that they do suffer today for some cut-through traffic with some high speeds, so we've committed to install at the two intersections along those streets that Mr. Trias mentioned, we're going to install...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Six...

Mr. Navarro: Six...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Speed cushions.

Mr. Navarro: Exactly, one on each of the intersections.

Mayor Lago: Okay, so I want this to serve as an example for Public Works Department, for Legal, for the City Manager, for anyone who is coming to do business in the City of Coral Gables, we welcome you. We welcome you to do business, but there has to be public components to your project. Not only does your art in public places have to be exceptional -- not good, exceptional. I've told you we will vote no. We will not leave art on the public right-of-way in perpetuity if we're not proud of that artwork. In regards to the issue -- and we're going to address that now after -- which is something that I'm very proud of. Number two, the issue of development, as we become more and more congested as a community, it is critically important -- I know we can't control people cutting through our city. We know that and we have to be honest with ourselves. We have to slow traffic down, and we have to give the police and our Public Works Department all the tools necessary. So, we ask the public -- you know, anybody, developers who come to the City, to conduct themselves in the same way as Alexan Crafts is conducting themselves, the way that we're dealing with issues on Madeira, which is another example where we're listening to the residents and we're providing traffic calming, okay. This is a long-term investment for your client. And the final point that I think is critically important, and that is that, as developers, we need to start considering the projects that have to have open space. This is a perfect example. While the open space is not gargantuan, it is still open space. It is an open park. It is an opportunity for people who live in this building, who live within that block, just like Valencia, just like we're doing with Agave, just like we're doing, hopefully, with Publix and the Codina Cadre project, these projects have open space. And as you start adding these open spaces up in a certain range of five or six blocks, they build upon each other. That is true community. When you mix in traffic calming, pedestrian and bicycle accessibility, art in public places and open space, that is what a real -- in my opinion -- a real city should look like, especially our downtown. It shouldn't just be a concrete jungle. You need to activate people's minds. You need to have people go outside, and there's a lot of ways to do that, but we just have to hold -- we have to hold ourselves accountable as a city and make sure that when developers step into the City, that they understand that they're developing

not in any other city, but the City Beautiful. So, I want to commend your client for doing a good job, listening to the community, getting support from all the residents, which is key, and hopefully, producing a project that delivers on a vision where people can live in this community and enjoy this community and our downtown. That's what we want. So, thank you for that. My colleagues, do you have any other comments, any other concerns? We addressed the issue of the park. We addressed the issue of the tree location, traffic calming. Are there any other issues that are concerned? The project is within the Zoning Code, the height limitations. They're not asking for anything outside of the norm on that front.

Vice Mayor Mena: Sorry, you were going to say something?

Mayor Lago: No, please, go ahead.

Commissioner Anderson: I just -- going to repeat the accolades, so just imagine it repeated. I appreciate the manner in which you worked with the City and with the residents, so thank you.

Mr. Navarro: Thank you. No, it's been a pleasure, and I think with everybody's input, the project's -- from day one, the day we submitted to today is 10 times better. You know, I think the park has grown. We've almost doubled it.

Mayor Lago: Yep.

Mr. Navarro: But also, in terms of programming -- and soon we'll get into a special visitor that we have with us in terms of our public art, but we've really looked to provide a quality park. I think relocating those trees is going to going to really create a very nice space there, a very enjoyable space because you'll have nice seating areas and walking areas, and also, we're going to feature it with some world-class public art. So, we're very excited, and thank you for your input and working with us.

Commissioner Anderson: So, was it estimated how old those trees are?

Mr. Navarro: You know what, I did not get that information, but I could follow up with you. I could talk to David and...

Commissioner Anderson: My guess would be, you know, 50 to 75 years.

Mr. Navarro: Yeah, I mean, it's very difficult to replicate the canopy that we're going to be able to produce. And I think some of the trees is going to create the situation you have on Coral Way, where you have them over the right-of-way, which should be very, very cool, so we're very excited for that.

Commissioner Anderson: Excellent, thank you.

Mayor Lago: Anything else? Any public comment, Mr. Clerk?

City Clerk Urquia: No, sir.

Mayor Lago: Close the public comment. I'll entertain a motion.

Vice Mayor Mena: I'll move it.

Commissioner Anderson: Second.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Clerk.

Commissioner Fors: Yes.

Vice Mayor Mena: Yes.

Commissioner Anderson: Yes.

Mayor Lago: Yes.

(Vote: 4-0)

Mayor Lago: Thank you very much. Congratulations.

Mr. Navarro: Thank you.

City Attorney Ramos: Mayor, we have to vote on F-7.

Mayor Lago: Yes, moving on to F-7.

Commissioner Anderson: I'll move it. Or do we have to...?

Mayor Lago: No, no.

City Attorney Ramos: I already read it in.

Commissioner Anderson: Yeah.

Mayor Lago: Can I get a second?

Vice Mayor Mena: Second.

Vice Mayor Mena: Yes.

Commissioner Anderson: Yes.

Commissioner Fors: Yes.

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Mayor Lago: Yes.

(Vote: 4-0)