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CITY OF CORAL GABLES
LOCAL PLANNING AGENCY (LPA) /
PLANNING & ZONING BOARD MEETING
VERBATIM TRANSCRIPT
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15, 2026, COMMENCING AT 6:03 P.M.

Board Members Present at the City Chamber:

Robert Behar, Chairman
Felix Pardo
Alex Bucelo
Nestor Menendez
Ignacio Alvarez
Gonzalo Sanabria
Alice Bravo

City Staff and Consultants.

Jill Menendez, Administrative Assistant/Board Secretary
Craig Collier, Special Counsel
Craig Southern, Planning Official
Jennifer Garcia, City Planner
Arceli Redila, Zoning Administrator
Gengqian Grace Chen, Principal Planner

Also Participating:

Mario Garcia-Serra

1 THEREUPON:

2 MR. BEHAR: I'm calling the meeting to
3 order.

4 Good evening. This Board is comprised of
5 seven members. Four Members of the Board shall
6 constitute a quorum, and the affirmative of
7 four Board Members should be necessary for the
8 adoption of any motion.

9 If only four Board Members are present, an
10 applicant may request and be entitled to a
11 continuance to the next regularly scheduled
12 meeting of the Board. If a matter is continued
13 due to a lack of quorum, the Chairperson or
14 Secretary of the Board may set a Special
15 Meeting to consider such matter.

16 In the event that four votes are not
17 obtained by an applicant, except in the case of
18 a Comprehensive Plan Amendment, may request a
19 continuance or allow the application to proceed
20 to the City Commission without a
21 recommendation.

22 Pursuant to Resolution 2021-118, the City
23 of Coral Gables has returned to traditional
24 in-person meeting. However, the Planning and
25 Zoning Board has established the ability for

1 the public to provide comments virtually.

2 For those members of the public who are
3 appearing on a Zoom basis and wish to testify,
4 you must be visible to the court reporter to be
5 sworn in. Otherwise, if you speak without
6 being sworn in, your comments may not be
7 valued -- valuable.

8 Lobbyist Registration and Disclosure, any
9 person who acts as a lobby (sic) must register
10 with the City Clerk, as required to the City --
11 pursuant to the City Code.

12 As Acting Chair, I now officially call the
13 City of Coral Gables Planning and Zoning Board
14 meeting of April 15 to order. The time is
15 6:03.

16 Jill, can you please call the roll?

17 THE SECRETARY: Ignacio Alvarez?

18 MR. ALVAREZ: Here.

19 THE SECRETARY: Alice Bravo?

20 MS. BRAVO: Here.

21 THE SECRETARY: Alex Bucelo?

22 MR. BUCELO: Here.

23 THE SECRETARY: Nestor Menendez?

24 MR. MENENDEZ: Here.

25 THE SECRETARY: Felix Pardo?

1 MR. PARDO: Here.

2 THE SECRETARY: Gonzalo Sanabria?

3 MR. SANABRIA: Here.

4 THE SECRETARY: Robert Behar?

5 MR. BEHAR: Here.

6 Thank you.

7 Notice Regarding Ex Parte Communication,
8 please be advised that this Board is a
9 quasi-judicial board, which requires Board
10 Members to disclose all ex parte communication
11 and site visits. An ex parte communication is
12 defined as any contact, communication,
13 conversation, correspondence, memorandum or any
14 other written or verbal communication, that
15 takes place outside a public hearing, between a
16 member of the public and a member of the
17 quasi-judicial board regarding matters to be
18 heard by the Board.

19 If anyone made any contact with a Board
20 Member regarding an issue before the Board, the
21 Board Member must state on the record the
22 existence of the ex parte communication and the
23 party who originated the communication. Also,
24 if a Board Member conducted a site visit
25 specifically related to the case before the

1 Board, the Board Member must also disclose such
2 visit.

3 In either case, the Board Member must state
4 on the record whether the ex parte
5 communication or site visit will affect the
6 Board Member's ability to impartially consider
7 the evidence to be presented regarding the
8 matter. The Board Member should also state
9 that his or her decision will be based on
10 substantial competent evidence and testimony
11 presented on the record today.

12 Does any Board Member have any such
13 communication or site visit to disclose at this
14 time?

15 MR. PARDO: No.

16 MR. BEHAR: Thank you. Seeing none.

17 Swearing In, anyone who speaks this evening
18 must complete the roster on the podium. We ask
19 that you print clearly, so the official records
20 of your name and address will be correct.

21 Now, with the exception of any attorney,
22 all persons physically in this room, in the
23 Chamber, who will speak on any agenda item
24 tonight, please rise to be sworn in.

25 Seeing none, we close that.

1 MR. COLLIER: Mr. Chairman, ordinarily we
2 would have Staff sworn in, but these are both
3 legislative items, so they're not --

4 MR. BEHAR: Required to do so?

5 MR. COLLIER: -- quasi-judicial.

6 MR. BEHAR: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Collier.

7 Zoom Platform Participants, I will ask any
8 person wishing to speak on tonight's agenda, on
9 any item, to please open your chat and send a
10 direct message to Jill Menendez, stating that
11 you would like to speak before the Board, and
12 include your full name. Jill will call you
13 when it's your turn to speak. I would ask you
14 to be concise, for the interest of time.

15 Phone Platform Participants, after the Zoom
16 platform are done, I will ask the phone
17 participants to comment on tonight's agenda
18 item. I will also ask you to be concise, for
19 the interest of time.

20 At this time, I'm going to ask for the
21 approval of the minutes of February 11, 2026.
22 Do we have a motion?

23 MR. BUCELO: So moved.

24 MR. MENENDEZ: I'll second.

25 MR. BEHAR: We have a motion and a second.

1 Jill, can you please call the roll?

2 THE SECRETARY: Alice Bravo?

3 MS. BRAVO: Yes.

4 THE SECRETARY: Alex Bucelo?

5 MR. BUCELO: Yes.

6 THE SECRETARY: Nestor Menendez?

7 MR. MENENDEZ: Yes.

8 THE SECRETARY: Felix Pardo?

9 MR. PARDO: Yes.

10 THE SECRETARY: Gonzalo Sanabria?

11 MR. SANABRIA: Yes.

12 THE SECRETARY: Ignacio Alvarez?

13 MR. ALVAREZ: Yes.

14 THE SECRETARY: Robert Behar?

15 MR. BEHAR: Yes. Thank you.

16 The procedure we will use tonight, we will
17 first identify the item on the agenda by
18 Mr. Coller. We will have a presentation by the
19 applicant or agent. We will follow by a
20 presentation by Staff. We will open it up for
21 public comments, in the Chamber, Zoom platform,
22 and then followed by the phone platform. We
23 will close the public comments. We'll have the
24 Board discussion. We will make -- entertain a
25 motion, discussion, and second of the Board,

1 and then we'll have a final vote by the Board
2 Members.

3 With this completed, Mr. Coller, could you
4 read the first item into the record?

5 MR. COLLER: Yes.

6 Item E-1, an Ordinance of the City
7 Commission of Coral Gables, Florida providing
8 for text amendments to the City of Coral Gables
9 Official Zoning Code by amending Article 5,
10 "Architecture," Section 5-500, "Roofs," to
11 clarify roof design standards including the
12 intent to incorporate a combination of pitched
13 and flat roof forms and to establish that roof
14 designs proposed as entirely flat require
15 review and approval by the Full Board of
16 Architects; to remove Sections 5-503 and 5-504
17 and renumber subsequent sections; to delete
18 outdated parapet height provisions in flood
19 hazard districts; and providing for a repealer
20 provision, severability clause, codification,
21 and providing for an effective date.

22 Item E-1, public hearing.

23 MR. SOUTHERN: Good evening, Mr. Chair and
24 Board Members. Craig Southern, Planning and
25 Zoning Department.

1 So this item is a follow-up to your
2 February 11th discussion regarding proposed
3 text amendments to Article 5, specifically
4 Section 5-500 of Roof Designs Standards.

5 At that meeting, the Board raised concerns
6 about balancing traditional architectural
7 character with the need for modern design
8 flexibility, particularly as it relates to flat
9 roof, parapets and roofing materials. So since
10 that meeting in February, Staff worked closely
11 with Board Member Pardo, and also the City
12 Architect, Juan Riesgo, to refine the ordinance
13 in response to the feedback from the Planning
14 and Zoning Board.

15 So what you have before you tonight is the
16 original Staff report and an updated memo
17 indicating basically the three key updates to
18 the proposed ordinance, as was discussed back
19 in February. The first is, Section 5-501,
20 Roofs. What we've done is, we've added a new
21 requirement for a contextual architectural
22 analysis to accompany proposals for roofing
23 materials on systems -- or, sorry, roofing
24 materials and systems. This analysis must
25 include drawings, specifications, supporting

1 documentation as required by the City Architect
2 and/or the Board of Architects, and must
3 clearly identify the surrounding built
4 environment, while also evaluating
5 compatibility with the neighborhood character,
6 including the architectural style, massing,
7 scale and materiality.

8 The second revision that we put together is
9 from Section 5-502, Flat Roofs. We basically
10 simplified that flat roof provision by
11 providing subsections -- by removing those
12 subsections that actually had ambiguous
13 comments, that were so general it was very hard
14 to understand what was going on, specifically
15 regarding the extent of the visibility of flat
16 roof elements in the residential design
17 component.

18 And, third, we've clarified the language on
19 the pitched roof materials to explicitly
20 prohibit the painting or post installation,
21 alteration of roof tile colors. This is
22 Section 5-503, Subsection C, Pitched Roof
23 Materials. So these updates are intended to
24 provide clear guidance to the applicants and
25 reviewing bodies, while maintaining the City's

1 standards for architectural quality and
2 consistency with neighborhood character.

3 So all of the prior findings from our
4 previous February Staff report, they're still
5 consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and
6 remain unchanged, and Staff is here to answer
7 any questions, if there are any.

8 MR. BEHAR: Thank you, Craig.

9 Jill, do we have any members of the public?

10 THE SECRETARY: No members.

11 MR. BEHAR: Zoom?

12 THE SECRETARY: No.

13 MR. BEHAR: Or phone?

14 THE SECRETARY: No.

15 MR. BEHAR: We're going -- I'm going to
16 close the public comments.

17 I'm going to open it up to the Board
18 Discussion. Felix, since you were involved in
19 the meeting with Staff, do you want to go
20 first?

21 MR. PARDO: Well, we met with Staff -- I
22 met with Staff and we discussed that it all had
23 to do with the character of the neighborhoods,
24 maintaining that, having a mechanism, an
25 evaluation, for the Board of Architects and the

1 City Architect to be able to make sure that the
2 placement of any of these design elements would
3 be in keeping, you know, with the character of
4 the neighborhood, et cetera. I think those
5 safeguards are there.

6 In fact, I pointed out to Staff that in
7 their -- in the whereases that came from the
8 Commission, in the whereases, they had actual
9 wording in there that was now -- that is now
10 added into the actual resolution. So by doing
11 that, I think it gives protection to people
12 that live in the existing neighborhoods, and at
13 the same time, it also gives -- it gives the
14 applicant the ability to work within certain --
15 a certain construct -- design construct, if you
16 will.

17 MR. BEHAR: Let me ask you, as a design
18 professional, essentially this would eliminate
19 the flat roofs, because if you're going to be
20 compatible to your -- contextually to your
21 surroundings, you know, I think, in Coral
22 Gables, 99.9 percent of the roofs are all
23 sloped roofs.

24 MR. PARDO: Actually, I disagree, because
25 there are certain areas, for example, near the

1 Bay, very large homes, beautiful homes that are
2 there, and over the years they had been built
3 with a much more modern style. Even in some of
4 the historical neighborhoods, even smaller
5 neighborhoods, you would be surprised how many
6 areas have flat roofs. So, therefore --
7 and you could deal with the flat roof, not just
8 the roof itself, but the massing of the pushing
9 and pulling.

10 We went into great detail with the City
11 Architect, City Planner, Staff, and they felt
12 comfortable that it gave them the ability to do
13 that. So I don't think that 99 percent of the
14 areas are going to be -- I think that it has to
15 do more with the particular application of
16 where the site is, where it's sited even on the
17 property itself.

18 MR. BEHAR: We know that if it's not
19 visible from the streets, and it's concealed,
20 you could have flat roofs, you know, as an
21 addition or something in the back of the house.

22 MR. PARDO: You were limited to a certain
23 percentage.

24 MR. BEHAR: Right.

25 MR. PARDO: Right.

1 MR. BEHAR: You know, but this -- to me, I
2 guess, this is trying to go away from some of
3 the new houses that we have seen, that are more
4 contemporary modern houses --

5 MR. PARDO: Right.

6 MR. BEHAR: -- that have no pitched roofs.

7 MR. PARDO: Well, I agree with you there,
8 but the point is, it's like music. You know,
9 good music is good music, and in this
10 particular case, some of the -- some of the
11 examples that have gone up, you know, recently,
12 in the last few years, especially on the
13 smaller lots, are very bulky and they just
14 don't feel like they fit in the City, but at
15 the same time, depending on your detailing, et
16 cetera, some of these areas are -- can
17 support --

18 MR. BEHAR: I guess your analogy of good
19 music, you're right. What may be good for you,
20 may not be good for someone else.

21 MR. PARDO: No. No. And you know what I
22 mean. You know, of all people, you know
23 exactly what I mean. The point is that giving
24 someone the flexibility is great, but giving
25 the people that already live in the

1 neighborhood the respect, I think is very
2 important.

3 So, for me, if you have -- and I think I
4 mentioned that at the last meeting that we
5 discussed this, if you have, let's say, twenty
6 homes between the two sides of the street, and
7 you have twenty homes, and one person goes in
8 there and says, "I'm going to knock this home,
9 and I'm going to put this in there," as long as
10 it's not out of keeping with the scale, et
11 cetera, there are other design elements that
12 can be used and picked up, and I think that's
13 why we have the Board of Architects and that's
14 why we have the City Architect.

15 So I feel that the safety factors, the
16 safety nets, are there.

17 MR. BEHAR: Okay.

18 I'm going to bring it to this side. Gonzalo.

19 MR. SANABRIA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

20 I just want some clarity. I apologize, I'm
21 not an architect, so some things don't quite
22 come through in my mind, but on Section 5-501,
23 on the definition of flat roof, I see, on the
24 fourth line, that copper metal is a metal that
25 could be qualified on a flat roof, it could be

1 applied to a flat roof. Am I correct in
2 reading this or not?

3 Line Number Four.

4 MR. SOUTHERN: Yeah, Section 5-501, "Except
5 as provided for in this section, all roofs for
6 single-family residences, townhouses, duplexes,
7 overnight accommodations and uses in Special
8 Use Districts, shall be constructed of tile,
9 slate or copper in its natural state and
10 allowed to oxidize and patina or other high
11 quality material, subject to the review and
12 approval by the City Architect, and where
13 applicable, the Full Board of Architects, as
14 determined appropriate based on the building
15 architectural style, neighborhood context and
16 sound structural principles."

17 So, yeah, that copper component is already
18 within the Code, yes.

19 MR. SANABRIA: So you agree that my
20 assumption is that copper can be used in flat
21 roofs, is that correct or am I misreading this?

22 MR. SOUTHERN: It's an option for the Board
23 of Architects -- yeah, it's an option --

24 (Simultaneous speaking.)

25 MR. BEHAR: But, unfortunately, you can't,

1 because in order to do copper, you have to be
2 able to slope. So you're forced to go to a
3 sloped roof to do that. It cannot be on a flat
4 roof.

5 MR. SANABRIA: I understand, but,
6 unfortunately, the language that's incorporated
7 in this is misleading, in the sense that it
8 shows it as if it's okay on a flat roof.
9 Furthermore, Mr. Southern --

10 MR. SOUTHERN: This is for all roofs. So
11 this is the general section. This is a general
12 component.

13 MR. SANABRIA: Well, if you read that
14 paragraph, like I did, a few times, I think it
15 was misleading, and the language can use a
16 little fine tuning.

17 But moving on, on the issue of standing
18 seam metal, on the sloped roofs, standing seam
19 metal, I'm sure that the architects here on the
20 Board understand what I'm saying. I don't. I
21 would like an explanation, definition, of what
22 a standing seam metal is.

23 MR. BEHAR: Standing seam is, if you've
24 seen a metal roof --

25 MR. PARDO: Interlocking.

1 MR. BEHAR: -- interlocking. There's all
2 of these little ridges in the roof --

3 MR. SANABRIA: Yeah.

4 MR. BEHAR: Those are the --

5 MR. SANABRIA: Conjoining.

6 MR. BEHAR: Yeah, to hold them together.

7 MR. SANABRIA: So what material can that
8 be?

9 MR. BEHAR: Metal roofs is very vague,
10 because you could do -- it doesn't have to be
11 copper. It could be metal, right.

12 MR. PARDO: It could be aluminum.

13 MR. BEHAR: Aluminum, it could be stainless
14 steel, it could be --

15 MR. SANABRIA: So it's a broad definition;
16 is that correct?

17 MR. PARDO: Right. And, again, that's --
18 if I may Chair.

19 MR. BEHAR: Please.

20 MR. PARDO: The whole point is that the use
21 of metal roofs doesn't apply everywhere. It's
22 part -- it's part of the pallet that you use in
23 your designability as an architect. So some
24 characters, for example, of architecture, if
25 you're in The Keys, you would use that and it's

1 very palatable, and it has a history to it, and
2 it's used widely, but the slopes of those roofs
3 are normally more substantial. Not only one
4 slope, but sometimes multiple slopes are used
5 in the same plane. So it's used to embellish
6 and reinforce the character of the type of
7 architecture that you're trying to promote.

8 If you would take, for example, the
9 North -- bless you -- the North Gables area.
10 In the North Gables area, the architecture --
11 the properties are relatively small. If you
12 start putting in metal roofs there, you know,
13 with very slight, very slight slopes, it's
14 going to look like a trailer park. It's not
15 necessarily that we want to use that metal
16 roof, but there are going to be exceptions, and
17 those exceptions have to do with the character
18 of the neighborhood, and also the character of
19 the building itself where you were trying to
20 design that.

21 MR. SANABRIA: Understood. My only
22 confusion here, and it's relating to copper
23 roofs, where it should be defined as only
24 applicable, whether it's good or bad for the
25 neighborhood or whether it's a plus or a minus,

1 I understand that point, and that's for the
2 Board of Architects to decide, it's not for us,
3 at this point, but it's confusing in the sense
4 that copper roofs, as it's written from this
5 paragraph, is also okay with flat roofs, and
6 that's just the technicality of it, Mr. Pardo.

7 MR. PARDO: We actually left it in there,
8 from a general note, because historically the
9 material was placed there. So we didn't try to
10 pull it out to create confusion, where it
11 couldn't be there.

12 MR. SANABRIA: Agreed. Thank you, sir.

13 MR. PARDO: Yeah. You're welcome.

14 MR. SANABRIA: Nothing else, Mr. Chairman.

15 MR. BEHAR: Okay.

16 MR. BUCELO: I'll keep it brief, Mr.
17 Chairman.

18 MR. BEHAR: Go ahead.

19 MR. BUCELO: First of all, thank you,
20 Mr. Pardo, for working with City Staff. Given
21 the safeguards you've explained, I'm in favor.
22 So, yeah, like I said, brief.

23 MR. BEHAR: Ignacio?

24 MR. ALVAREZ: I was hoping I was last, so I
25 could listen to everybody else, but I agree

1 with Alex. I'm fine.

2 MR. BEHAR: Okay. Alice?

3 MS. BRAVO: I think the Staff did a good
4 job of opening the door for the use of modern
5 materials and providing an adequate review
6 process to make sure things are compatible.

7 MR. BEHAR: Nestor?

8 MR. MENENDEZ: I echo the sentiments.
9 Thank you, Felix, for working with Staff. Much
10 appreciated.

11 MR. PARDO: You're welcome.

12 MR. MENENDEZ: One thing did jump out at
13 me. In Section 503, Subsection G, "Roof of
14 accessory building shall conform to the roof
15 requirements for the principal building
16 provided," and it looks like you scratched --

17 MR. SOUTHERN: Correct. Yeah, that was
18 upon the request of the City Architect, the
19 bomb shelters and follow-up shelters.

20 MR. MENENDEZ: So are you saying that bomb
21 shelter can't have flat roofs anymore?

22 MR. SOUTHERN: Well, just roofs on
23 accessory buildings shall conform to the roof
24 requirements for the principal building
25 provided. Just keep it simplified, in the

1 sense that all accessory buildings shall have
2 that consistency with the principal structure.

3 MS. BRAVO: Should you strike through the
4 word, "Provided," as well?

5 MR. SOUTHERN: Yes. That's correct. We
6 should.

7 MR. MENENDEZ: Right.

8 MR. SOUTHERN: Noted.

9 MR. MENENDEZ: That's it.

10 MR. SOUTHERN: Thank you.

11 MR. BEHAR: I'm not really in favor. I
12 think there has been too many -- a lot of
13 flexibility was taken out. I understand, in
14 some areas, it's beneficial, but I think this
15 is City wide, except you gave us some lots, 1
16 through 18, wherever -- Block 89. You know,
17 those are the only lots that do not get
18 affected from what I understand.

19 I think every case is different, and, yes,
20 1954 -- 1950 to 1960, we had a lot of ranch
21 style homes built in Coral Gables, that all had
22 pitched roofs, and if you really go back, those
23 houses were intended to have flat cement tiles
24 on it, and there was a fad during the '80s,
25 where those roofs were being changed to barrel

1 tiles, to make those houses look more Spanish,
2 Mediterranean, which really did not qualify for
3 that, and I think that, 1950s, were good at the
4 time. I think that 70 years later, I think we
5 should not be so restrictive.

6 I'm not in favor of this, but at this time,
7 I'm going to close the Board discussion and I'm
8 going to open it up for a motion.

9 MR. PARDO: Mr. Chair, I wanted to just add
10 one thing. Staff said "And/or" -- you know,
11 the City Architect and/or the Board of
12 Architects, that is correct, but it's not
13 written like that here. It says, "Or." So I
14 would like to make that -- make sure that
15 change gets made when its voted.

16 It should be -- in my opinion, it should be
17 and/or.

18 MR. SOUTHERN: Yeah. I think we're also
19 referencing the February Staff report, but
20 that's also noted, as well.

21 MR. PARDO: Thank you.

22 MR. BEHAR: All right. I'm going to open
23 it up for the Board for any motion.

24 MR. PARDO: I feel almost like it's self --

25 MR. COLLIER: The form of the use of and/or

1 is disfavored. It can be one or the other or
2 both.

3 So could I go back to where you were
4 looking at, so I can see exactly where you were
5 suggesting the and/or goes, because whenever we
6 come across it, it's been criticized by the
7 Third Court of Appeal as not really word.
8 And/or is not a word.

9 So what we do is, usually we say, one or
10 the other, as the context will say, or if
11 you -- or if you want both to be involved, then
12 you could go one, A or B, or both A and B.

13 MR. SOUTHERN: When applicable or where
14 applicable.

15 MR. COLLIER: Yeah. You could say it that
16 way.

17 MR. PARDO: Mr. Chairman, if I may.

18 MR. BEHAR: Go ahead.

19 MR. PARDO: The reason and/or in this case
20 is because the City Architect is one entity,
21 and the Board of Architects is the second
22 entity.

23 MR. SOUTHERN: Correct.

24 MR. PARDO: So unless I'm mistaken, that's
25 why the and/or, because normally -- normally,

1 the Board of Architects makes the decision, but
2 over the previous years, the City Architect on
3 especially smaller projects, can make a
4 decision administratively instead of going to
5 the Board of Architects.

6 MR. COLLER: Well, then "or" would be the
7 perfect construct, because it would depend on
8 the circumstances. In a small scale, where the
9 architect makes his own decision, then that's
10 it. If it's a situation that doesn't qualify
11 it, then it's or the Board of Architects.

12 So the word "or" would be the right term to
13 use.

14 MR. PARDO: I follow your thought.

15 MR. COLLER: Okay.

16 MR. SOUTHERN: For clarification, approval
17 by the City Architect, and when applicable, the
18 Full Board of Architects.

19 MR. COLLER: That works, too.

20 MR. SOUTHERN: Okay. And when applicable?

21 MR. COLLER: Yeah, that's fine.

22 MR. BEHAR: Okay. We're going to vote on
23 this. We need to vote on it, correct?

24 MR. COLLER: So we're voting on it as
25 amended.

1 MR. ALVAREZ: Motion to approve as amended
2 by Mr. Menendez.

3 MR. BEHAR: Okay. Do we have a second?

4 MR. BUCELO: Second.

5 THE SECRETARY: Sir, the motion was made
6 by? Alvarez.

7 Alex Bravo -- I'm sorry, Alex Bucelo?

8 MR. BUCELO: Yes.

9 THE SECRETARY: Nestor Menendez?

10 MR. MENENDEZ: Yes.

11 THE SECRETARY: Felix Pardo?

12 MR. PARDO: Yes.

13 THE SECRETARY: Gonzalo Sanabria?

14 MR. SANABRIA: Yes, and please clarify the
15 language that we discussed. Thank you.

16 THE SECRETARY: Ignacio Alvarez?

17 MR. ALVAREZ: Yes.

18 THE SECRETARY: Alice Bravo?

19 MS. BRAVO: Yes.

20 THE SECRETARY: Robert Behar?

21 MR. BEHAR: No.

22 Next item.

23 MR. COLLIER: Item E-2, an Ordinance of the
24 City Commission of Coral Gables, Florida,
25 providing for text amendments to the City of

1 Coral Gables Official Zoning Code by amending
2 Article 16 "Definitions" to create a definition
3 for Financial Institutions; amending Article 3,
4 "Uses," including Sections 3-100 "Uses," and
5 access -- I'm sorry, Section 3-100 "Uses,"
6 3-200 "Principal Uses," 3-300 "Accessory Uses,"
7 and Article 10, "Parking and Access," Section
8 10-110 "Amount of Required Parking" to
9 establish location, design and parking
10 standards for financial institutions within
11 certain overlay districts; providing for
12 repealer provision, severability clause,
13 codification, and providing for an effective
14 date.

15 Item E-2, public hearing.

16 MR. SOUTHERN: All right. On to our second
17 item.

18 Again, Craig Southern, Planning and Zoning
19 Division.

20 So this item, as was read by the City
21 Attorney, is initiating -- well, it was
22 originally initiated by City Staff -- the City
23 Manager's Office and City Staff.

24 The Zoning Code Text Amendment is focused
25 on financial institutions. So the request has

1 three primary components when you reference the
2 Staff report. Initially, it's creating a clear
3 definition for financial institutions,
4 distinguishing financial institutions from
5 retail sales and services. Secondly, it
6 establishes a very specific location and design
7 standards for these uses within the City's
8 primary ground floor pedestrian-oriented areas
9 within the specified Overlay Districts, and
10 Third, it introduces targeted incentives, such
11 as parking reductions and signage flexibility,
12 when active street front uses are incorporated.

13 So this amendment is really just about the
14 alignment of kind of what we're trying to
15 accomplish within the City here. Over the past
16 several years, the City has made significant
17 public investments in streetscape improvements,
18 pedestrian infrastructure, and the overall
19 quality of the public realm, particularly
20 within the Central Business District and the
21 listed mixed-use corridors.

22 At the same time, we've observed
23 traditional financial institutions, while they
24 are important economic uses, they tend to lower
25 levels of pedestrian activity, specifically

1 after certain periods of time and outside of
2 the standard business hours. When these uses
3 occupy prominent ground floor corner locations,
4 they can unintentionally create gaps in street
5 level activity, and what we often refer to as
6 inactive frontages. So this text amendment is
7 intended to address that condition in a
8 targeted and balanced way.

9 So staff conducted a data analysis, to
10 ensure that the proposed standards are
11 appropriately calibrated, to a degree. We
12 initially looked at all of the financial
13 institutions that are within the City as of
14 April 2026. So the analysis, if you take a
15 look inside your Staff report, identified 74
16 total financial service locations within the
17 City, City-wide. That's 51 banks and then 23
18 other financial service establishments.

19 So 46 of the 74 are located within the
20 City's specified overlay districts that are
21 intended within the activation standards within
22 the ordinance. This is basically just where
23 the pedestrian activity is a primary objective
24 for the City. 31 of the 74 financial
25 institutions occupy ground floor locations, and

1 then only nine are located on prominent corner
2 frontages, primarily within the Central
3 Business District. These are the locations
4 that have the greatest influence on pedestrian
5 experience. So Staff is showing that the data
6 is -- it's not necessarily a widespread
7 condition, but to a degree, it's occurring in
8 the City's most visible and pedestrian
9 sensitive areas.

10 The proposed standards for design to
11 respond specifically to those conditions, while
12 recognizing that all legally established
13 financial institutions will be able to remain
14 conforming and are not impacted, unless there
15 is a new development, a change of use or a
16 substantial facade modification. So what this
17 ordinance does and what it does not do, this
18 ordinance does not affect existing, legally
19 established banks or financial institutions
20 service uses, and it does not reduce or
21 restrict underlining development rights,
22 density or intensity.

23 What it does is basic performance oriented
24 standards for how these uses interact within
25 the public realm, specifically when they're

1 located on high visibility ground floor corner
2 frontages. These standards are triggered only
3 under specific conditions. Once again, new
4 development, change of use, or substantial
5 facade modifications. So they're not
6 retroactive.

7 Basically, the key approach is, on corner
8 lots, primary pedestrian frontages, financial
9 institutions are required to incorporate an
10 active streetfront use, such as a cafe, a
11 retail component or a similar publicly
12 accessible use, that creates activation. These
13 uses must be directly accessible from the
14 sidewalk, visually transparent, and designed to
15 engage pedestrians. The standards are flexible
16 in how they can be met, either through a
17 percentage of floor area or defined depth along
18 the frontage. Additionally, flexibility is
19 built in through administrative review by the
20 Development Review official.

21 Incentives are also provided, which include
22 parking exemptions and additional signage
23 allowances. So, for non-corner sites, the
24 requirements are even more modest. They're
25 focused primarily just on the transparency and

1 the access and limiting inactive frontages.

2 So Staff has conducted a review of
3 comparable Florida municipalities, including
4 Delray Beach, Oakland Park, Orlando,
5 Jacksonville, Tampa, Miami Beach. Many of
6 these jurisdictions impose stricter regulations
7 than what we're proposing here, ranging from
8 outright prohibitions on primary frontages or
9 even a Downtown, where financial institutions,
10 as a standalone principal use may not even be
11 permitted, unless they have some kind of
12 accessory or active use. So this is what's in
13 other municipalities, not what we're requiring.
14 But in that context, Coral Gables is measured
15 and we wanted to be contextual in our
16 sensitivity about allowing financial
17 institutions to operate while ensuring they
18 contribute to the pedestrian environment.

19 So for a regulatory standpoint, the text
20 amendment is really specifically grounded in
21 the specific Overlay Districts, as listed,
22 which I can read and get into later, but it's
23 primarily the Central Business District,
24 existing frontage and transparency
25 requirements, and the City's Comprehensive Plan

1 policies related to walkability, economic
2 viability, and public safety. So, the
3 standards, they're not arbitrary. They're tied
4 directly to our urban design standards and
5 performance objectives that we have in the Code
6 already, and particularly in areas where the
7 City has prioritized pedestrian-oriented
8 development.

9 Initially, there were questions about maybe
10 a prescriptive nature, yet Staff would
11 characterize these standards as
12 performance-based and proportional to the
13 location within frontages, corners and with
14 only -- not City-wide, but only within these
15 Overlay Districts. So they are applied only
16 within the targeted specific Overlay Districts,
17 on high visibility frontages, primarily
18 involving new development, change of use,
19 substantial facade modifications on the ground
20 floor. There is also built in administrative
21 flexibility through the Development Review
22 Official to address site specific conditions.
23 So rather than being rigid, the framework is
24 structured to be adaptable.

25 So, in closing, the text amendment does

1 ensure the ground floor uses, regardless of the
2 type, contribute to the viability of the public
3 realm within the City's primarily pedestrian
4 corridors. It regulates the interface between
5 private development and the public realm,
6 consistent with the City's long-established
7 authority to shape how ground floor uses engage
8 with the street, particularly within these
9 Overlay Districts, where walkability, economic
10 vitality are the key objectives.

11 So the text amendment balances economic
12 functionality with urban design expectations,
13 protects existing businesses and reflects,
14 both, local conditions and established best
15 practices across comparable municipalities.

16 So based on the findings, Staff has
17 proposed these text amendments to be consistent
18 with the Zoning Code and the Comprehensive
19 Plan, and if you have any questions, we're --

20 MR. BEHAR: Thank you.

21 I want a clarification, and Mr. Collier you
22 could help on this.

23 You stated that even though it's permitted
24 by Code in some municipality, you are not
25 allowed to do it on storefronts, right? Even

1 though it's allowed by the Code, I find that
2 hard to believe, that you could impose -- the
3 Code may allow it, and then you could say, no,
4 that is not allowed.

5 MR. SOUTHERN: There are existing
6 municipalities in Florida that financial
7 institutions -- as an example, in the Downtown
8 of Oakland Park, as a primary use, financial
9 institutions are not permitted, unless they are
10 an accessory to a different active primary use.
11 Same thing in Delray Beach, in their Central
12 Business District.

13 MR. BEHAR: So by -- you're creating a
14 hardship to a financial institution, to try to
15 bring -- and I'm going to tell you from
16 experience, because I used to be involved with
17 a bank, which is on the North Ponce corridor,
18 the old Apollo Bank. It was hard enough to run
19 a bank, now to try to put an accessory, a cafe
20 or something, in that business, it makes it
21 very, very difficult. I think we're going to
22 create, you know, City Attorney, a hardship to
23 some of these businesses.

24 MS. BRAVO: Could --

25 MR. COLLER: Well -- do you wish to be

1 recognized or you have another Board Member
2 that wishes to be recognized. So I would yield
3 to her.

4 MR. BEHAR: Go ahead, Ms. Bravo.

5 MS. BRAVO: Hi. I think this item is very
6 timely. About a week ago, there was an article
7 in the Miami Herald and it was commenting on
8 the state of affairs on Miracle Mile and why
9 there was some vacancies, and there was
10 actually a comment, that these banks create
11 these blank spots that affect the corridor
12 overall. So I think, you know, this is a great
13 proposal, and we have to balance the needs of
14 banks opening up, so it's not a hardship, but
15 this is going to help maybe elevate retail
16 throughout the City.

17 MR. BEHAR: Okay.

18 MR. SANABRIA: Mr. Chairman --

19 MR. BEHAR: We haven't -- I just wanted a
20 clarification.

21 MR. COLLER: Do you want a response to your
22 question?

23 MR. BEHAR: Yeah.

24 MR. COLLER: This item does grandfather in
25 all existing banks. So existing banks will not

1 be required to provide a cafe or something like
2 that to provide an active use for more than
3 just banking hours.

4 MR. BEHAR: I guess this is intended to go
5 after hours, to make sure, if you're on Miracle
6 Mile, you open, you know, until nine o'clock at
7 night, ten o'clock at night, you have
8 activation, and the bank was not going to stay
9 open to those hours. I guess so.

10 MR. COLLER: Well, I've seen banks that
11 actually do have -- not -- I just know there
12 was one on Miami Beach, which I believe is a
13 Capital One, I think, Cafe and I do believe
14 they have some extended banking hours. I don't
15 know if fully what the -- I don't know if it's
16 fully what the cafe is, but I do know they do
17 have it, but this is a policy issue that the
18 Staff is presenting to you for your
19 consideration in weighing the various competing
20 interests. I mean, that's really what you're
21 here to make a decision on.

22 MR. BEHAR: Before I open it to the
23 public -- thank you, Mr. Coller.

24 Before I open it to the public comment,
25 other questions, clarification you want to have

1 from Staff?

2 MR. SANABRIA: Yes.

3 MR. BEHAR: Go ahead.

4 MR. SANABRIA: Yes.

5 Mr. Southern, on your stats that you
6 have --

7 MR. SOUTHERN: Yes, sir.

8 MR. SANABRIA: -- where you have 29, 26 and
9 8, on the ones that are 29 sites and they are
10 located within the district -- the Overlay
11 District, which I'm guessing is the CBD
12 District, in a way, correct?

13 MR. SOUTHERN: No, it's all three
14 districts. It's the North Ponce Mixed-Use
15 District, Central Business District, and then
16 our Design District. Those are the Overlay
17 Districts that the activation standards are
18 related to only, no other portion of the City.

19 MR. SANABRIA: Understood.

20 Now, please tell me how many are in the
21 Central Business District at this time?

22 MR. SOUTHERN: Okay. So as we have it in
23 the analysis, of the 51 active banks City-wide,
24 we only have 7 that are on the ground floor in
25 the Central Business District. 7.

1 MR. SANABRIA: Okay. Following up on that
2 statement you just made, how many of those
3 banks are corner sites?

4 MR. SOUTHERN: I -- now, you said,
5 "Oversight"?

6 MR. SANABRIA: Corner sites.

7 MR. BEHAR: Corner.

8 MR. PARDO: Corner sites.

9 MR. SOUTHERN: Yeah. That's the 7. The
10 ground floor corners are the 7.

11 MR. SANABRIA: Okay. Now, you say in here
12 in your -- in your explanation that 75 feet
13 frontage on the street -- is that correct, on
14 the retail street? So, in other words, a bank
15 wants to locate somewhere in the commercial
16 corridors, they cannot place one wider than 75
17 feet street frontage?

18 MR. SOUTHERN: But that 75 feet is not
19 within our Code. That's one of the examples
20 that's in Delray right now.

21 MR. SANABRIA: So that's not being
22 discussed at this time?

23 MR. SOUTHERN: This is what is existing in
24 Delray right now, in their CBD section. So it
25 just says, "Financial institutions such as

1 brokerage firms and private wealth management
2 firms, they are prohibited, but banks and
3 savings and loans are restricted in terms of
4 frontage, with no more than 75 feet along
5 retail streets, to prevent inactive zones. So
6 active street level uses are maintained or
7 mandated to maintain pedestrian engagement and
8 to support continuity on the ground floor
9 retail."

10 MR. SANABRIA: I hear you, but is this
11 something that we're considering, placing 75
12 feet as a maximum --

13 MR. SOUTHERN: No, sir. This is just an
14 example from another municipality.

15 MR. SANABRIA: So let's be clear that that
16 is not --

17 MR. SOUTHERN: It's not part of the
18 underlined portion of the Code.

19 MR. SANABRIA: Okay. Out of these --

20 MR. SOUTHERN: It's just an example.

21 MR. SANABRIA: Out of these units that are
22 banks and are operating currently, all of these
23 ones that you have, do you know how many are
24 owned by simple deed, how many are under ground
25 lease or how many are tenants? Do you know?

1 Do you have that breakdown?

2 MR. SOUTHERN: I'm sure we could find it,
3 but at this moment, I do not.

4 MR. SANABRIA: You don't? You do not have
5 it? Okay.

6 Mr. Chairman, I am very much in favor of
7 this, but I think we need some further
8 clarification. I think it's a little bit
9 confusing, and the deed part of it -- I want to
10 vote for the --

11 MR. BEHAR: Let me close -- any
12 clarification? If not, I'm going to get -- do
13 you need a clarification?

14 MR. PARDO: I do need a clarification --

15 MR. BEHAR: Okay.

16 MR. PARDO: -- because one of the things
17 where I'm very confused with is the drive
18 thru. There are certain areas, certain
19 corridors, that drive thrus are prohibited,
20 such as Ponce and Miracle Mile. There is no
21 mention of keeping that preservation there, and
22 it's because of the conflicts, obviously, with
23 pedestrians.

24 So I would make sure -- I would want Staff
25 to make sure, in looking at this carefully,

1 that those areas are still preserved that way.
2 In other words, that drive thrus cannot come
3 out or go through that area where you will have
4 a direct conflict.

5 MR. BEHAR: But I don't think -- and you
6 could clarify. I don't think that will be
7 affected here, because on Miracle Mile, you are
8 not allowed to have a drive thru.

9 MR. PARDO: I understand that, but when you
10 look at this, it's not going back and saying,
11 we're reinforcing that you cannot have it, you
12 know. In other words, that it's prohibited on
13 those particular streets. I don't know what
14 other streets it should be prohibited, since
15 many of these areas are already designed and
16 built, and the only thing you're doing now is
17 taking that use and placing it on the ground
18 level, and you're facilitating drive thrus for
19 it.

20 What I'm saying is, you know, put an
21 eyeball on that.

22 MR. SOUTHERN: So if Staff can help clarify
23 hopefully.

24 If you turn -- forgive me, turn to Page 8
25 of the Staff Report, under Section 3-300,

1 Accessory Uses, and then, once again, Section
2 3-312, Drive Thrus --

3 MR. PARDO: Right.

4 MR. SOUTHERN: -- all drive thrus must be
5 reviewed as a conditional use, subject to the
6 conditions that are within that section.

7 So we're not even going into that component
8 whatsoever. We're not touching it. We're
9 letting it be just as it is. Any drive thru
10 that is requested would have to go through a
11 conditional use process, no matter where it's
12 at, within the City.

13 MR. PARDO: Mr. Chair, you see, that is
14 completely different than the prohibition that
15 exists on those two corridors. One is
16 prohibited. The other one is saying you have
17 to obtain --

18 MR. BEHAR: Is the same language that
19 exists today; isn't it?

20 MR. SOUTHERN: Yes. Yes.

21 MR. BEHAR: This is no different.

22 MR. PARDO: I know of one case, on Ponce,
23 where a drive thru exiting only was placed
24 there. It went through a full blown public
25 hearing, all of the way to the Commission.

1 This is not Staff, you know, or someone waving
2 a magic wand.

3 MR. BEHAR: But I think this is intended
4 to -- is not touching that section of the Code
5 of the drive thru.

6 MR. SOUTHERN: Correct. This is mainly for
7 that pedestrian-oriented activity in the
8 Overlay Districts.

9 MR. BEHAR: This is to incentivize or to
10 mandate that a financial institution
11 incorporate a different use, to keep the
12 activation all of the way through nighttime,
13 let's say.

14 MR. BUCELO: Or even the weekend.

15 MR. BEHAR: The weekend.

16 MR. SOUTHERN: Pedestrian-oriented -- you
17 know, yeah, to help with the activation and
18 pedestrian --

19 MR. BEHAR: Just to make sure we address
20 Mr. Pardo's concern, we're not doing --
21 touching -- this does not touch anything
22 pertaining to drive thrus.

23 MR. SOUTHERN: No, sir.

24 MR. BEHAR: That's still prohibited on
25 Miracle Mile, on some of the other, you know --

1 MR. SOUTHERN: Yeah, that entire section --

2 MR. BEHAR: -- pedestrian friendly streets.

3 MR. SOUTHERN: Right.

4 MR. BEHAR: Correct?

5 MR. SOUTHERN: Yeah. We're not looking at
6 drive thrus at all in this. It's just the
7 activation standards within those overlay.
8 Now, granted, the initial component is, we're
9 revising the retail services definition within
10 the Code. We're taking financial institutions
11 out, and we're giving financial institutions
12 its own definition now.

13 MR. BEHAR: Okay. Ignacio.

14 MR. ALVAREZ: So, if I'm understanding this
15 correctly, let's say, Miracle Mile and Ponce,
16 if you're on a corner and you want to open up a
17 bank, now you have to make like a Capital One
18 type of cafe style bank to promote people
19 walking there?

20 MR. SOUTHERN: It doesn't have to be a
21 cafe, but it does have to be something that
22 would activate, and if you want, we can go to
23 what the standards are or what we're proposing.

24 MR. ALVAREZ: Tattoo parlor?

25 MR. BEHAR: Yes.

1 MR. ALVAREZ: My question then is, what
2 happens if it's a non-bank? What happens if I
3 want to open up a law practice on the corner
4 and my hours are 9:00 to 5:00, am I required to
5 do the same thing on that same location?

6 MR. SOUTHERN: This is just for financial
7 institutions.

8 MR. BEHAR: But you're absolutely right.

9 MR. BUCELO: That's a very good point.
10 That's a great point.

11 MR. SOUTHERN: Let me please clarify,
12 offices --

13 MS. BRAVO: You probably wouldn't, because
14 you're not depending on foot traffic as a law
15 firm.

16 MR. ALVAREZ: Yeah, but here it is trying
17 to promote foot traffic on Miracle Mile, for
18 example. So let's punish the bank --

19 MR. SOUTHERN: 90 percent of the uses on
20 Miracle Mile, they need to be retail --

21 MR. ALVAREZ: Okay. Let's pick Ponce, a
22 block away. There's locations here that are
23 non-banks on the corners.

24 MR. SOUTHERN: Correct.

25 MR. ALVAREZ: Do they have to do the same

1 thing?

2 MR. SOUTHERN: This is only for new proposals.

3 MR. ALVAREZ: But they're not a bank. So
4 if it's a new proposal, they don't have to open
5 up a tattoo parlor.

6 MR. SOUTHERN: On North Ponce, from my
7 understanding, no, but on Miracle Mile, 90
8 percent of the uses have to be of a retail
9 nature.

10 MR. ALVAREZ: You're not answering my
11 question.

12 MR. SOUTHERN: Okay.

13 MR. BEHAR: To his point, if he wants to
14 open a law office on Miracle Mile --

15 MR. ALVAREZ: Or on Ponce. Let's say, a
16 block away.

17 MR. BEHAR: Okay. Let's say --

18 MR. SOUTHERN: Inside of the North Ponce
19 Mixed-Use District is what you're indicating.

20 MR. ALVAREZ: Right.

21 MR. SOUTHERN: Outside of the Central
22 Business District --

23 MR. ALVAREZ: But if I want to open up any
24 other business -- if it's a bank, you have to
25 open up something. If it's a non-bank, it

1 doesn't matter. I don't get it. If you're
2 trying to promote --

3 MR. SOUTHERN: But that's incorrect. I
4 mean, that's the thing. The ground floor uses,
5 that's where our design standards are about
6 that pedestrian activity. If it's on the
7 second floor or above, yeah, it would be a
8 permitted use.

9 MR. BEHAR: No, but let's talk about the
10 ground floor, and specifically, you know, the
11 space that is to promote pedestrian activation,
12 okay. If you want to do an office, like you
13 said, he cannot do it. I mean, you could do an
14 office, just cannot do a bank with the same --
15 in the same space.

16 MR. ALVAREZ: Right. If you're a bank,
17 you're going to say to the bank, "Hey, you need
18 to put pedestrian -- something that promotes
19 pedestrians." But if it's a non-bank, you
20 don't. So what's the purpose, if your purpose
21 is to promote pedestrian walkway on that
22 street, and then you're not limiting it --

23 MR. SOUTHERN: Let me try to --

24 MR. ALVAREZ: Hold up -- and then you're
25 not limiting it, because then you can open up a

1 tattoo parlor. You're opening it up to many
2 different things other than just a cafe. I
3 just think it's going to be problematic, is my
4 position.

5 MR. MENENDEZ: So just to follow-up on
6 Ignacio's point, do we do this with any other
7 institutions? We're doing with financial
8 institutions now. Is there anything similar
9 that we put --

10 MR. SOUTHERN: Yes. Offices, currently,
11 right now, on Miracle Mile --

12 MR. MENENDEZ: That's a broad -- that's
13 broad, offices.

14 MR. SOUTHERN: -- on that ground floor --

15 MR. MENENDEZ: I mean, like you're saying,
16 financial institutions. Do we do this with
17 attorney's offices? Do we do this with, you
18 know --

19 MR. SOUTHERN: Any office, right now,
20 would -- as long as 90 percent of what we have
21 on -- I'll just keep using Miracle Mile, as an
22 example, it has to --

23 (Simultaneous speaking.)

24 MR. SOUTHERN: Certificate of Use
25 application, Staff would take a look at that,

1 and be like, "Unfortunately, sorry, this use
2 would not be compatible with that location."

3 In the sense of -- to answer your question,
4 on corners and corner activations, this is
5 actually the first kind of use that we're
6 trying to help, you know, and utilize that
7 pedestrian orientation on the corners, because
8 we do have a couple of locations within the
9 City right now that they are inactive, and
10 that's -- the hope is that we're trying to
11 activate these Overlay Districts.

12 MR. MENENDEZ: Right. So, Number One,
13 couldn't the antithesis be that banks will shy
14 away from corner locations? And Number Two,
15 what screamed out about bank and activation
16 like together, because when I think, banks, I
17 don't really think activation. I think banking
18 hours. I don't think, promote commerce or
19 street traffic. I just think, it's a bank.

20 I get what we're trying to do, which is
21 trying to eliminate dead spaces, but, I mean, I
22 just -- I think it's -- Number One, financial
23 institutions is a -- I guess I see it, because
24 they do take up prime locations, but I don't
25 see why we should start with banks.

1 Again --

2 MR. SOUTHERN: So just to reiterate, right
3 now, retail, as it's defined in our definitions
4 for retail sales and services, as a primary
5 use, we currently have financial institutions
6 in there. So, previously, they would be
7 permitted -- or, currently, they're permitted,
8 but that's the problem. We have a list of
9 grocery stores, personal services, art
10 galleries, et cetera, a lot of these other
11 things, they have longer hours, they create
12 more pedestrian activity, and that's -- that is
13 solely the hope of this.

14 MR. BEHAR: Alice, you had a comment?

15 MS. BRAVO: Yes.

16 And I think you're presenting this to
17 address an issue that's been identified, and
18 the issue that's been identified is that there
19 are certain type of businesses that compete for
20 these areas, where they depend on foot traffic,
21 and it's not law firms and it's not other
22 offices, because they can find less expensive
23 real estate and not take up this space.

24 So the issue is finding that balance, to
25 keep the areas activated and the main

1 competitor to the activated spaces are these
2 non-activated spaces, which happen to be banks,
3 and that's why you presented this, right?

4 MR. SOUTHERN: That's correct, and that's
5 why we're trying to add these incentives, as
6 well, and it's 25 percent -- if Staff can read
7 the activation standards that are proposed.

8 MR. BEHAR: Felix, you had a comment?

9 MR. PARDO: Yes.

10 Based on Alice's comment of the Miami
11 Herald article, you know, what's wrong with
12 Miracle Mile, first of all -- first of all, the
13 normal depth is somewhere from 70 to 80 feet,
14 as far as the depth of the available space that
15 faces Miracle Mile. So that provides a
16 tremendous depth, that there's no way, based on
17 the rents, that they can make a living there,
18 you know, as far as a retail store, let's say,
19 for activation on Miracle Mile.

20 So if you take this financial institution,
21 and you take the back two-thirds of it, let's
22 say, and then you leave the front as the
23 retail, that's basically, I think, what they're
24 simply trying to do, which is to keep the
25 activation, where now you can have uses for

1 retail where you do activate.

2 Second thing is that, over time, we used to
3 have Restaurant Row in a particular street, and
4 it was wall to wall restaurants, very good
5 restaurants. Now we have -- Miracle Mile has
6 become the new restaurant row, except that now
7 you see the effect of other economic forces
8 that have brought a lot of these restaurants,
9 including chain restaurants, which are
10 financially funded very well, to their knees.
11 So you have a tremendous amount of vacancies
12 there. We have, I think, even an auto
13 dealership now on Miracle Mile.

14 And the other thing that really is amazing,
15 if you walk Miracle Mile, which I have, is that
16 some of these stores are by appointment only.
17 There's no foot traffic component there. So
18 it's become an issue that for many years,
19 including BID and many people, have talked
20 about it, but the problem is that you lose the
21 diversity, especially when you make it
22 absolutely impossible from a rent standpoint.

23 So I think that some of what you're seeing
24 here is, to be able to chip away at the depth
25 of the real estate, to be able then to make it

1 a more economically and accessible and valuable
2 thing to other uses.

3 MR. BEHAR: But -- and I understand, but if
4 you want to be able to activate it, then you're
5 going to only, you know, bring in or promote to
6 bring restaurants.

7 Because I'm going to give you an example.
8 2003 or so, on Ponce and Miracle Mile, I did
9 both corners. I did -- on the southwest
10 corner, I did the Einstein Bagel and the
11 Starbucks. I remember having to do a cut out,
12 because At the time, Miracle Mile did not allow
13 outdoor seating. So if you know, I had to cut
14 out an area, 25 by 25, to have outdoor seating
15 within the footprint of the building.

16 On the opposite side, we did -- I did
17 Lignet Roset. Lignet Roset used to be a very
18 nice furniture store, but the hours of
19 operation was from 10:00 to 6:00. So no matter
20 what, you had a retail business that at six
21 o'clock stopped. So, you know, what's the
22 point, unless you bring in restaurants that are
23 the only thing that is going -- or for the most
24 part, the only thing that's going to stay open
25 late, you're going to have a problem.

1 To me, on the banks, you know, I
2 understand, and Capital One is a great example.
3 Yes, they do have, you know -- but it's a
4 problem, when it comes to security, also, for
5 those banks, to have a separate thing that, you
6 know, that nobody could be coming in. I think,
7 if you're going to promote activation, you
8 know, it cannot be limited to just, you know,
9 exclude the banks.

10 MR. PARDO: One use.

11 MR. SANABRIA: Mr. Chairman, if I may. I'm
12 sorry, I apologize. Mr. Pardo, if you'll allow
13 me.

14 Why would a new storefront bank become a
15 storefront bank when you've got these
16 grandfathered in banks that are sitting on the
17 corners around the area? It just doesn't make
18 any economic sense at all for the banks
19 themselves.

20 Why would banks, a storefront bank, be
21 limited to 75 foot width frontage, because
22 that's what Delray Beach has required, 75 feet
23 frontage of storefront? So what if they want a
24 hundred? What if they have 125? We're going
25 to emulate Delray Beach, because it's 75? I

1 mean, this language is only for informational
2 points, but it doesn't make sense. What's the
3 point of having a storefront bank creating
4 activity? The answer is, zero. They don't
5 create activity. I mean, they have a walk-in
6 customer base. That's fine. But they don't
7 create any retail activity.

8 I mean, they close, like Mr. Behar said,
9 and Mr. Pardo, all of the others, they close at
10 6:00. On all of these holidays, whether
11 they're legal holidays or whatever holidays
12 they are, they close up. They don't operate.
13 They don't open. So it's a limited offering to
14 a customer base, taking up very valuable
15 storefront, in a very valuable area, Miracle
16 Mile. It really -- the more I read about this,
17 the more I'm not going to --

18 MR. BEHAR: Let me ask you a question. The
19 car dealership that is on Miracle Mile, okay,
20 after 6:00 p.m., is it open? No. So they're
21 taking valuable space. The only thing that is
22 not is going to take valuable space is a
23 restaurant.

24 MR. SANABRIA: Exactly.

25 MR. BEHAR: Can we have everything --

1 MR. PARDO: Or it doesn't open to a certain
2 time. It's by appointment only.

3 MR. BEHAR: By appointment.

4 MR. BUCELO: And it's probably closed on
5 Sundays, as well.

6 MR. MENENDEZ: Sorry.

7 Is there anything in the language that says
8 that the space has to be open for the cafe, if
9 they share space with the financial
10 institution? We keep saying, the Capital One
11 Cafe, because, Number One, that's their
12 business model. They tend to, you know, market
13 to a younger demographic, and so it's -- you
14 know, it makes sense for them to have that.
15 That's their niche.

16 I don't see more Northern Trust doing the
17 same thing --

18 MR. PARDO: No.

19 MR. MENENDEZ: -- And I don't see why we
20 should make them. If Northern Trust wants to
21 go and open up a branch on the corner of Ponce
22 and Miracle Mile, where TD Bank, and they go in
23 and they're the new tenant, are we going to
24 force them to use 50 percent or 25 percent of
25 their space to have a cafe? Can it be an

1 upscale cafe? Can it be like a 7Eleven? What
2 are we doing here? I just think it's a bit
3 intrusive on the financial institutions to put
4 this onus on them to create foot traffic or
5 commerce, that, you know, the City should be
6 promoting maybe giving better incentives to
7 restaurants to use that space. So that's just
8 my two cents.

9 MS. BRAVO: But they could also carve out a
10 shallow frontage liner, and sublease that out
11 to someone else. So they don't have to give up
12 their space to a cafe.

13 MR. BEHAR: That -- I'm going to tell you,
14 that's hard to really accomplish, because, you
15 know why, if I'm going to do a cafe, you're
16 going to need back of house service and
17 everything. To throw that through the back,
18 through the bank --

19 (Simultaneous speaking.)

20 MS. BRAVO: It's carving it in the frontage
21 and lease that to a clothing store or something
22 else that's more active.

23 MR. MENENDEZ: Who dictates --

24 MR. BEHAR: At six o'clock, it's dead too.

25 MR. MENENDEZ: Who gets to dictate who the

1 cafe space is leased to? Does the bank or does
2 it -- I mean, I guess, if the bank owns
3 property, then --

4 MR. SOUTHERN: Sometimes there are shared
5 spaces inside the bank.

6 MR. MENENDEZ: No. No. I understand that,
7 but let's say the bank we have -- again, I
8 default to like the Northern Trust, a private
9 banking institution, that might not want, you
10 know, a certain restaurant next door to their
11 bank, and they chose -- I mean, I just think
12 there's a possibility to drive banks away from
13 these commercial districts, because they just
14 don't want to have to deal with it. It's
15 probably easier to just buy a block or two
16 blocks away, outside of these districts, and
17 set it up there and then the space is going to
18 sit empty.

19 So, yeah, I think it's -- in theory, it's a
20 lovely idea, and I'm all for commerce and
21 making foot traffic. I just don't like having
22 to tell these financial institutions what to
23 do, and, again, who's going to choose what cafe
24 goes there?

25 MR. BEHAR: Let me do something. Let me --

1 we had enough for now.

2 MR. ALVAREZ: One more clarification.

3 MR. BEHAR: Okay. Go ahead.

4 MR. ALVAREZ: I'm sorry, one more
5 clarification.

6 I agree with Nestor, but what -- these --
7 and we call it a cafe, but is there a limit to
8 what they can open up there? They can open
9 anything that just creates pedestrian walk?

10 MR. SOUTHERN: No. So we have a
11 definition that we're proposing. If you guys
12 just turn to the front of where the ordinance
13 would start, that would be Page 4, Definitions,
14 so a newly proposed definition, "Active
15 streetfront use means ground floor use, whether
16 principal or accessory, that is open to the
17 general public and generates frequent
18 pedestrian activity, visual interaction with
19 the public realm through transparent storefront
20 design, direct sidewalk access, and active
21 customer engagement. Active streetfront uses
22 include retail sales and services, restaurants,
23 cafes, food service establishments,
24 entertainment venues, cultural facilities,
25 fitness studios, galleries, personal services,"

1 which we also have a new definition for, "as
2 well, and similarly publicly accessible uses.
3 These uses that are located on corner lots may
4 be subject to additional activation standards,"
5 which is the other item. We can go over it, if
6 the Board would like to, "Ensure continuous
7 pedestrian activity along both street
8 frontages, such as providing active uses along
9 both frontages, when on corners, locating
10 entrances on the near -- on or near the corner,
11 providing more than one public entrance to
12 address each streetfront, and increasing
13 streetfront transparency along both facades and
14 limiting blank walls and non-transparent
15 fronting facing either street."

16 MR. MENENDEZ: That's including, but not
17 limited to, correct? So it could be a tattoo
18 parlor.

19 MR. SOUTHERN: Well, limiting blank
20 walls --

21 MR. ALVAREZ: How do you define -- how do
22 you define personal services and similar
23 publicly accessible uses?

24 MR. MENENDEZ: Yeah, this is too broad.

25 MR. BEHAR: If you have a storefront,

1 you're not creating -- listen, let me do
2 something. Let me open it up to the public
3 comment, and then we're going to come back.
4 We're going to have a second bite to the apple
5 here.

6 MR. SOUTHERN: Staff is just trying to
7 assist with creating some kind of pedestrian
8 orientation.

9 MR. BEHAR: I hear you, but I --

10 MR. MENENDEZ: This needs a lot more work.

11 MR. BEHAR: Let's open it to the public.

12 Jill, do we have any --

13 MR. SOUTHERN: That's why we need you guys.

14 MR. BEHAR: Do we have anybody from the
15 public wishing to speak on this?

16 THE SECRETARY: Yes, we do. Mario
17 Garcia-Serra.

18 MR. BEHAR: Mr. Serra, come on up, please.
19 Welcome.

20 MR. GARCIA-SERRA: Good evening, Mr. Chair
21 and the Board. Mario Garcia-Serra, with
22 offices at 600 Brickell Avenue and also 901
23 Ponce de Leon Boulevard, here today
24 representing PNC Bank, which I'm sure you're
25 all familiar with, a large community bank.

1 PNC Bank right now is under a lease for the
2 building located at 4231 South Le Jeune.

3 That's the building that some of you will
4 remember, the last use of it was a Sir Pizza
5 restaurant, pizzeria, there along Le Jeune.

6 Before that, it's been other restaurants,
7 including, I think, if you go far back enough,
8 a Burger King.

9 That space, that building, has been empty
10 now somewhere between five and ten years,
11 right, absolutely dead, nothing going on there.
12 We now have a potential bank there, but with
13 the prospect of 25 percent of that space within
14 that building having to be dedicated to
15 something other than banking, it will kill that
16 proposal, and what we're talking about now is
17 not a building that has any occupancy. It is a
18 dead-dead space. There has been nothing in
19 that building for many years.

20 And we finally have, potentially, a new
21 tenant there to bring life and activity to that
22 area of the City, and now it's facing an
23 ordinance whereby 25 percent of the space, it's
24 about a 3,000 square foot space, and equates to
25 800 square feet, would have to be dedicated to

1 something other than banking, which is their
2 main business and they do not follow any model
3 of incorporated cafes and that sort of thing.

4 So aside from the impact on space, think of
5 the impact on operations, having to balance the
6 need for food service or entertainment or
7 whatever it might be, with what their main
8 function is, which is banking and financial
9 services. Think of the impact on the
10 experience for their clients, especially when
11 you're talking about a high end Gibraltar Bank
12 maybe or Northern Trust Bank, as was mentioned
13 before. Now, all of a sudden, that sort of
14 discreet banking experience has to be balanced
15 with a room full of members of the public that
16 are there.

17 It would really be, in the case of this
18 particular property, in this part of the City,
19 where this ordinance is still applicable --
20 there's been a lot of talk about Miracle Mile,
21 but this ordinance is also applicable to many
22 other parts of the City, the North Ponce area,
23 the Design District around the Village of
24 Merrick Park, where this is located, it would
25 be devastating. It will be devastating and I

1 don't see any particular public benefit for
2 this area of the City. On the contrary, as I
3 mentioned already, a space that indeed has been
4 vacant for a long time, hard to find a tenant
5 to fill this space, would now lose the one
6 prospective tenant that there actually is.

7 There could be certain design requirements
8 to promote visibility and pedestrianism and so
9 forth, which would make sense. This might make
10 sense perhaps in some other part of the City,
11 such as Miracle Mile, but, here, in this
12 particular part of the City, I think it's
13 counter-productive. If you'd perhaps want to
14 consider incentivizing this, as opposed to
15 obligating it, that might be something that's a
16 little bit more effective and palatable, but we
17 need to keep in mind, while banking and
18 financial services may not be the most active
19 of uses, they are a function that every
20 resident of the City needs, and in order to
21 keep that function here, in order to make sure
22 that we can fill a building that's been empty
23 now for somewhere between five and ten years,
24 this sort of regulation does not help.

25 And with that said, you know, I think it's

1 helpful to have that sort of real life
2 experience. I think, at the minimum, this
3 ordinance needs a lot of review and analysis
4 and factoring in what the practical impacts are
5 going to be. You don't want to have unintended
6 consequences, like the one I discussed right
7 now. We were focusing completely on one part
8 of the City, when the ordinance is applicable
9 to many others and it could cause unintended
10 consequences.

11 Thank you, guys.

12 MR. BEHAR: Mr. Serra, thank you.

13 Jill, any other --

14 THE SECRETARY: No more speakers.

15 MR. BEHAR: Zoom?

16 THE SECRETARY: No.

17 MR. BEHAR: PHONE?

18 THE SECRETARY: No.

19 MR. BEHAR: Close -- we're going to close
20 the public comments.

21 We're going to open it back up to the Board
22 discussions.

23 Nestor.

24 MR. MENENDEZ: So I know we were kind of
25 fixated on Miracle Mile, and the concept did

1 make sense, but something like the old Sir
2 Pizza building, I didn't even know -- is that
3 part of where the required area is going to be?

4 MR. SOUTHERN: So, yeah. Can we just go
5 through the activation -- proposed activation
6 standard? Can we look at that, because there's
7 two options there? That 25 percent of the
8 tenant floor bay area, that's one option. The
9 other option would be a minimum twenty-foot
10 customer service area depth extending across
11 only 50 percent of the liner frontage.

12 MR. BEHAR: But that question, it would
13 apply there, too? It would be --

14 MR. MENENDEZ: It would apply to that
15 location, correct?

16 MR. SOUTHERN: Yeah. That location --

17 MR. MENENDEZ: Are we trying to promote
18 activation there, too?

19 MR. PARDO: Everything that's MX.

20 MR. SOUTHERN: Not everything that's MX,
21 but -- well, this case, the one that Mario was
22 talking about, that's within the Designed
23 Overlay.

24 MR. MENENDEZ: So, basically, from Ponce to
25 Le Jeune, from Bird to US-1?

1 MR. SOUTHERN: Correct. Yeah.

2 MR. MENENDEZ: I mean, the main issue I
3 see --

4 MR. SOUTHERN: Primarily on corners.

5 MR. MENENDEZ: Right, but the main issue I
6 see there, and I'm not saying that it's bad,
7 but a bank like PNC, Gibraltar, one of these
8 private institutions, if they open up a cafe or
9 something, you have a high school right across
10 the street -- I mean 7-Eleven was pretty bad.
11 I don't know if it's still bad, but that -- I
12 mean, there's a lot of loitering, you know,
13 truancy, whatever you want to call it. You
14 know, I think, for a financial institution, it
15 would be a tough pill to swallow, given the
16 proximity that you have a high school right
17 across the street. That's a really big concern
18 for me.

19 MR. BEHAR: Ignacio.

20 MR. ALVAREZ: I'm sorry you're getting beat
21 up.

22 MR. SOUTHERN: It's okay. I mean, that's
23 what we're here to do, is collaborate and
24 hopefully refine some ideas.

25 MR. ALVAREZ: And I don't know what other

1 ideas -- I think the gentleman brought up
2 incentivizing a business maybe might be an
3 option.

4 MR. SOUTHERN: We have two incentives that
5 are --

6 MR. ALVAREZ: Which are?

7 MR. SOUTHERN: Basically taking out the
8 parking requirements, that would be required,
9 so it's --

10 MR. ALVAREZ: But it's an either/or.

11 MR. SOUTHERN: Or they could also get an
12 additional projection sign. They could get
13 additional signage -- bonus signage.

14 MR. ALVAREZ: But you're not giving them
15 the option.

16 MR. SOUTHERN: They do have that option,
17 yeah.

18 MR. ALVAREZ: You have to do this. If
19 you're going to open up a bank, you have to do
20 this.

21 MR. SOUTHERN: If it's a newly proposed
22 bank on a corner within these Overlay
23 Districts, that would be the requirement.

24 MR. ALVAREZ: Yeah, but why don't we do it
25 -- what I'm trying to tell you is, why don't

1 you say, A or B. If you want to promote
2 walking or promote pedestrian, why don't you
3 say, hey, you can do it the old way, but if you
4 want to do it this way, we'll give you A, B and
5 C as an option. Give them that option, because
6 I agree with PNC Bank.

7 In my former life, I was a cop. Everybody
8 knows that. We always had problems with people
9 leaving that high school. They're going to be
10 at that bank drinking coffee, eating food,
11 doing whatever they want to do, I'm not going
12 to walk over there, into that bank, and do
13 business while they're all there.

14 No offense to the students. I'm sorry, no
15 offense to Coral Gables High, and we'll put
16 that on the record, but these are legit issues,
17 which is why I'm going to vote no to the way
18 this is right now.

19 MR. SOUTHERN: So I just want to reiterate
20 the fact, again, that we are taking financial
21 institutions out of retail sales and services,
22 which is currently how it is defined, and it's
23 pretty common, and Staff feels that through,
24 you know, analysis, through a multitude of
25 different municipalities, that there is a

1 difference between retail sales and services
2 financial institutions and speaking of
3 currently or the old ways --

4 MR. BEHAR: Let me go to the Board and then
5 we'll come back.

6 MR. PARDO: In my career, I've designed, I
7 don't know, thirty, forty banks. The world of
8 banking has changed completely in the last, you
9 know, thirty years, and it's still changing,
10 but the curious thing about what
11 Mr. Garcia-Serra said is that, there you have a
12 structure that was originally designed as a
13 Burger King, then it was a pizza place, and
14 then -- and it looked like it was pretty
15 successful. Then it died out, and it's been
16 empty for about a decade.

17 And, you know, for me, the use of the bank
18 would make sense, as long as they can stay
19 there, as long as they could provide a service
20 to the community. I see and I understand --
21 you know, this goes back to, you know, books
22 that we read many years ago by Jane Jacobs, et
23 cetera, for the activation of these streets,
24 where the streets, by being activated, they
25 become safer, they become this, they become

1 that, but the reality is, there's nothing worse
2 than an empty building. Every time I walk down
3 Miracle Mile and I see paper cladding on the
4 storefronts, it's heartbreaking, and when I see
5 existing banks that have recently closed on Le
6 Jeune Road, I think that's heartbreaking. It
7 speaks volumes of what we're not doing.

8 I understand and I appreciate what Staff is
9 trying to do, but I don't think that we're
10 doing what we should be doing, which is
11 providing more flexibility, when we obviously
12 don't have obnoxious uses that are affecting
13 neighbors and neighborhoods. For me, having an
14 empty property is telegraphing, you don't want
15 to put your business there, when you have so
16 many of them, and that's also part of the
17 psychology of what people are looking for when
18 they go shopping.

19 It's the same thing as parking. Parking is
20 an issue, and you make parking extremely
21 expensive, and you're going to get ticketed on
22 top of that, people are just going to get in
23 their car and drive to Dadeland Mall and park
24 there for free. It's just, you have to
25 understand that when real estate is filled, and

1 those people are carrying that, which is
2 property taxes and insurance and everything
3 else, having a building empty for ten years
4 makes absolutely no sense, compared to having a
5 bank on that particular corner, in my opinion.

6 MR. BEHAR: Thank you.

7 Alice -- let me get Alice a second and I'll
8 come back to you.

9 Any other comment?

10 MS. BRAVO: You know, I think you're trying
11 to address the concern. Now you've heard more
12 concerns, and maybe the best thing is for you
13 to come back with a revised proposal.

14 MR. SOUTHERN: Yeah, and any
15 recommendations --

16 MR. BEHAR: We're going to continue, and
17 then you're going to give your comments.

18 MR. SOUTHERN: Okay.

19 MR. BEHAR: Alex.

20 MR. BUCELO: Not to beat a dead horse, I
21 know we've been at this, but I think we're
22 trying to address Miracle Mile more than
23 anything and the walkability. I know we're
24 talking about the Central Business District, so
25 on and so forth, but I think then you have a

1 property, such as this one, where it gets
2 affected for no reason, and I think, obviously,
3 when talking about banks and financial
4 institutions, we're more worried about the
5 corner of Ponce and Miracle Mile, and now, my
6 understanding is, another bank is going in that
7 corner, where there was a coffee shop prior.

8 So I think this ordinance is extremely
9 broad, extremely burdensome, especially for
10 financial institutions, and quite frankly, I
11 think the scope of the locations is a little
12 too broad. I think we've got to focus more on,
13 I guess, Miracle Mile and maybe the surrounding
14 blocks, but I think this gentleman's property,
15 which is completely outside of that, and quite
16 frankly has no walkability -- I drive by there
17 every single day, I don't notice anyone walking
18 those streets.

19 So I just think, it definitely, to her
20 point, needs some revision.

21 MR. MENENDEZ: Except for students.

22 MR. BUCELO: Except for students, which
23 aren't going to be there at night anyways.

24 MR. BEHAR: Gonzalo.

25 MR. COLLIER: Can we all sort of speak into

1 the mic, because it's for the court reporter's
2 benefit.

3 MR. BEHAR: Gonzalo, anything else?

4 MR. SANABRIA: What are we voting on?

5 MR. BEHAR: Not yet.

6 MR. SANABRIA: That's the thing -- Mr.
7 Chairman, I asked the Counsel what are we
8 voting on, because Mr. Garcia-Serra came in
9 representing some pizza, which is a vacant
10 building and it should be active. It should be
11 a bank on it. No question about that.

12 But then we're talking about storefronts on
13 Miracle Mile. So what are we voting on, sir?
14 I want some sort of clarification on that if
15 you don't mind.

16 MR. COLLIER: Just on the ordinance. It's
17 not limited to Miracle Mile. I think there may
18 be some confusion --

19 MR. BEHAR: They're going to have to come
20 back, Gonzalo, because this is too broad. You
21 know, listen, I'm in favor, if this was only
22 Miracle Mile, okay, and maybe a couple of
23 blocks north and south of Miracle Mile. Other
24 than that, I think this is not a good proposal,
25 because we're -- this is the perfect case, you

1 know, where you have a building that for the
2 last ten years is empty. Why would that bank
3 there want to open a cafe to have, you know,
4 crowds in there, that are not going to be
5 compatible with a banking institution?

6 MR. MENENDEZ: Empty, in an area that has
7 been recently gone through a big building boom,
8 because that area has been developed a lot and
9 that building still sat empty, and it begs the
10 question, why.

11 MR. BEHAR: I think if -- like, you know,
12 there's a time and place for everything. If
13 it's Miracle Mile, I think it would be a great
14 proposal, and I think we need to look at it in
15 limited areas. We cannot say, you know, all of
16 these areas, because it doesn't work. In my
17 opinion, it doesn't work there.

18 MR. ALVAREZ: Make it an option.
19 Incentivize them, and give them Option A or
20 Option B, Don't make this mandatory --

21 MR. BEHAR: Yeah.

22 MR. ALVAREZ: -- if you're just asking for
23 ideas.

24 MR. BEHAR: I think -- what are we going to
25 vote, to answer your question, I don't think

1 we're going to vote on anything tonight. I
2 think we're going to send them back. You heard
3 all of the comments. I think we should come
4 back with something else, that is more specific
5 for an area. It's not those four --

6 MR. SOUTHERN: Three.

7 MR. BEHAR: -- or three areas that -- you
8 know, it may not be applicable in the Design
9 District, you know, or Innovative area. You
10 may want to have a bank -- my office is in that
11 area. At six o'clock, the lights are pretty
12 much gone, you know. So what's the difference
13 between my office and a financial institution?

14 MR. PARDO: Should we defer?

15 MR. MENENDEZ: Or maybe focus -- maybe a
16 combination of making it optional and starting
17 as like a pilot program with Miracle Mile as
18 the target, you know, pilot, see how it will
19 sell.

20 MR. SOUTHERN: Yeah. I mean, I can refine
21 that.

22 MR. MENENDEZ: Because that's very broad,
23 the way it's there.

24 MR. BEHAR: Do we defer it --

25 MR. COLLIER: It's my recommendation to

1 defer to a date uncertain. Let Staff come back
2 with a revised proposal. That would be my
3 suggestion, so that they have plenty of time to
4 consider the various options.

5 MR. BEHAR: I think that's the way we go.
6 We're going to defer. Do you think that thirty
7 days for next meeting is sufficient or do you
8 want to have to the meeting after that?

9 MR. SOUTHERN: I would say, at least sixty
10 days.

11 MR. BEHAR: Okay.

12 MR. PARDO: Mr. Chairman, just one more
13 thing. When we talk only about this particular
14 use, it's so small. So, I think about, how
15 many institutions can you even place on the
16 back side of the -- you know, you take the
17 square footage, divide it, and go back to the
18 amount that already exists in the City of Coral
19 Gables, it's very, very small. Maybe there are
20 other uses, that are not permitted, that could
21 be permitted this way, where you could still
22 activate it.

23 I really do believe it's just, you know,
24 reducing some of that depth, when we're talking
25 specifically about Miracle Mile, simply because

1 when they were designed as retail spaces, it
2 was a different time.

3 MR. BEHAR: Okay. I think Staff has --
4 you've heard the comments. Come back in sixty
5 days for the June meeting, whenever that date
6 would be?

7 MR. COLLER: They're going to advertise
8 anyways, so --

9 MR. BEHAR: Okay.

10 MR. COLLER: So I don't think you
11 necessarily need to give them a time. They
12 could come back when they're ready.

13 MR. BEHAR: Okay.

14 MR. PARDO: That's better.

15 MR. BEHAR: We need a motion to defer.

16 MR. COLLER: We do need a motion to defer
17 to a date uncertain.

18 MR. SANABRIA: Motion to defer, Mr.
19 Chairman.

20 MR. BUCELO: Second.

21 MR. BEHAR: We have a motion and a second.

22 THE SECRETARY: I'm sorry, who made the
23 motion and who seconded it?

24 Mr. Sanabria.

25 MR. BEHAR: Alex made the second.

1 All in favor?

2 (All Board Members voted aye.)

3 MR. BEHAR: All opposed? Nay.

4 Next item.

5 Thank you. The next item, we have the
6 election --

7 MR. COLLER: Was that a unanimous vote on
8 deferral?

9 MR. BEHAR: Yeah.

10 MR. SANABRIA: Mr. Chairman, on E-3,
11 Election, I would like to defer this for until
12 next meeting, unless it's the sentiment of the
13 Board to continue with this item. I'd like to
14 go into discussion more than the election at
15 this time.

16 MR. BEHAR: But I think -- I'm going to
17 bring up the elections now. It's on the
18 agenda. I don't want to push it. So we're
19 going to do the election --

20 MR. MENENDEZ: I would also move to defer.

21 MR. BEHAR: To defer that?

22 MR. MENENDEZ: I'll second that.

23 MR. BEHAR: To defer it?

24 MR. MENENDEZ: Yeah.

25 MR. COLLER: So there's a motion to defer

1 and we have a second, and to a particular time
2 or --

3 MR. BEHAR: But why are deferring this? We
4 have the seven of us here. Everybody is here.

5 MR. BUCELO: There's no need to defer it.

6 MR. MENENDEZ: That is true.

7 MR. ALVAREZ: Let me ask you a question,
8 what's going to happen if on Tuesday they move
9 the elections to November, that changes our
10 periods, it could affect the future of this
11 Board?

12 MR. SANABRIA: Exactly.

13 MR. ALVAREZ: There's too many what-ifs.

14 MR. SANABRIA: Exactly.

15 MR. ALVAREZ: I don't know. That's a
16 question for counsel.

17 MR. PARDO: That's a good point.

18 MR. COLLER: It's really up to you all, how
19 you feel. You could do the election now or you
20 could choose to defer it. It's within your
21 discretion.

22 MR. BEHAR: Let's take a guess -- I mean, a
23 vote among the Board Members, who would like to
24 defer this to the next meeting?

25 Gonzalo?

1 MR. MENENDEZ: I mean, the only reason I
2 would change my mind on this, is because we are
3 all here, and we should take advantage. We've
4 been punting this for, I don't know, months
5 now, and so I vote we'll just have the
6 election.

7 MR. BEHAR: Felix?

8 MR. PARDO: I think that he does make a
9 good point about the referendum coming up.

10 MR. BEHAR: But would that really affect
11 us?

12 MR. BUCELO: I don't think it affect --

13 MR. ALVAREZ: If it moves it to November,
14 you're going to have potential new people. We
15 might have a brand new Commissioner. They're
16 going to want to appoint their own people. So
17 it might change it from May to December.

18 MR. BUCELO: Yeah, but then we would have
19 to punt this off for six, seven months, until
20 that election happens?

21 MR. ALVAREZ: That comment is probably
22 going to get me in trouble later, I'll deal
23 with that later, but -- you know what, I'll
24 make a motion, I'll make a motion to leave it
25 as is, because I like Robert being the

1 chairperson.

2 MR. COLLER: Well, there was a motion to
3 defer. Have they withdrawn their motion?

4 MR. MENENDEZ: I'm withdrawing it, yeah.

5 MR. COLLER: All right. So now we're back
6 to status quo.

7 MR. BEHAR: So we're going punt it for six
8 months?

9 MR. COLLER: So if it's status quo, we're
10 voting on it tonight. Is that what I'm
11 hearing?

12 MR. ALVAREZ: I would put a motion forward
13 for keeping the status quo.

14 MR. COLLER: Status quo means that it's on
15 the agenda tonight. That's what status quo
16 means.

17 MR. ALVAREZ: No, I'm saying -- I nominate
18 Robert.

19 MS. BRAVO: I have a question. When are we
20 supposed to have elections?

21 MR. BUCELO: Technically it's April.

22 MR. BEHAR: No, technically, upon
23 appointment to the Board, right?

24 MR. COLLER: I don't know when your
25 regularly scheduled election is. I have to ask

1 Staff -- I think we're well beyond the time
2 that we were going to have an election for
3 Chair and we've pushed it off.

4 MS. BRAVO: What are we required to do and
5 when?

6 MS. GARCIA: You're not required to do it
7 any time. We suggest we do it when we have a
8 full Board here, all of our members appointed.

9 MR. ALVAREZ: We've got a motion right now.
10 My motion. Anybody second?

11 MR. BUCELO: Your motion is what?

12 MR. MENENDEZ: He nominated Robert.

13 MR. BEHAR: But I can't. I cannot stay --
14 as much as -- the Chairperson.

15 I'll make a motion that we put -- make Alex
16 Bucelo as the Chairperson?

17 MS. BRAVO: Second.

18 MR. COLLER: Okay. We have a motion and a
19 second for Chair.

20 MR. BEHAR: I cannot be.

21 MR. COLLER: So can I call the vote on
22 that?

23 MR. MENENDEZ: Sure.

24 MR. BEHAR: Call the roll. I made a motion
25 to make Alex the Chairperson, second by Alice.

1 THE SECRETARY: Okay. Felix Pardo?
2 MR. PARDO: Yes.
3 THE SECRETARY: Gonzalo Sanabria?
4 MR. SANABRIA: No.
5 THE SECRETARY: Ignacio Alvarez?
6 MR. ALVAREZ: Yes.
7 THE SECRETARY: Alice Bravo?
8 MS. BRAVO: Yes.
9 THE SECRETARY: Nestor Menendez?
10 MR. MENENDEZ: Yes.
11 THE SECRETARY: Alex Bucelo?
12 MR. BUCELO: Yes.
13 THE SECRETARY: And Robert Behar?
14 MR. BEHAR: Yes.
15 MR. ALVAREZ: Who is the Vice Chair then?
16 MR. BEHAR: We need a second vote on the
17 Vice Chair.
18 I will make Alice Bravo, I nominate to be
19 the Vice Chair.
20 MR. BUCELO: I'll second. She seconded
21 mine, so --
22 MR. COLLER: There's a motion and a second.
23 Can we call the roll?
24 THE SECRETARY: Gonzalo Sanabria?
25 MR. SANABRIA: No.

1 THE SECRETARY: Ignacio Alvarez?

2 MR. ALVAREZ: Yes.

3 THE SECRETARY: Alice Bravo?

4 MS. BRAVO: I guess, yes.

5 THE SECRETARY: Alex Bucelo?

6 MR. BUCELO: Yes.

7 THE SECRETARY: Nestor Menendez?

8 MR. MENENDEZ: Yes.

9 THE SECRETARY: Felix Pardo?

10 MR. PARDO: Yes.

11 THE SECRETARY: Robert Behar?

12 MR. BEHAR: Yes.

13 So, I guess, Mr. Chair, I turn over the
14 gavel to you.

15 MR. COLLER: So for the new Chair, the only
16 other thing that you need to do tonight is to
17 call a motion to adjourn, but you're welcome,
18 if you would like, to make a speech.

19 MR. BUCELO: Well, I appreciate all of your
20 support. I was not expecting this. So thank
21 you very much. I've served on this Board I
22 guess now for two different terms, so close to
23 two years, so I appreciate it. Thank you.

24 I guess a motion to adjourn.

25 MR. ALVAREZ: Second.

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(Board Members voted aye.)

(Thereupon, the meeting was adjourned at 7:40
p.m.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

STATE OF FLORIDA:

SS.

COUNTY OF MIAMI-DADE:

I, NIEVES SANCHEZ, Court Reporter, and a Notary Public for the State of Florida at Large, do hereby certify that I was authorized to and did stenographically report the foregoing proceedings and that the transcript is a true and complete record of my stenographic notes.

DATED this 22nd day of April, 2026.



NIEVES SANCHEZ