

1 CITY OF CORAL GABLES
2 LOCAL PLANNING AGENCY (LPA)/
3 PLANNING & ZONING BOARD MEETING
4 VERBATIM TRANSCRIPT
5 WEDNESDAY, JULY 2, 2025, COMMENCING AT 6:00 P.M.

6 Board Members Present at Commission Chamber:

7 Eibi Aizenstat, Chairman
8 Robert Behar
9 Felix Pardo
10 Sue Kawalerski
11 Nestor Menendez
12 Alex Bucelo

13 City Staff and Consultants.

14 Peter Iglesias, City Manager
15 Fengqian "Grace" Chen, Principal Planner,
16 Jill Menendez, Administrative Assistant/Board Secretary
17 Jennifer Garcia, City Planner
18 Craig Collier, Special Counsel
19 Arceli Redila, Zoning Administrator
20 Craig Southern, Planning Official

21 Also Participating:

22 County Commissioner Raquel Regalado
23 Chip Withers
24 Dr. Betty Mortenson
25 Cathy Burnwell
Denise Carvalho
Lisa DeTournay
Maria Cruz
David Harnett, Esq.
Roger Kogan
Daniel Millay
Victoria Weller
Henry Pinero
Francisco Senior, via Zoom
Pat Parker, via Zoom

1

1 recommendation.

2 Pursuant to Resolution Number 2021-118, the
3 City of Coral Gables has returned to
4 traditional in-person meetings; however, the
5 Planning and Zoning Board has established the
6 ability for the public to provide comments
7 virtually.

8 For those members of the public who are
9 appearing on Zoom and wish to testify, you must
10 be visible for -- to the court reporter to be
11 sworn in. Otherwise, if you speak without
12 being sworn in, your comments may not have
13 evidentiary value.

14 Lobbyist Registration and Disclosure, any
15 person who acts as a lobbyist must register
16 with the City Clerk, as required pursuant to
17 the City Code.

18 As Chair, I now officially call the City of
19 Coral Gables Planning and Zoning Board Meeting
20 of July 2nd, 2025 to order. The time is 6:00
21 p.m.

22 Jill, if you'd please call the roll.

23 THE SECRETARY: Robert Behar?

24 MR. BEHAR: Present.

25 THE SECRETARY: Armando Bucelo?

3

1 THEREUPON:

2 (The following proceedings were held.)

3 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: It's six o'clock.

4 Let's go ahead and get started, please.

5 I'd like to go ahead and call the meeting
6 to order. I'd like to ask everybody to please
7 silence their phones and beepers, if you have
8 any.

9 Good evening. The Board is comprised of
10 seven members. Four Members of the Board shall
11 constitute a quorum, and the affirmative vote
12 of four Members shall be necessary for the
13 adoption of any motion. If only four Members
14 of the Board are present, an applicant may
15 request and be entitled to a continuance to the
16 next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board.
17 If a matter is continued due to a lack of
18 quorum, the Chairperson or Secretary of the
19 Board may set a Special Meeting to consider
20 such matter.

21 In the event that four votes are not
22 obtained, an applicant, except in the case of a
23 Comprehensive Plan Amendment, may request a
24 continuance or allow the application to proceed
25 to the City Commission without a

2

1 MR. BUCELO: That's --

2 MR. BEHAR: Alex.

3 MR. BUCELO: -- the wrong Bucelo.

4 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Alex.

5 THE SECRETARY: Alex Bucelo? I'm so sorry.

6 MR. BUCELO: Present. Close enough,
7 though.

8 THE SECRETARY: Sue Kawalerski?

9 MS. KAWALERSKI: Here.

10 THE SECRETARY: Nestor Menendez?

11 MR. HERNANDEZ: Present.

12 THE SECRETARY: Felix Pardo?

13 MR. PARDO: Here.

14 THE SECRETARY: Javier Salman?

15 Eibi Aizenstat?

16 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Here.

17 Notice Regarding Ex-Parte Communications,
18 please be advised that this Board is a
19 quasi-judicial board, which requires Board
20 Members to disclose all ex parte communications
21 and site visits. An ex parte communication is
22 defined as any contact, communication,
23 conversation, correspondence, memorandum or
24 other written or verbal communication that
25 takes place outside of the public hearing

4

1 between a member of the public and a member of
2 a quasi-judicial board regarding matters to be
3 heard by the Board.

4 If anyone made any contact with a Board
5 Member regarding an issue before the Board, the
6 Board Member must state on the record the
7 existence of the ex parte communication and the
8 party who originated the communication.

9 Also, if a Board Member conducted a site
10 visit specifically related to the case before
11 the Board, the Board Member must also disclose
12 such visit. In either case, the Board Member
13 must state, on the record, whether the ex parte
14 communication and/or site visit will affect the
15 Board Member's ability to impartially consider
16 the evidence to be presented regarding the
17 matter. The Board Member should also state
18 that his or her decision will be based on
19 substantial, competent evidence and testimony
20 presented on the record today.

21 Does any Member of the Board have such a
22 communication and/or site visit to disclose at
23 this time?

24 MR. BEHAR: No.

25 MR. PARDO: No.

5

1 MR. BUCELO: No.

2 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Swearing In, everyone
3 who speaks this evening must complete the
4 roster on the podium. We ask that you print
5 clearly, so the official records of your name
6 and address will be correct.

7 Now, with the exception of attorneys, all
8 persons physically in the City Commission
9 Chambers, who will speak on agenda items before
10 us this evening, please rise to be sworn in.

11 (Thereupon, the participants were sworn.)

12 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you.

13 Zoom platform participants, I will ask any
14 person wishing to speak on tonight's agenda
15 item to please open your chat and send a direct
16 message to Jill Menendez, stating you would
17 like to speak before the Board, and include
18 your full name. Jill will call you, when it's
19 your turn. I ask you to be concise, for the
20 interest of time.

21 Phone platform participants, after Zoom
22 platform participants are done, I will ask
23 phone platform participants to comment on
24 tonight's agenda item. I also ask you to be
25 concise, for the interest of time.

6

1 First we have the approval of the minutes
2 of March 12th, 2025.

3 MR. BEHAR: Motion to approve.

4 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: We have a motion to
5 approve. Is there a second?

6 MS. KAWALERSKI: Second.

7 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Sue made the second.

8 Any discussion? No?

9 Call the roll, please.

10 THE SECRETARY: Alex Bucelo?

11 MR. BUCELO: Yes.

12 THE SECRETARY: Sue Kawalerski?

13 MS. KAWALERSKI: Yes.

14 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Menendez?

15 MR. HERNANDEZ: Yes.

16 THE SECRETARY: Felix Pardo?

17 MR. PARDO: Yes.

18 THE SECRETARY: Robert Behar?

19 MR. BEHAR: Yes.

20 THE SECRETARY: Eibi Aizenstat?

21 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Yes.

22 The procedure that we'll use for tonight is
23 the following: First we'll have the
24 identification of the agenda item by
25 Mr. Collier, then we'll have the presentation by

7

1 the applicant or agent, presentation by Staff,
2 and then we'll go ahead and have a public
3 comment, in Chamber first, Zoom platform, and
4 then phone line platform. Then we'll go ahead
5 and close the public comment, Board discussion,
6 motion, further discussion, if needed, and
7 second of motion, then Board's final comments
8 and a vote.

9 First, before we get started, what I'd like
10 to do is, I'd like to thank two Members of the
11 Board that are not with us anymore. That is
12 Chip Withers, who's in attendance with us
13 tonight, and Julio Grabiell, for all of their
14 devotion, time and dedication that they have
15 provided the Board. Their leadership will be
16 missed.

17 I would also like to welcome -- we have two
18 new Board Members tonight -- Nestor Menendez,
19 appointed by Vice Mayor Anderson, and Alexander
20 Bucelo, appointed by Commissioner Lara. I
21 would like to ask each appointment to please
22 tell us a little bit about yourself. If you
23 don't mind, Nestor, if you'd go first.

24 MR. HERNANDEZ: Sure. My name is Nestor
25 Menendez. I recently moved to Coral Gables in

8

1 2020. I served previously on the
2 Transportation Advisory Board. I was Vice
3 Mayor Rhonda Anderson's appointment on that. I
4 was asked to serve on the Planning and Zoning
5 Board, so I moved over to this Board.

6 I'm a practicing attorney. My practice is
7 at One Alhambra. So I work here, I live here,
8 and I've been looking for any way to give back
9 to this Community.

10 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you. Welcome.

11 MR. HERNANDEZ: Thank you.

12 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: We appreciate it.

13 Alex, welcome back.

14 MR. BUCELO: Thank you. I was going to
15 say, not a new member, a returning member.

16 I'm Alex Bucelo. I'm sorry if this is a
17 little close.

18 I'm Alex Bucelo. I have been born and
19 raised in Coral Gables. I have served on this
20 Board. I have served on the Mayor -- I have
21 the pleasure of serving on the Mayor's Advisory
22 Board currently. I've served on the Code
23 Enforcement Board. So, any way I can give back
24 to this community, I'm all in.

25 So, quite frankly, this is -- don't tell

9

1 the other boards, but this is definitely my
2 favorite board to serve on. So thank you. I
3 look forward to serving with you guys the next
4 couple of years.

5 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you.

6 Also, I'd like to welcome openly
7 Commissioner Regalado, who's with us today --
8 thank you very much for coming -- as well as
9 City Manager Peter Iglesias, and my
10 understanding is, we also have with us the Vice
11 Mayor, Anderson, on Zoom with us.

12 THE SECRETARY: That's correct.

13 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you.

14 What I'd like to do first is pass the gavel
15 over to my Vice Chair, if you would accept.

16 MR. BEHAR: I will accept it.

17 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: I would like to go
18 ahead and make the recommendation for the
19 appointment of the Board Member that we have as
20 a whole. I would like to nominate Alice Bravo.
21 We have many projects that are coming up before
22 us, and a lot of them have to do with traffic
23 and planning concerns. The reason Alice Bravo,
24 that I recommend her, is because she's a
25 veteran engineer, civil engineer, with over 25

10

1 years of experience in transportation planning
2 and design.

3 She previously served as Director of
4 Miami-Dade County's Department of
5 Transportation and Public Works. She was the
6 Deputy City Manager of the City of Miami, where
7 she oversaw six departments, including Planning
8 and Zoning, Real Estate Management and Capital
9 Improvements. She has overseen significant
10 projects, including Miami-Dade County's
11 Strategic Area Rapid Transit, SMART, and she
12 also oversaw the Port of Miami tunnel
13 public-private partnership, the P3, the 95
14 express lanes, and the reconstruction of the
15 Palmetto Expressway interchange and several
16 transit oriented development projects.

17 Ms. Bravo can bring her experience and
18 expertise on these subjects to the Board, by
19 providing her insight in vehicular and planning
20 issues regarding the projects.

21 MR. BUCELO: Mr. Chair, may I?

22 MR. BEHAR: Yes, please.

23 MR. BUCELO: I will second that motion.
24 That's an incredible resume.

25 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: We have a second.

11

1 MR. BUCELO: I will second it.

2 MR. BEHAR: Okay. We have a first and a
3 second. Any other discussions? No discussion?
4 I close it.

5 And, Jill, can you please call the roll?

6 THE SECRETARY: Yes.

7 Nestor Menendez?

8 MR. HERNANDEZ: Yes.

9 THE SECRETARY: Felix Pardo?

10 MR. PARDO: Yes.

11 THE SECRETARY: Robert Behar?

12 MR. BEHAR: Yes.

13 THE SECRETARY; Alex Bucelo?

14 MR. BUCELO: Yes.

15 THE SECRETARY: Sue Kawalerski?

16 MS. KAWALERSKI: Yes.

17 THE SECRETARY; Eibi Aizenstat?

18 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Yes.

19 Thank you.

20 MR. BEHAR: If we're done, now I'm going to
21 pass it back to you, Mr. Chair.

22 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you.

23 Proceeding forward, we have the first item
24 on the agenda, which is F-1.

25 Mr. Collier, would please read it into the

12

1 record?

2 MR. COLLIER: Yes.

3 F-1, an Ordinance of the City Commission of

4 Coral Gables, Florida, amending Future Land Use

5 Map and Mixed-Use Overlay Districts Map of the

6 City of Coral Gables Comprehensive Plan

7 pursuant to Zoning Code Article 14, "Process,"

8 Section 14-213, "Comprehensive Plan Text and

9 Map Amendments," and Small Scale amendment

10 procedures (Sections 163.3187, Florida

11 Statutes), from "Commercial Low-Rise Intensity"

12 to "Commercial High-Rise Intensity" and to

13 create the "University Station Rapid Transit

14 District Overlay" for Blocks 155 and 156, Coral

15 Gables Riviera Section Part 8, Tract "A",

16 Replat of Coral Gables Riviera Section Part 8,

17 which are the properties bounded by South Dixie

18 Highway, Caballero Boulevard, Madruga, and

19 Turin Street, providing for a repealer

20 provision, severability clause, and providing

21 for an effective date.

22 Mr. Chairman, there's a related item, which

23 is F-2, which is the Ordinance. I'd like to

24 read that in, as well, and then we would hold

25 the public hearing on both items, but then we

13

1 would vote on them separately.

2 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Separately.

3 Understood.

4 MR. COLLIER: Item F-2, an Ordinance of the

5 City Commission of Coral Gables, Florida

6 providing for map and text amendments to the

7 City of Coral Gables Official Zoning Code

8 pursuant to Zoning Code Article 14, "Process,"

9 Section 14-212, "Zoning Code Text and Map

10 Amendments," by 1) amending Article 2, "Zoning

11 Districts," to create Section 2-408,

12 "University Station Rapid Transit District

13 Overlay" for promoting the use of mass transit

14 facilities and pedestrian activities along

15 transit corridors and near multimodal stations,

16 2) amending Appendix A, "Site Specific Zoning

17 Regulations," to remove inconsistent Site

18 Specifics; 3) amending Article 14, "Process,"

19 Section 14-202, "Transfer of Development

20 Rights," to expand Transfer of Development

21 Rights (TDRs) receiving sites to the

22 "University Station Rapid Transit District

23 Overlay," and 4) making Zoning District

24 boundary changes from "Mixed-Use 1 (MX1) to

25 Mixed-Use 3 (MX3)" and including within the

14

1 "University Station Rapid Transit District

2 Overlay" boundary for Blocks 155 and 156, Coral

3 Gables Riviera Section Part 8, and Tract "A"

4 Replat of Coral Gables Riviera Section Part 8,

5 which are the properties bounded by South Dixie

6 Highway, Caballero Boulevard, Madruga and Turin

7 Streets, and to create the "University Station

8 Rapid Transit District," providing for repealer

9 provision, severability clause, codification,

10 and providing for an effective date.

11 Items F-1 and F-2, public hearing.

12 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you.

13 Jennifer.

14 MS. GARCIA: Good afternoon, Jennifer

15 Garcia, Planning and Zoning Director.

16 I'm going to present the item and then

17 we're going to have our guest speaker to speak,

18 as well.

19 MR. IGLESIAS: Yes, thank you.

20 Peter Iglesias, City Manager.

21 Good evening, Chair and Board Members.

22 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Welcome, sir.

23 MR. IGLESIAS: Thank you very much.

24 I would like to welcome our County

25 Commissioner, Raquel Regalado, here. She's

15

1 here concerning the RTZ, our RTZ regulations.

2 She is a wealth of information on that. She's

3 highly experienced and very dedicated to

4 promoting transportation, and some of the --

5 and all of the mobility aspects that we're

6 dealing with along the Rapid Transit Zone.

7 So, with that, I would like to have our

8 Planning Director present, and then we're

9 certainly here, and the Commissioner is here to

10 discuss the issue and certainly answer

11 questions concerning the RTZ County

12 regulations.

13 So, with that, you're most welcome. Thank

14 you very much.

15 COMMISSIONER REGALADO: Thank you.

16 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you,

17 Mr. Manager.

18 Welcome, Commissioner.

19 COMMISSIONER REGALADO: It's a pleasure.

20 MS. GARCIA: So if I could have the

21 PowerPoint, please. Thank you.

22 So let's see. So this all started in May.

23 Miami-Dade County is proposing to -- why is

24 that not going -- Miami-Dade County adopted, on

25 First Reading, expansion of the RTZ, of the

16

1 Rapid Transit Zone, called the Gables
2 University Station Subzone, and already
3 approved by the County is that University
4 Station is considered a community urban center,
5 but what this ordinance is doing is proposing
6 actual regulations in a subzone for this area.

7 My voice is going in and out. I apologize.
8 I was on the phone a lot with residents this
9 morning and afternoon, so my voice is kind of
10 leaving me.

11 But in this ordinance, it is granting the
12 County regulatory jurisdiction over this
13 specific area of our City, as it specifies
14 allowable uses, as well as development
15 standards, criteria and review of these
16 developments in the subzone.

17 So, as a reaction to the County, the City
18 is proposing an overlay district. We have many
19 overlay districts in our City throughout. You
20 know, the North Ponce Overlay District, as well
21 as the Design and Innovation District. There
22 are many overlay districts that we have in our
23 City. It is not an uncommon way of planning in
24 our City. So the overlay district that we're
25 looking at is between Caballero, on the south

17

1 side, you know, almost to US-1, and up to
2 Turin, and then Madruga, on the south side.

3 So, as you can see on this aerial looking
4 southwest, you can see that the Thesis Hotel is
5 on the very south part of this overlay
6 district. The Gables One Tower is just next to
7 that, that shopping center -- the shopping
8 center is in the middle, and there are some
9 low-rise, TGI Friday's, and the property is
10 there just to the north of Turin -- I'm sorry,
11 north of Madruga, I believe.

12 Just looking south, you can see the TGI
13 Friday's is low commercial areas, on the very
14 left side of the slide. You can see the
15 University Shopping Center in the middle. Then
16 you can see the more taller buildings of -- I'm
17 sorry, the University of Miami Gables One
18 Tower, as well as Paseo de la Riviera, on the
19 very right side.

20 The current Future Land Use Map shows that
21 the Thesis Hotel is a mixed-use zoning -- I'm
22 sorry, mixed-use land use, and the rest of the
23 properties there are commercial low-rise
24 intensity. And the zoning right now, for the
25 Thesis, is MX3, and the remaining properties

18

1 are MX1.

2 The request that the City has right now,
3 again, as a reaction to the County, is to
4 change the Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Map
5 and Mixed-Use Map, as well as the Zoning Map,
6 and then Zoning Code Text Amendments, and I'll
7 go through that right now.

8 So, right now, the Future Land Use Map, as
9 I said, shows Mixed-Use for the south parcel,
10 which is the Thesis Hotel, and the commercial
11 low-rise, and that will be changed to
12 commercial high-rise, to allow additional
13 height next to the Metro Station.

14 And, then, the Mixed-Use Overlay District
15 Map of our Comprehensive Plan would include
16 this new overlay district. You can see those
17 three overlay districts in our Comprehensive
18 Plan right now, the North Ponce Mixed-Use
19 Overlay, the Design and Innovation District,
20 and this will be the third one, which will be
21 the University Overlay District.

22 And the Zoning Map changes would include
23 changing MX1 to be MX3, again, to allow the
24 extra height. No increase of FAR and no
25 increase of density for that map change.

19

1 So this is showing a massing of what that
2 would look like. The existing is that top map.
3 You can see -- in the top image, you can see
4 that pinkish color is right now the MX1 or the
5 commercial low-rise massing, with the darker
6 pink being the as of right height, and then the
7 light pink being the Mediterranean Bonus. On
8 the bottom of the slide is the proposed. So if
9 this is changed to commercial high-rise or MX3,
10 you can see that massing much higher, and,
11 again, no change in density and no change in
12 intensity, with these map changes.

13 So this is looking at a comparison between
14 what we allow now in our Zoning Code, and what
15 the RTZ, proposed by the County, and then what
16 our mixed-use overlay district, on the far
17 right column. So the review of our current
18 process would be, any property in this area,
19 would have to request change of land use and
20 zoning, as we saw more than a year ago with the
21 University Shopping Center. So it would
22 require a change of land use, a change of
23 zoning, as well as a conditional use mixed-use
24 site plan. The proposed RTZ with the County
25 would require this special exception and review

20

1 and approval.

2 The City is proposing a more expedited
3 review for faster Board of Architects review,
4 to give them certainty that they can go through
5 the process without any large hurdles.

6 The current height is 45 feet for those MX1
7 properties, and 150 feet for those MX3
8 properties. The proposed County is 150 feet,
9 just because they're saying, within the quarter
10 mile, the highest building. The highest
11 building is the Gables One Tower, which is 150
12 feet. The Thesis Hotel property is already
13 MX3.

14 So what's proposed today is, the overlay
15 district would be 120 feet, and that would not
16 allow Mediterranean Bonus height, but would
17 allow a couple of stories, two stories, based
18 on additional open space -- with open space,
19 for a maximum height of 147 feet. The density
20 would remain the same. It would be 125 units
21 an acre. The FAR right now is 3.5. This
22 allows for 1.5 per the site specifics. The
23 proposal is to eliminate that, to be more
24 consistent with the County's no limitation of
25 FAR, to have 3.0. And, then, with

21

1 Mediterranean Bonus, that would be an
2 additional .5, and then use of the TDRs.

3 As you know, the use of TDRs is only
4 allowed in our CBD and in our North Ponce
5 Mixed-Use District, as well as our Design and
6 Innovation District. This would be a proposal
7 to expand the receipt of TDRs to expand to this
8 district.

9 The setbacks are similar to what they are
10 right now, which is 20 feet on US-1. The
11 proposed County Ordinance is zero feet. What
12 we're proposing today for the overlay district
13 is to retain that 20 feet on US-1, as well as
14 an additional 25 feet on the rear of those
15 larger properties, which is the Thesis, the
16 Gables One Tower, as well as the University
17 Shopping Center, so they're not so deep. It
18 also gives more space for that narrower street
19 on the back.

20 Open space is similar, 10 percent on the
21 ground level is our underlining requirement,
22 and we're not changing that. The step backs,
23 as you know, right now, 45 feet, required a
24 10-foot step back. The County, of course, does
25 not have any step back requirements, but we

22

1 would keep the same set backs, 45 feet, for any
2 area that's facing residential, and then allow
3 for a 100-foot step back -- I'm sorry, at 100
4 feet, to step back 30 feet, facing US-1, that
5 is a more broader, more important thoroughfare.

6 And, then, the parking, as you know, it
7 depends on the number of bedrooms that we have
8 in our current regulations. The County is
9 proposing zero parking residential units, as
10 well as some parking requirements for
11 commercial and non-residential units,
12 non-residential spaces. The City is proposing
13 in this overlay district to require parking,
14 except for ground floor restaurant, retail
15 uses, as well as a 50 percent reduction for the
16 remaining required parking for the area -- for
17 the building. In relation to that, also
18 waiving 25 percent, if they provide a parking
19 plan via remote parking or available transit
20 passes or whatnot.

21 So the time line is, we are here today at
22 the Planning and Zoning Board. We hope to go
23 to the Commission on First Reading in August,
24 and the Second Reading will be determined at
25 that time.

23

1 So we mailed notices within 1,500 feet, as
2 required by our Zoning Code, and that was
3 mailed out once. We posted the property a
4 couple of weeks ago, and we posted the website,
5 as well as newspaper advertisement, as required
6 by Code.

7 The Staff has determined this application
8 is consistent with the Comp Plan, as it does
9 promote development near transit stops and
10 transit stations, along transit corridors, and
11 it does comply with the findings of fact that
12 are located in your Staff Report, and we
13 recommend approval. Thank you.

14 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you.

15 Commissioner.

16 COMMISSIONER REGALADO: Yes. So, first and
17 foremost, it's a pleasure to be here.

18 Just a little background on the RTZ, for
19 those of you who haven't followed it. We were
20 talking earlier about Alice Bravo. When she
21 sits on your Board, she'll be able to speak
22 specifically about the nodes.

23 So when Miami-Dade County started its urban
24 planning in the 1970s, ramping up to what would
25 be the build-out of the Metrorail, before they

24

1 created the tear, they decided that we would
2 have the creation of urban centers, and those
3 urban centers would take ten to fifteen years
4 to create, and the first spots that were
5 dedicated for those were what later became the
6 Metrorail nodes, right.

7 So you have 27th, 37th, Gables, all of the
8 way to Dadeland. For those of you who remember
9 that, I was there for the ribbon cutting of the
10 Dadeland station. It was the end of the line,
11 because our Miami-Dade ended back in Dadeland.
12 Now, it's very different.

13 So, when we went back to look at what
14 eventually became the RTZ, one of the things
15 that we dealt with is, it had taken 25 years to
16 do the first node. The first node being 27th
17 and 37th, which are both in District 7. The
18 fact is that it took the County 25 years to do
19 it, and that we were using it as an opportunity
20 to refresh the Metrorail stations and to really
21 reconsider what the liner of South Dixie
22 Highway was going to be.

23 So we started meeting with different people
24 about the RTZ. I was initially very critical
25 of the RTZ, because it did not give any

25

1 municipalities any time to match our zoning
2 code. So we spent about a year and a half, we
3 carved out certain areas, and one of the things
4 that I insisted it be part of the RTZ Ordinance
5 was giving municipalities two years to meet us
6 at our zoning point, right.

7 The other thing is that there isn't really
8 a punitive aspect to the RTZ. When the RTZ was
9 first considered, the idea is, if the cities
10 didn't do this, "X" would happen, right. It
11 doesn't have that. I've always thought that
12 the best thing to do would be to go to the
13 cities and prove this concept. At least, in my
14 district, that what I've focused on. I've
15 always wanted it to include interlocals, but
16 that's a very difficult thing. However, I can
17 tell you that, when South Miami was considering
18 what to do with Sunset Place, we had this
19 conversation, and they actually met us at our
20 zoning. So Sunset Place, and also the property
21 across from Sunset Place, which is the
22 Government Center, does meet all of the RTZ
23 requirements and then some. So there was no
24 need to bring those properties into the RTZ and
25 we're actually -- because we have a library

26

1 there, we worked on that project and we're
2 going to be building a new library, and they're
3 also, like Coral Gables, investing in the
4 Underline.

5 We've used the nodes now as examples of a
6 proof of concept. When we first started
7 talking about the RTZ, one of the polemic
8 issues was the zero parking requirement, and
9 that is not to say that someone is going to
10 build something without parking. That is to
11 say that the County is allowing the developer
12 to decide what parking works for them, and Link
13 is a prime example of that. It's now going
14 into Phase 3. In Phase 1 of Link, 67 percent
15 of the residents there do not have cars. They
16 have parking, but those units do not come with
17 that parking. That parking is extra, you know.

18 And when you look at the zone, one of the
19 ways that I explain it to people is, I am a dog
20 lover. If I was moving into an apartment that
21 didn't allow Sam to come, I would not live
22 there. If I felt the same way about my car,
23 which I do not, I live in the Rapid Transit
24 Zone, I would not move into a building that did
25 not have a parking space, right. I live in a

27

1 home with two other adults. We share an
2 electric Fiat and we live in the RTZ. I am the
3 only County Commissioner that lives in the RTZ,
4 but it really is a different mindset.

5 The other thing that we try to explain to
6 our municipalities is that there was eventually
7 going to be a redevelopment, because a lot of
8 the areas along this corridor are old 1980s
9 parking lots, right, where you have the parking
10 lot facing South Dixie Highway, and then you
11 have the building in the back. And the idea
12 was to bring those buildings forward, with the
13 RTZ, and to create a step down, so that you
14 actually have less density as you go into those
15 residential areas, as opposed to continue to
16 encroach upon those residential areas, and to
17 amass people along the corridor, in the hopes
18 that they will be using public transportation.
19 Link and Grove Station have both proved that
20 people are interested and living there to use
21 public transportation.

22 As you will recall, one of the projects
23 that I inherited, that we've actually helped
24 and doubled down on, is the South Miami
25 Metrorail Station, which was boxed. When I

28

1 started at the County Commission, one of the
2 issues that we had in South Miami is, we had a
3 lot of UM students that were cutting up houses,
4 living eight, nine, ten in a house, a box with
5 student housing, which was very polemic at the
6 time, and everyone thought that the world would
7 end if we did student housing at a Metrorail
8 station. We're now working on Box 3. It's
9 been very successful. It's really curtailed
10 the use of housing by students in the
11 residential areas, and once again, over 75
12 percent of those students use public
13 transportation.

14 So the proof is in the pudding, in terms of
15 the RTZ, and this is an opportunity for Coral
16 Gables to start meeting us at that level. As
17 you saw on that presentation, it does not meet
18 all of the RTZ requirements, but I believe that
19 it is a good start, and I think that you should
20 start somewhere, and I know that there's always
21 push back when we make these changes, but the
22 alternative is Live Local, and we have to be
23 honest about that. And Live Local gets
24 stronger and stronger every legislative term.

25 So, as much as we get push back for making

29

1 changes to our Comprehensive Master Plan, I
2 think we also have to be cognizant that the
3 alternative involves no public comment, no
4 community benefit, no conversation about
5 anything else. So I think it really is an
6 opportunity for us to look at this corridor,
7 and try to envision the future, and also answer
8 the need for housing.

9 So there is a need for housing. There is a
10 need for housing in the corridor. I can tell
11 you that we're committed to continue
12 investigating in the Metrorail. We've worked
13 on almost all of the stations. Our last one is
14 South Miami, but we have -- we redid 37th.
15 We've just reopened -- we redid 37th. We just
16 reopened 27th. And, obviously, we're working
17 on Dadeland North and Dadeland South, and now
18 we have the busway. So that, when you add it
19 to the Underline, you know, one of the things
20 that this area has is, it already has a
21 pedestrian bridge. So the pedestrian bridges,
22 I think, were a good investment, when they were
23 made, a little ahead of their time, maybe, but
24 now that we have the Underline and something to
25 go to, not just Metrorail, I think we're going

30

1 to see a tremendous use, and a real desire by
2 people, who want a 15-minute city, right, and
3 understand the concept, from a planning
4 perspective of a 15-minute city, that are going
5 to come to this area in order to do that.

6 My drafting of this item really is very
7 different from what has been presented to the
8 RTZ at this point. It includes an interlocal,
9 it includes Chapter 33, which is what we used
10 at Grove Central. So I've done my best to
11 include, as much as possible, and I'm always
12 here to help the City Beautiful, and I hope
13 that you will consider your proposal. I think
14 it is thoughtful and an important first step.

15 I'm happy to answer your questions.

16 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you.

17 Any questions from the Board?

18 MS. KAWALERSKI: Not at this point. Will
19 you be here a little later?

20 COMMISSIONER REGALADO: Yes.

21 Okay. Thank you.

22 MS. KAWALERSKI: Thank you.

23 COMMISSIONER REGALADO: Sure.

24 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you.

25 Jennifer, any other -- no?

31

1 How many speakers do we have on this item?

2 THE SECRETARY: About six.

3 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Six in Chambers? And
4 in Zoom?

5 THE SECRETARY: One, so far.

6 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Okay. Can you start,
7 please, with the in Chambers?

8 Lisa DeTournay.

9 MS. DETOURNAY: Hi. My name is Lisa
10 DeTournay. I live at 10 Aragon Avenue, Suite
11 1405, just down the street, but I also have a
12 property in the area that we're discussing,
13 directly behind there.

14 I've been involved -- I've lived in Coral
15 Gables since 1991, I've lived in Miami a few
16 years before that, and I've seen so much
17 growth. I'm not against growth, but I am
18 against the incredible rise that we're having
19 in our neighborhoods.

20 I don't frankly see the push to bring so
21 many new people into the City. There certainly
22 aren't livable workforce places, unless you
23 make over \$100,000, then you qualify, but I
24 don't know anybody who works in a restaurant,
25 et cetera, that makes that kind of money.

32

1 I know this isn't Live Local right now, but
2 that's the option, as was mentioned before, if
3 we don't like Rapid Transit. I personally
4 don't see why, in this City, that we pride
5 ourselves the City Beautiful, what exactly does
6 that mean? Does that mean we have a lot of
7 trees, does that mean we prohibit excessive
8 growth and keep it beautiful like that or is
9 this like a population contest?

10 So, in the particular area, I've been
11 involved, in the last couple of years, going to
12 townhalls for the area, University Center. The
13 neighbors made it very clear to the developer,
14 the owner of that property, and the lawyer, et
15 cetera -- everybody that was there, we made it
16 very clear that we weren't happy with eight
17 stories, we would like seven. There were
18 plenty of townhalls. I saw the angry owner
19 storm out after the meeting one time, and then
20 they've delayed anything more, and then they
21 came back, well, sorry, you don't like it,
22 we're going Rapid Transit, because then we can
23 do what we want.

24 Their project is to bring, I don't know how
25 many units now they have scheduled, but

33

1 thinking they'll be mostly rented to students
2 and they won't need cars. I know, from just my
3 place that I rent out, that usually my tenants
4 have a car. And, also, the use of public
5 transportation along the US-1 corridor only
6 goes from here to there, it doesn't go
7 north-south, so people are going to be using
8 Ubers or something like that. It's still
9 traffic.

10 You're asking, in this particular area of
11 the proposed overlay we're talking about, for
12 single-family homes, which is pretty much
13 everything to -- and past Sunset, from US-1,
14 and you're asking for high-rises, to bring that
15 much more population to that area. Traffic is
16 already very difficult since the Thesis came in
17 to negotiate. The U of M Building has been
18 vacant for a while, so that doesn't even count
19 for current transportation needs or traffic
20 needs.

21 So I think what I'm trying to say is, I
22 don't know what the big push is to increase our
23 population. I'm originally from Los Angeles
24 and I always compare -- when people say, "Oh,
25 where are you from?" I don't say Miami. I say

34

1 Coral Gables, because I'm very proud and I
2 compare that to Beverly Hills. Everybody knows
3 what Beverly Hills is. Beverly Hills also has
4 a workforce thing, but certainly, along their
5 main corridor, which is Santa Monica Boulevard,
6 off of Wilshire, going all of the way to
7 Downtown. They certainly don't allow any
8 building, other than homes, on the residential
9 side of Santa Monica Boulevard. I don't see
10 why we have to be so different, and what the
11 importance is of making this corridor so tall,
12 and, frankly, not within the perspective of the
13 rest of the Gables.

14 Thank you.

15 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you.

16 Just a question, if I may. When you
17 referred to University Center, are you
18 referring to where the Friday's is, that
19 shopping center?

20 MS. DETOURNAY: Yes, more known for Bagel
21 Emporium.

22 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Correct. Thank you.

23 MS. DETOURNAY: Thank you.

24 THE SECRETARY: Cathy, and I'm sorry, I
25 couldn't make out your last name.

35

1 MS. BURNWEIT: Hi. I appreciate the
2 opportunity to speak with you guys. I
3 assume that if you ask --

4 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: If you could please
5 state your name and address, for the record.

6 MS. BURNWEIT: Oh, Cathy Burnweit, and live
7 at 6304 Caballero Boulevard.

8 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you.

9 MS. BURNWHITE: And I am, obviously,
10 affected by this project, which is one block
11 from me.

12 I am more concerned, however, about this
13 huge high-rise initiative, and creeping south
14 to the waterway and the Gables Waterway
15 project. There, it is being proposed, nine
16 stories, across from my house, my child's
17 house, who was raised there, and my grandchild,
18 who's living there now, and if you put these
19 huge buildings in that small area where they're
20 proposed now on this -- in this building north
21 of the Thesis, what are you going to say to the
22 Gables Waterway project when they want to put
23 13 stories and 11 stories and nine stories in
24 the residential neighborhood? "Oh, we just
25 allowed the County to do it, so we're going to

36

allow Coral Gables to do it."

So I think it's really important that we stop the spread of Brickellization of the US-1 corridor. You have high-rises at 27th, at 37th and at South Miami. You can walk to South Miami in less than a half mile. You can walk to the Douglas Metro station in less than two miles. So you do not need this.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you, ma'am.

THE SECRETARY: Chip Withers.

CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Mr. Withers, welcome back.

MR. BEHAR: Welcome. Welcome.

MR. WITHERS: Good evening. Thank you for having me here. A lot of old faces -- well, I shouldn't say a lot of old faces, a lot of familiar faces.

MR. BEHAR: Thank you.

MR. WITHERS: I apologize.

So here we go again. A lot of people --

CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: If you would please --

MR. WITHERS: Chip Withers, 1104 Hardee Road, Coral Gables, Florida. I was brought home in the house I live in 73 years ago. So

37

I've been living in the house there for 73 years, 1104 Hardee Road. You're welcome to stop by any time.

So, here we go, this is -- although the rapid pace this issue has developed in the last couple of weeks, it really started, I think it was 1893, the World's Fair, where the City Beautiful movement actually was kicked off. It was probably one of the most influential parts of George Merrick's life, and the whole reason for the City Beautiful movement was that the urbanization of the traffic and the cities, pushed cities to think about opening spaces and putting in planned communities. Felix knows this.

And what happened was, some cities, like San Francisco and Cleveland, really tried to develop the idea, but really, really fell flat on their faces. Basically three cities in American today, Shaker Heights, Ohio, Washington DC, and Coral Gables, Florida, still use that City Beautiful concept as their north star.

So the issue that I saw for 30 years sitting in the role as the Planning and Zoning

38

Board or the City Commission, was that we love the integrity that we have built in protecting our residential neighborhoods. Saying that, we are in a position right now where we've been looking at the 600-pound gorilla known as the, you know, US-1 corridor, and Commissioner Regalado, who is a real hero in my mind -- I respect her a great deal -- she's been there, she's fought the fight, and personally I want to say, thank you for your hard work in bringing this issue, and really trying to protect the sanctity of some of the Coral Gables neighborhoods through this Rapid Transit Zone.

I don't see a whole lot of issues out there. We have basically three competing municipalities. We have the City of Coral Gables, which we are trying to protect our Zoning Code, we have the Live Local, which is right around the corner from us, that I don't know how much, you know, we've discussed this. I've discussed it, and we've been told by our City Attorney that we don't have a whole lot of options in slowing that down. And we have an opportunity now, it looks like, to maybe

39

negotiate and try to work this out with the County to at least, maybe not get the entire loaf of bread, but part of the loaf of bread.

So I support the initiative. I support the fact that we are acting in haste to get this done. I support the County in working with us and hopefully we'll come to a resolution this evening. So, thank you, again, for your time, and welcome back, Peter. It's good to see you, as always, and City Attorney, City Clerk, it's great to see you, as well. So thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you for coming.

THE SECRETARY: Betty.

DR. MORTENSON: Hello. I am Dr. Betty Mortenson.

CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Could I ask you to lower the microphone? Thank you.

DR. MORTENSON: Hello. My name is Dr. Betty Mortenson. I live on the 1200 Block of Aduana. I am basically in the little area that they call South Gables.

The reason I am coming to talk is very simple. Nobody has looked at the life-safety issues, life-safety problems that these two

40

giant constructions cause. We're thinking of increasing the density, increasing the number of people, increasing the number of cars, because this is Miami, everybody drives, right along Dixie and right along Caballero.

Right now we have major problems with the Thesis. We were told many times, by all of the engineers, that it would not increase our traffic, it would not delay us going. I am one of many doctors, nurses and emergency personnel that live in the South Gables area. When a couple of minutes' increase, when we are called and we have to get to which ever hospital we're coming from, in five minutes, it takes us 25, 30 minutes, what happens? People die. Doctors can't get to the heart attacks and people die. Nurses can't help the stroke patients, and they are now stroked or incapacitated.

We need to stop, slow down, and think about what this is going to mean. Any one of us could have a stroke. Any one of us could have a heart attack, a fatal problem. Without the ability of we, doctors, nurses, and emergency personnel, to get to the hospitals, everybody is going to suffer. I'm not just talking about

41

Coral Gables. I'm talking about Miami-Dade. We service Baptist, we service South Miami Hospital, we service Mercy, and a few minutes makes a major difference in someone's life or death or ability to resolve a stroke.

So think. You guys are in a very unique -- ladies, also -- in a very unique position to save someone's life. It may be yours. It may be your family member's. It may be one of the citizens of Coral Gables or Dade County. So think very seriously.

This is Miami. Nobody takes the Metro, because the Metro goes up and down. It has no tributaries. It has nothing else. So to make more density means more cars, more people coming in, us not being able to do our job, which is to save people's lives. This is imperative, folks. Any one of us could have that problem.

Two of my colleagues, who are not in Miami, they were in their 40s, one died of a heart attack, and the other one died of a stroke complication. Had they been in this area, where we are able to still maneuver, it might not have happened. But if we increase the

42

density, those of us in the South Gables are landlocked. We cannot get out. Dixie Highway is a variable parking lot, and now you're going to increase the density there and in Coral Gables. Think about it, guys, lady, these are our lives. You are in a unique position to help save lives. Please think about this, before you increase the density.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you, ma'am.

THE SECRETARY: Denise Carvalho.

MS. CARVALHO: Hi. My name is Denise Carvalho. I live in 6308 Caballero Boulevard.

I have been here before to tell you what we think and say that we are against the Mark, which is going to bring a bunch of new students from the University of Miami, to live in the neighborhood, and now -- and I was happy to see that you guys heard our message, that we didn't have a traffic study, we didn't have structure to have all of these people come over and live in our neighborhood and increase in -- like one-third the amount of people that live there, just by that building alone.

So, now, I got a really big surprise to

43

realize that it went to the County and we had no notice. We had no notice from the City of Coral Gables that said to us that they were doing a counter-proposal for the County legislation, that was not going to talk -- the people of the City was not going to hear our points, and they are all counting on all of those people using the Metrorail.

Please stand up and say who uses the Metrorail to ride here today.

CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: If you can, please direct all comments to the Board. I'd appreciate it.

MS. CARVALHO: Sorry, but I wanted to make a point here. Nobody uses the Metrorail. Nobody will ever use the Metrorail, if it continues to be that way. So you expand first the Metrorail, please, Commissioner --

MR. BEHAR: Can you address us?

CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Please address us.

MS. CARVALHO: Sorry. You need to please expand the Metrorail to other areas, and then build, and -- we have a very big traffic problem already, and at least if you allow this bigger than it was before denied, please don't

44

1 use any -- don't let anyone have cars. No
2 parking. If nobody has parking, they're going
3 to have to use the bicycles. They're students.
4 They're not committed to the City of Miami
5 (sic). They are there for a four-year term,
6 and they're going to leave. They're not
7 citizens of the city.

8 And Gables Waterway is our big concern.
9 It's an environmental issue, a really big
10 environmental issue. We are very fond of our
11 canal and this will ruin our canal, because if
12 you accept all of that, and Gables Waterway is
13 in the vicinity, it's like adjacent to all of
14 these, you're going to accept Gables Waterways
15 under RTZ, under whatever, and it's not
16 something that is going to be a long-term good
17 thing for our City. It's going to be bad for
18 our City. It's going to ruin our single-family
19 neighborhood, a calm single-family neighborhood
20 that's Riviera and South Gables.

21 I live there. It's been ten years that
22 I've lived there. I knew the 45 feet height
23 that was on the Code. I never expected this to
24 be changed like that, in this map, in a
25 signature. This is really, really concerning.

45

1 I have an apartment in Miami Beach, 7330
2 Ocean Terrace. They wanted to build something
3 on the site of it. It took years, and lots of
4 talks with the neighborhood, to be allowed. We
5 gained so much from it. Those TDRs -- those
6 TDRs don't come to our neighborhood. They go
7 somewhere else. We lose our sky, for a
8 building like that. We increase the density of
9 our neighborhood and we don't get anything of
10 that -- for that. So that's something really,
11 really, really bad.

12 Okay. That's all. Thank you very much for
13 hearing.

14 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you, ma'am.

15 THE SECRETARY: David Harnett.

16 MR. HARNETT: Good afternoon. My name is
17 David Harnett, and I am the lawyer and son of
18 Catherine Harnett, who lives at 510 Marmore, in
19 Coral Gables, which is four blocks north of
20 Hardee Road, just on the east side of the canal
21 and Riviera Drive.

22 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Could you provide your
23 office address, for the record, please?

24 MR. HARNETT: My office address is 8900
25 Southwest 107th Avenue, Suite 301, and I live

46

1 at the home at 510 Marmore two days a week, and
2 my family has been living in Coral Gables for
3 95 years. I grew up in that neighborhood.
4 I've seen the changes that have happened, and I
5 echo much of the sentiments that have been said
6 here today. And really appreciate -- I live
7 down in Pinecrest the other time, and we really
8 appreciate Commissioner Regalado's leadership
9 on a lot of these issues.

10 Nevertheless, I urge the Board and the City
11 Commission, when it travels to them, to
12 consider a couple of things. I've watched as
13 this corridor development has occurred, and
14 when it went up at 37th Avenue, I distinctly
15 remember the comments from all of the officials
16 from the City of Coral Gables, which was, we
17 don't have any control over that. That's the
18 County. It's their land, their say, right on
19 the Metrorail.

20 Now we're talking about, which you do have
21 control over, in the zoning. I urge -- I don't
22 know enough about the land use and the zoning
23 issues between the County and the City, but I
24 urge the City to do what it can, and if this
25 proposal is about maintaining control over the

47

1 zoning, that's one thing I would urge the City
2 to do.

3 There are a couple of things that I would
4 articulate, which is, if I heard correctly
5 about the development that's ultimately going
6 to be proposed at the complex which was -- is
7 the Friday's, Bagel Emporium, the ten-story
8 building which used to house the Hurricane
9 Center, that now is University of Miami or
10 whatever it is, next to the Thesis Hotel, if I
11 heard correctly they're proposing a compromise
12 with the County that would be a zoning height
13 of 120 feet. If I got that right, that's
14 probably ten stories. Then you're talking
15 about roofs, and, then, when you get to
16 trade-offs that I've seen in the zoning over
17 the last four, five, six, seven years,
18 particularly when it gets up at the Commission,
19 the next thing you know, as was articulated, it
20 sounds to me like it won't be ten stories, it
21 will be eleven, twelve, with some trade-offs,
22 some public land use openings and some art
23 given to the City, that you can post around the
24 City, and walk around.

25 For the time that I've lived in this area,

48

1 which is my whole life, basically, and before
2 that, the City of Miami, Miami-Dade County, of
3 which my mother's father was Mayor of Miami,
4 we've never been a commuter town, and
5 respectfully to those who want to make it that,
6 because of population control, it's not going
7 to change here in the City of Miami. For the
8 time I've grown up, they've talked about, when
9 they put it in the Metrorail, for the Florida
10 East Coast Railway, and now it's there. People
11 still own cars.

12 Down at the Dadeland area, the building
13 that went up, that's along the corridor, just
14 south of the last Dadeland station, if I
15 understand correctly, that building, which has
16 been up for two years now, is still unrented by
17 ten or twenty or thirty percent. That's next
18 to the lot that they just tore down, where the
19 KFC was, which is just south -- where Shorty's
20 is, which is going to be another building
21 that's going to go up right by Dadeland, which
22 if I understand it, is going to be there.

23 We're already faced, at Red Road and US-1,
24 to the westbound of Coral Gables, right in that
25 area, with a 22 to 30-story building that's

49

1 going to go up, that's going to increase the
2 population there, as well. I think, anybody
3 who articulates that it's going to -- that
4 these buildings are going to somehow create
5 affordable housing in that area, is grasping at
6 straws, because I don't see it.

7 The developers are going to come in.
8 They're going to build high-rises and they're
9 going to sell them at three, four, five
10 thousand dollars a month, apartment-wise, and
11 they're going to be 500 to two million dollar
12 units, at best, at the beginning. Why?
13 Because this is Coral Gables.

14 One of the beauties about Coral Gables is
15 what has gone on forever, which was the
16 maintaining and not seeding control over
17 zoning, and the reason the people live in the
18 City of Coral Gables is because of the strict
19 zoning and building codes that we have, and
20 every time there is an encroachment, where the
21 buildings go higher, and then they go a block
22 over, and then the next developer comes and
23 says, "Well, you see, they did it down the
24 block, so now I'm entitled to it," that's what
25 these people are talking about and I believe

50

1 that's what the community would articulate, in
2 whole, if it was posed to them.

3 The last thing that I would say is, is that
4 I read the proposal in the Staff memo, and
5 there are a couple of things here which are key
6 to what -- if I understand it, is the County's
7 development plan, which, in theory, this is all
8 supposed to create more affordable housing for
9 the increase in the population community.
10 Well, the words that the Staff is using is,
11 "May," and I would respectfully submit, I have
12 never seen a study, read it in The Herald or
13 heard it articulated in the meetings that I now
14 have started to watch with more frequency,
15 either here or even at the Commission, where
16 there has been any articulation that affordable
17 housing is coming to the City of Coral Gables
18 in those buildings that are going up or the
19 buildings that just went up at 37th Avenue,
20 much less the one at 27th Avenue.

21 So I would urge -- I don't know enough
22 about all of the zoning, and I actually came
23 here for the water management one, but I would
24 urge this Board to do what it can to maintain
25 as much control, and recommend to the

51

1 Commission to keep as much control over all of
2 the zoning rights we have, all of the building
3 rights we have, and how we regulate them here
4 in the City of Coral Gables, not unlike or very
5 much like what they're trying to do now in the
6 Village of Pinecrest, where my other home is.

7 So thank you for your time.

8 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you, sir, for
9 coming.

10 THE SECRETARY: Daniel. And he's going to
11 need to be sworn in.

12 MR. MILLAY: I am.

13 (Thereupon, the participant was sworn.)

14 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you.

15 MR. MILLAY: Hi. My name is Daniel Millay.
16 I live at 1205 Mariposa Avenue, 433. I am
17 quite literally facing the University Center
18 development and what used to be TGI Friday's.
19 I wasn't around when he was here, but now,
20 going after him, I hope I can be as articulate.

21 I have no disagreement that development
22 needs to be done. My opposition is to the
23 scale at which it is being done. Anything that
24 has -- that is done, needs to be done
25 thoughtfully and purposefully and with

52

consideration to real world impacts.

Everyone's talked about, oh, the traffic, the health, the appearance of Coral Gables, but there some things that are systematically and fundamentally wrong with trying to build up so high in these areas. So I have a simple question. Where do you turn left? Has anyone looked at the map and seen where you turn left out in that whole stretch, to go south on Dixie? There is one light. One, two-lane road, that turns left. All of this traffic will try and go to that light, causing huge backups, or, alternatively, they'll go down to the Stanford light, where it has -- how many rows is it?

Madruga, which leads into Maynada, Augusto Street and Miami Homestead Avenue, which is front of the school, all lead you into that intersection, which is already a busy, busy intersection, with people going south. So, just, fundamentally, it's not built to handle the kind of stress these giant buildings will do, because using The Mark as an example, they wanted to do sixty percent of all of their traffic on Madruga Avenue, or Madruga Court,

53

the road behind. It's a 300 percent increase. That was one single building, which made it 2,700 trips a day on that road, which is more -- barely more than an alley street. So that was a single building, not counting all of the other ones combined.

And on top of that, the loading docks for these buildings, there's nowhere on that street that you can pull into a building physically. They may note, in their study, that the trucks cannot turn right into these buildings. So what the trucks will do is park on the street to load and unload. So, again, fundamental problems with trying to build these giant buildings in these tiny areas that are not designed for these.

And, also, to address the use of the Metro, I am someone that uses the Metro. I told you, I live right behind the building. I work Downtown. I'm a perfect example of it. I still need my car. Everything, except going to work, I have to drive to, because even going to Aldi, one stop down, three broken elevators on one of my trips. So can you imagine an elderly person trying to go on their grocery shopping,

54

using the Metro, trying to haul all of the groceries up and down the stairs, across two bridges, where you have three different elevators broken, on each bridge and at the station. So it's not feasible just to assume, hey, we're on the Metro line, everyone's going to use the Metro for everything, because it just does not work that way.

I am a resident there. I see it. So let me tell you, as someone who sees -- lives there and sees what happens, from a practical and realistic standpoint, as I said, I still have to drive. When I leave in the morning to take my daughter to school, half of our parking garage is living, at the same time, to go to work themselves. We live on the Metro, but these people do not work -- because the Metro only goes north-south, very restrictive. There's only so many places to go, and it will become less, the more you build, because, again, using The Mark as an example, the current square footage for retail on the University Center Shopping street is 58,000 square feet. Their proposed retail was 19,000 square feet.

55

So doing the mixed-use and trying to squeeze all of this in reduces the amount of retail and shopping available to residents, so then you now have to go further to anything else, because it's just not there, because they've tried to squeeze -- they squeezed out the bigger box stores, that had more stuff, to make little boutiques or tiny little cafe restaurants, that now you have to go out further for more things.

So just because they've done it at other places does not mean it works here. We cannot say, "Hey, look, they're doing construction down there. That's great. They're developing. Let's do it here, too," without looking at how it actually impacts. Just the fact that they're building and having this idea that, oh, you're on the Metro, it means everyone will use the Metro, does not mean the reality of the situation is what you envision it or a perfect scenario.

So I want to again emphasize that I am not opposed to development. I just want to scale it way back and not have these giant buildings, that do not fit the area in any way.

56

1 Thank you.

2 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you, sir.

3 THE SECRETARY: Robert Kogan.

4 MR. KOGAN: Good evening. My name is
5 Robert Kogan. I live at 1127 Manati Avenue,
6 and like Chip, I've been living on that block
7 for 65 years. I have to tell you that, like
8 most of everybody else here, I am not opposed
9 to development. I remember when the Food Fair
10 was at University Center, when I used to go
11 there with my mom.

12 I just want to tell you, I am very familiar
13 with that shopping center. I'm also familiar
14 when they build Gables Tower, when I was going
15 to Westlab. I used to ride my bike from
16 Westlab to my house, and stop and watch the
17 construction every day, while that building was
18 going up. Again, I'm not against development.
19 I understand what's happened to the shopping
20 center over the years, and that's fine. With
21 new development, new people coming in, there's
22 no problem.

23 It's the scale that we're talking about
24 here. As a person that's lived in that area,
25 as I mentioned, 65 years, I can tell you

57

1 happened there. The courts ruled in their
2 favor.

3 All I'm saying is, do not seed the zoning
4 to the County, because what we're going to end
5 up with is something that we're all going to
6 hate. And remember, once this building is
7 built, it's not coming down. It's going to be
8 permanent, and we're all going have to live
9 with the consequences. Like I said, I'm a
10 homeowner there, grew up there.

11 And, also, what you have to remember is
12 that, there's no sidewalks on Hardee, there's
13 no sidewalks on Madruga, there's no sidewalks
14 on Caballero, and there's no sidewalks on
15 Turin. I don't care what the developer says,
16 if you go to Jaycee Park in the morning or
17 afternoon, all you have to do is look at all of
18 those people, with their children and their
19 strollers, walking, riding their bikes,
20 whatever. You're going to have a mess. People
21 are going to get hit.

22 And I'm a person, and if you want to ask
23 Mr. Withers, he sees me every afternoon riding
24 my bike around the block, I can't tell you how
25 many close calls I've had right now, since The

59

1 exactly how traffic patterns are. I don't care
2 what a traffic study says, I have personal
3 experience, life experience, and the only way,
4 like the previous speaker said, if you want to
5 make a left turn now, because of all -- from
6 The Thesis development, the only place you can
7 go is to the corner by the junior high school,
8 Maynada -- that's not me? Oh, I'm sorry, I
9 thought that was my phone -- to make a left
10 turn.

11 Now, you have a bunch of roads leading into
12 that. You have the kids going to junior high
13 school in the morning and in the afternoon,
14 with the buses. It's a complete disaster, if
15 you had more density, more traffic. That's
16 just one of the issues.

17 Another issue is future development. If
18 you allow this in, how about the University
19 Waterway project? Like another speaker
20 previously said, they're going to point to that
21 and say, "Hey, how about us?" That's what
22 happened down in the Coral Gables waterway, if
23 you'll remember, when the City tried to fight
24 that new building going up. The developer
25 said, "Hey, they built one," and you know what

58

1 Thesis has gone up, missing not being hit by a
2 car, okay. And, also, Uber pick-ups, Uber
3 drop-offs, they're using the parking at Jaycee
4 Park. They're not going into the building at
5 all. They're not going into the valet area at
6 all.

7 Also, I wanted to talk to you about the
8 circle there, the traffic circle. I'll be
9 happy to send pictures over to the Board here,
10 three years ago, a car carrier went around that
11 circle, couldn't make it, drove right through
12 it. I have the photos in my phone, if anybody
13 wants to see it. Took down the shrubbery, took
14 down the street signs. Called the City of
15 Coral Gables police non-emergency, gave them
16 the license number of the car carrier, nothing
17 happened. This has gone on and on and on. I
18 would ask for you to check with Public Works
19 and ask them how many times they've had to
20 replace the foliage and the signs there at that
21 circle at Caballero and Hardee. It's quite a
22 few, I can tell you, from personal experience.

23 So all of these issues -- oh, and one final
24 thing, just to inform you -- Chip, did you get
25 a notice in the mail?

60

1 MR. WITHERS: Yes.

2 MR. KOGAN: You did?

3 A lot of people on Manati did not, and you
4 have to take into consideration, my next door
5 neighbor, on the opposite side of the street,
6 didn't get a notice. They had no idea about
7 this. So I'm just saying, yes, you followed
8 the law by sending out so many feet, but this
9 affects everybody in the University Estates
10 area, on the east side of Maynada, west side of
11 Maynada, the same on Hardee. So I would
12 advise, just a recommendation, in the future,
13 extend it, because everybody uses it. Maynada
14 and Hardee is going to be affected, in that
15 neighborhood.

16 Thank you.

17 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you, sir.

18 Jill?

19 THE SECRETARY: Victoria Weller.

20 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Sorry, I was going to
21 ask if there was anybody else.

22 THE SECRETARY: Yes, and then we have four
23 speakers on Zoom.

24 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Okay. Thank you.

25 MS. WELLER: Hello. I'm Victoria Weller.

61

1 I just off of a 10-hour flight from Europe and
2 I came, because this is an important issue.

3 As a younger --

4 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Would you state your
5 address, please, for the record?

6 MS. WELLER: Oh, 1218 Aduana Ave.

7 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you.

8 MS. WELLER: As a younger member of the
9 community -- me?

10 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Let's get you sworn
11 in, since you came later.

12 (Thereupon, participants were sworn.)

13 MS. WELLER: Okay. Hi. Did I accomplish
14 all of the prerequisites? Okay. Perfect.
15 Awesome.

16 As a younger member of the community, I've
17 grown up in Coral Gables. I love Coral Gables.
18 And one of the beauties of Coral Gables is the
19 aesthetic appeal to it. And I'm in a unique
20 position in my life right now, as a young
21 adult, that I can afford to buy property, and
22 one of the places that I looked into is Coral
23 Gables, because I think it's beautiful.

24 If I wanted to live in an urban, you know,
25 high-rise area, I would. It's not. I want the

62

1 community. And I understand moving forward
2 development is important and it will happen,
3 but I agree with the previous speakers, that
4 scale is the key here, and living in that
5 community for so many years, the traffic, even
6 with The Thesis, what that gentleman said about
7 the traffic circles, is very true. I can no
8 longer, you know, drive to the park -- and I
9 use the park. I play tennis -- because I guess
10 the Uber drivers use it. I can tell you, I use
11 the street right in front of The Thesis, and it
12 is backed up four cars. I use my horn more
13 often than not. Or I take the little gap,
14 where the waterway is, that little gap through
15 that parking lot, and, you know, with the
16 development coming in, that's not even an
17 option for me in the future.

18 What I'm saying is that this is -- that
19 this will affect everyone in the residential
20 neighborhoods, because traffic needs to
21 continue to flow forward, and if it can't,
22 because US-1 is overly congested, and let's be
23 real, it is, they'll take the back roads of the
24 neighborhoods, and those neighborhoods, one of
25 the appeals to them, is that, you know, people

63

1 walk around. There's a sense of community.
2 And if you take that away, because there's more
3 cars, there's more traffic, there's more
4 people, because the density is increased
5 because we're putting ten-story buildings or
6 higher, then, you know, you take away the
7 appeal of the beauty and the aesthetics of what
8 I find unique about Coral Gables, which is like
9 it's green, it's, you know, City Beautiful for
10 a reason.

11 So I think, you know, you guys have an
12 opportunity to listen to us and also decide,
13 moving forward, what the best way to go forward
14 is, with what the City -- you know, what you
15 guys intended it to be, but it would affect,
16 and I think scale is important to consider in
17 this option.

18 Thank you.

19 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you, and welcome
20 back.

21 THE SECRETARY: Henry Pinero.

22 MR. PINERO: Hi. My name is Henry Pinero.
23 I live at 1215 Aduana Avenue, basically two
24 blocks away from the affected area.

25 I want to ask a couple of questions, and

64

1 leave you with an anecdote. So why is it that
2 all of these types of zoning changes seem to
3 happen and seem to occur during the dead of
4 summer? Why do we get notifications, while I
5 was out on vacation? I just barely got back
6 for this. Is this designed on purpose? I'm
7 just asking the question, and I want you guys
8 to do a --

9 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: If you would, if you
10 would just make your comments and statements
11 and we'll note your question, and, then, at
12 that point, if anybody on the Board will take
13 up and answer it, we'll take it at that time

14 MR. PINERO: Okay. Take it as a rhetorical
15 question.

16 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Understood.

17 MR. PINERO: And I'll fill in my theories.
18 I think that this is done on purpose, so that
19 there is less attendance, less participation.
20 I was on a group chat with my neighbors, and a
21 lot of them were out. I just managed to make
22 it in for this.

23 My question is, are you guys asking
24 yourselves the question of why these major
25 zoning changes are happening in the dead of

65

1 summer? Why it always feels like it's
2 happening with very little notification, which
3 I think is something that some others have
4 brought up? I'm just asking the question. I
5 want you guys to really look at it, as
6 neighbors.

7 If your neighbors are being affected by
8 this, would you listen to them? Would you take
9 it to heart? I feel like there's a concerted
10 effort to get this passed, and I would like you
11 guys to ask the right questions of all of those
12 that are in favor of this. That's Number One.

13 So why are we doing -- why is -- the theory
14 behind all of these developments is that it is
15 going to be transit oriented development and
16 it's going to spur people to use the Metrorail
17 and all sorts of traffic transit. Well, I have
18 never seen a study -- we have multiple
19 developments that have been put in place, the
20 Paseo, the buildings further on -- further up
21 north on US-1, closer to Coral Gables High, no
22 study has been done, since any of these
23 buildings has been erected, to show an
24 increased use in the Metrorail by the people
25 that live there. Why hasn't that been done? I

66

1 would like to understand that.

2 Why don't we test the theory that is
3 driving all of this? If we are a data oriented
4 society, if we have cameras everywhere, if we
5 are measuring the traffic going through one
6 location and another, why can't we get that
7 data? Why can't we see the effectiveness of
8 these theories? We have multiple data points
9 that are being ignored. That's the second
10 question.

11 The third point that I want to make is an
12 anecdote that I want to share from a month or
13 so ago. At the Paseo building, there was a
14 graduation ceremony or some type of graduation
15 party being held. I came home at 11:00
16 something at night with my family. I tried to
17 turn into Caballero. I could not turn in.
18 Everything was completely backed up. My point
19 is, I had to go back, and double back, and use
20 a side street, cost me several minutes. My
21 point with this is that the impact of these
22 developments is not being quantified.

23 I'm an engineer by training. I want to see
24 quantification. We have the tools to test
25 these theories out. The reality is that, it is

67

1 not driving the use of the Metrorail. The
2 truth is, it is impacting the neighbors
3 directly. That's it.

4 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you, sir.

5 Jill, anybody else in Chambers?

6 THE SECRETARY: No.

7 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Okay. How many do we
8 have on Zoom?

9 THE SECRETARY: So far, four.

10 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Okay. Please call the
11 first person.

12 THE SECRETARY: Francisco Senior.

13 Mr. Senior, can you please open your camera?

14 Would you like me to go to the next person?

15 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Yes, please.

16 THE SECRETARY: I think he's connecting.

17 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: If he comes back,
18 we'll take him before.

19 THE SECRETARY: He's connected.

20 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: He's connected?

21 THE SECRETARY: Yeah.

22 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Okay.

23 THE SECRETARY: Can you hear us?

24 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: There you are, sir. A
25 little frozen, but you're there.

68

1 MR. COLLIER: Mr. Chairman, if it's
2 possible, we would need to swear these --
3 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Yes, as long as we can
4 see them.
5 Sir, would you raise your right hand,
6 please, so you can be sworn in?
7 MR. SENIOR: Yes --
8 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Jill, if we can, let's
9 move to the second person, and if he's able to
10 figure out his internet, we'll circle back.
11 THE SECRETARY: David Woodbury.
12 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Are you having the
13 issue with the second person, also?
14 THE SECRETARY: I can see him on the
15 camera. Okay. Now he unmuted himself.
16 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Okay.
17 THE SECRETARY: David, can you hear us?
18 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Mr. Woodbury, are you
19 there?
20 You're muted.
21 Mr. Woodbury?
22 We can't hear you.
23 Jill, is it a problem with the City's
24 internet or equipment or --
25 THE SECRETARY: I've given them access.

69

1 I've actually made them co-host. So it's -- it
2 might be just signal.
3 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Could we try the third
4 individual and then we'll keep those other
5 people in mind, please?
6 THE SECRETARY: Sure. Julie. She's not on
7 anymore.
8 The third speaker was Julie, but she's no
9 longer on.
10 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Okay.
11 THE SECRETARY: And I also have Maria Cruz.
12 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Could we put Mrs. Cruz
13 on, please?
14 THE SECRETARY: Sure. Mrs. Cruz.
15 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Mrs. Cruz, are you
16 there?
17 MR. COLLIER: Just for the record, this has
18 worked in the past. We seemed to be having a
19 problem tonight.
20 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Jill, is it possible
21 to maybe have these people -- I know, without
22 being video, there won't be any evidentiary
23 value -- but maybe we can get them on sound
24 only, without video, and that may help going
25 through.

70

1 THE SECRETARY: They've been unmuted. They
2 have access. It's not coming through.
3 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: They have access,
4 okay.
5 MR. BEHAR: Can I get an IT person maybe to
6 help out?
7 MR. COLLIER: I might suggest that we move
8 on with the proceeding, and then we can hold it
9 in abeyance when they come back up.
10 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: We can open it back
11 up. I would agree with that.
12 While we're waiting for them, I'd like to
13 ask Jennifer a question, if I may, please.
14 There's been a lot of discussion about what
15 the County is doing, and there's been
16 discussion about what we're trying to do. Can
17 you talk about the RTZ, as it relates to the
18 County only, if the City doesn't implement its
19 own? In other words, what's the radius of the
20 RTZ for the County?
21 MS. GARCIA: I believe it's a quarter mile
22 for the community urban center.
23 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Okay.
24 MS. GARCIA: The Douglas Center, for
25 example, is a metropolitan urban center. It's

71

1 a little bit wider or larger circle, but South
2 Miami and the University station is a
3 university -- sorry, it's a quarter mile.
4 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Okay. So for the
5 County, we're talking about a quarter mile
6 radius from, I guess, the entrance to the Metro
7 Station?
8 COMMISSIONER REGALADO: So, the RTZ,
9 actually, if you look at the map, goes along
10 the entire SMART corridor. However, it is not
11 as of right. The properties have to come into
12 the RTZ. So that's where you get the
13 confusion, right.
14 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Okay.
15 COMMISSIONER REGALADO: So that's why I
16 said, like the RTZ has existed as an overlay,
17 but the properties have to come in one by one
18 or in pairs or whatever.
19 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Sorry.
20 And if a property asks to come in, is it
21 automatic?
22 COMMISSIONER REGALADO: No.
23 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: What's the requirement
24 per property?
25 COMMISSIONER REGALADO: So there is a

72

process by which they come in, and it has to be brought to the Board of County Commissioners. It goes to First Reading. It goes to Committee. And then it goes to Second Reading. And there could be delays in that process, right, and the Commissioner of the district is normally involved in it.

CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Okay. And what the City is now trying to do, my understanding, is to be very specific with three or four specific addresses that would be in the RTZ? That's with the City --

COMMISSIONER REGALADO: So what the City is looking at doing is looking at the zone around the current property that has requested to come into the RTZ, because what the RTZ item does is, once a property comes in, it also creates a small overlay. So the City is looking at a smaller overlay footprint.

CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: And that footprint is not the quarter mile radius?

MR. BEHAR: It's less.

MS. GARCIA: No, it's just those five --

COMMISSIONER REGALADO: No, it's smaller. It's smaller.

73

CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Okay.

COMMISSIONER REGALADO: But the RTZ actually overlays -- everywhere where the SMART plan goes, the RTZ follows it.

CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Understood. Thank you for the clarification.

COMMISSIONER REGALADO: Sure.

CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Jill, do we have anybody back up?

THE SECRETARY: Let's try again with Mr. Senior.

CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Let's try one more time with all three, please, and if not, do we have anybody on the phone?

THE SECRETARY: We have three people on the phone, but they haven't indicated they wish to speak.

CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Okay. Let's try those three. If not, I'll go ahead and close it for public comment. If they're able to resolve their issue, then we'll take it up at that time.

THE SECRETARY: Mr. Senior?

I think we have David on. David, can you hear us?

74

MR. BEHAR: Mr. Chairman, I think we should go on, and if they're able to resolve it, we open it up again.

CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: I agree. At this point, let's go ahead and move forward. I'm going to go ahead and close it for public comment. If those three individuals are able to figure out what it is, I will go ahead and open it up for them to speak.

MR. BUCELO: Mr. Chairman, how about if they put a call in number? Maybe it's a Zoom issue.

CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: It's in there. That's why I asked if there was.

MR. BUCELO: Oh, okay. Understood.

CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Felix, would you start us off?

MR. PARDO: I'd like a little clarification. I'm a little confused with the whole premise.

CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Please --

MR. COLLIER: Your mic.

MR. PARDO: Good? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you, sir.

MR. PARDO: I'm a little confused with the

75

premise. We had a project that came before us a while ago, and it was a certain project to develop there on the property where the existing shopping center was.

So as far as ownership, et cetera, it's still the same. It's only the design constructs that are being changed through this -- through this specific University Transit District change, correct?

CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: The way I -- Jill -- I mean, Jennifer, sorry.

MS. GARCIA: Yeah. So the former Mark project has expired. The expiration for the Board of Architects has already expired. I think, after this Board, they went to the County and rallied the County to create an overlay -- not an overlay, but an expansion of the RTZ legislation, to be able to incorporate that project into that --

MR. PARDO: So that specific project went to the County to request this at that time?

MS. GARCIA: Yes. Correct.

MR. PARDO: Okay.

CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Did they go to Live Local also?

76

1 MS. GARCIA: No.
 2 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: But they could?
 3 MS. GARCIA: Through the City, sure, yeah.
 4 MR. BUCELO: Chair, if I may, what is
 5 the -- I apologize.
 6 MR. PARDO: I hadn't finished yet.
 7 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Please continue.
 8 MR. PARDO: So, understandably, we had been
 9 looking at a specific project, that had gone to
 10 the Board of Architects, that had a certain
 11 design. So that's out the window?
 12 MS. GARCIA: I haven't seen anything from
 13 them since it came before this Board last
 14 year -- early last year.
 15 MR. PARDO: Right. So, basically, the
 16 change of zoning that they're requesting --
 17 they were requesting at that time from the City
 18 of Coral Gables is --
 19 MS. GARCIA: Right.
 20 MR. PARDO: -- null and void, because they
 21 were able to, let's say, for use of a better
 22 word, and I don't mean to offend anyone, to
 23 usurp that specific request, and then continue
 24 and ask for this specific project.
 25 So, if that's the case, from what I

77

1 understand, Commissioner Regalado, the nodes
 2 that are existing on the corridor are
 3 complemented by the busway, which, in fact,
 4 Alicia Bravo, who is an excellent engineer, and
 5 was in charge of that at one time, in her many
 6 capacities over the years, was augmenting and
 7 then finishing, and this complementary bus
 8 service that was being attached to that, and
 9 she was basically in charge of doing that, to
 10 be able to have those components of the bus
 11 service, to be able to complement these
 12 particular stations.

13 So my first question, from a conceptual
 14 standpoint, and I know how powerful your seat
 15 is and your position and your knowledge is of
 16 all of these different things, would it be,
 17 first of all, difficult to request better
 18 specificity of the complementary bus service
 19 from this particular station, mass transit
 20 station, that goes in one direction, as was
 21 addressed a couple of times, where it could be
 22 more useful, you know, to the City?

23 For example, many years ago, through Billy
 24 Kerdyk, the trolley system that was created has
 25 helped substantially over the years, where it's

78

1 been copied by many municipalities throughout
 2 the County. The ridership is incredibly high,
 3 because it's incredibly efficient. Obviously,
 4 it's the right cost. But that, I think, would
 5 be very important.

6 The second thing is --

7 COMMISSIONER REGALADO: Do you want me to
 8 answer the transit one?

9 MR. PARDO: I'm going to ask you two other
 10 things, because I know you can talk and chew
 11 gum. There's no doubt about that.

12 COMMISSIONER REGALADO: Okay.

13 MR. PARDO: But I think, Commissioner, that
 14 the SMART corridor concept, the negative -- the
 15 negative, which I have seen, and I've seen
 16 other Commissioners, like in District 8,
 17 Higgins -- yes --

18 (Simultaneous speaking.)

19 MR. PARDO: Right. And, then, one of the
 20 things that she was concerned, on a project in
 21 her district, which is almost at the end of the
 22 line there, Homestead and the Highway, was that
 23 basically most of those people there, they're
 24 single-family homes, that are much closer to
 25 the SMART corridor, and she was very concerned

79

1 about the impact of basically upzoning the
 2 properties that were within that distance, the
 3 thousand foot, I think it was, if memory serves
 4 me right, and, therefore, upzoning those areas
 5 without any type of public hearing process
 6 and/or an understanding of the compatibility
 7 issues that were there, and she was -- in a
 8 particular case, she was able to win the day
 9 for the residents, in that case.

10 I would think that the second step, as far
 11 as the bus corridor component, to be able to
 12 make it more usable for the residents of Coral
 13 Gables, would be the possibility of finally
 14 resolving the Caballero intersection, because
 15 it's almost a hypotenuse triangle there, and it
 16 becomes a funnel effect, that people can't get
 17 out, as has been stressed by many of the
 18 neighbors here today. That has been going on
 19 for a long time. It's only gotten worse with
 20 the two large projects that were built there.
 21 So I know that we're at the mercy of DOT, but I
 22 think that it is essential that that finally
 23 gets resolved, with some type of mechanism,
 24 through engineering, that could be hopefully
 25 addressed.

80

And, then, the third item is that, if -- when you look at these corridors, I don't see anywhere, and I don't know if you have any objection of carving out a larger component of it, where you could carve a larger component, you know, to provide parks, you know, for the people that would live in this area. So many of these students, that would be going to the University of Miami, may not have cars, but they have recreational needs, and we have very little large recreational spaces. These little pocket parks are -- may be essential for you to walk your dog there and back, but not to use them.

Would you address the concept?

COMMISSIONER REGALADO: Of course. So I'll start with the last one first. One of the things that we're looking at, at this corridor, is obviously the investment that we're making in the Underline. The Underline Phase 3 is very different from the Underline Phase 2 and Underline Phase 1, just because of the amount of space that we have.

So a lot of the parks concerns and a lot of the outreach that we did in this area was to

81

the programming of Underline Phase 3. So Underline Phase 3, in the City of Coral Gables, for example, includes a dog park, because that's one of issues that kept coming up, when we were meeting with Coral Gables residents at the Underline.

We're also -- in the UM area, near this site, where we have a little bit further down the Baptist one that we just broke ground on, so that's the Baptist. I think it's the Pine Rockland Garden there. And then we also have an outdoor amphitheater, that's going to be created, because the Underline, in this part of the Gables, creates a complete reshuffling of the parking spaces, and actually is going to have large spaces.

In this area, also, we'll have, a little bit further down, the micro forest. So the micro forest are more green space, stormwater retention, green infrastructure, because that part of the impact actually floods a lot, and that's one of the things that we took into account, the natural reservoir that occurs there, and putting the micro forest there.

So the one thing that we have considered in

82

all of this area here is requiring developers to do bike lanes, pedestrian walkways, right, and that's throughout this entire corridor, including parts of Underline Phase 2. So that's the first thing there, in terms of the green spaces and the parks.

The second part of your request, in terms of the intersections, is important. Right now, Stacey Miller is our new Director of Transportation. She used to be the FDOT Secretary for District 6. So we're very excited about what she brings to the County. We had been working on the busway that you mentioned, intersection by intersection, with FDOT. Actually, the intersection at 136th has taken over seven months to figure out, because they can be very challenging.

I'm always open to helping with intersections. Our team recently redid the intersection in MAST Academy on the Rickenbacker, because we had asked the School District a million times, and we just went and we redid it. So if you want to look at Caballero, I'm happy to work with Pete, you know, and bring Stacey and the team in to look

83

at it and see what can be done.

When we get requests for traffic calming or traffic realignment, it has to be approved by the municipality first and then sent to the County. We cannot take on the request without the approval of the County Commissioner, or, at the minimum, the Manager. So I'm always happy to do that, and we've been called in, on a few intersections. And we get called in on a lot of pedestrian crossings, and we're happy to help with those. The only thing I would say about the ped crossings is, more and more, we're finding them just not to be effective, so we've been asking FDOT to provide us with different tools, right, just because the nature of Miami is such, unfortunately, that people see yellow and they go faster, not slow down. It's a challenge. I know, it's a challenging situation, but it's one that we deal with all of the time, but that's always on the table.

So we're always here happy to help with whatever intersection. The only thing that I would add to that is, usually we get a lot of requests for stop signs. The district does put a limit on how many stop signs we can use in

84

certain areas, because it just slows down traffic, but the County does have an overlay and we are looking at actually slowing down the speed in all residential areas. So that's something that we're currently working on, that the Board actually passed unanimously about six months ago.

Now, in terms to what happens when you have the RTZ development, right, the RTZ and how it works, really, is, like I mentioned, we have the overlay, and then the different sites come in. When those sites come in, the Commissioner of the district makes certain requests, right. In this particular RTZ application, this is the first one that comes to the County that includes an interlocal and the use of Chapter 33, and that is by design. That was my request to the Board.

I want the City of Coral Gables to have a seat at the table and to be able to weigh in. It is the same vehicle that we used for Grove Central, when we did it with the City of Miami. So this is actually the first non-governmental owned property to come in with a request of an interlocal and participation by a city. I

85

actually came before the City, when I submitted the RTZ application the first time, and I have met with all of them about it, and this is a byproduct of a lot of those conversations.

In terms of the transit, I think we need to clarify a point. While the Metrorail, as currently constructed, only goes from one end to another, there have been several investments that changed the way that the Metrorail works. You mentioned the trolley, and one of the things that we're working on at the County right now is, once again, giving the municipalities more flexibility in terms of County connectivity. I'm working on an item that actually forces the cities to work on having joint trolley stops.

So, for example, in the City of Coral Gables and the City of Miami, when you get to 37th Avenue on the City of Miami trolley, you have to get down at one site, at the City of Miami 37th, and you have to cross 37th Avenue to now get on the Coral Gables trolley and continue your route. So we're actively working to bridge those gaps, so that we can have a more unified trolley system, and we're not

86

being ridiculous with like a few feet. So we're working on that.

The other thing is, I sit on the Board of Tri Rail. I'm currently the vice chair. I was the chair for several years. Tri Rail actually goes all of the way to West Palm, and it meets at the MIC. You can take the Metrorail to the MIC, and you can take the Tri Rail there, all of the way to West Palm.

I also was very proud to open Miami Central Station. You can take the Metrorail to Miami Central Station, and now you have a direct all of the way to West Palm, and you can also take the Metrorail to the Hialeah station, where you can connect with Tri Rail again.

So one of the things that we're doing is, not only are we looking at connectivity, separate and aside from the buses, which we are connecting, and the trolleys, but we're also connecting all other systems.

Now, in July, we launched our one ticket app. This is a tri county app, that allows you to buy tickets for all three counties on the same platform, and gives you the schedules for all three counties. And if you visit the link

87

at Douglas, one of the things that they incorporate in their design, that I think allows so many of their uses to use public transit is, they actually have boards with all of the current times for the Metrorail, for the Metromover. They have a rideshare drop-off point. They have Tri Rail, they have Brightline, and the ways that you can connect there and they're also pushing out the app, when it rolls out now in July.

So we are working on the Flagler now. So we're working on Flagler. We're working on the Coastal Link. These are all transit projects that the County is working on, in the hopes of undoing the twenty years where we were not working on transit projects.

MR. PARDO: So, Commissioner, since you have a hand in what you want and what you don't want, one of the things that I'm very concerned with also is, from a visual impact, these people have been living in their neighborhood, single-family homes, for years and years and years, and they're pretty expensive homes. And all of a sudden, the last thing you want to do is look through your kitchen window and see,

88

1 you know, this behemoth there.

2 COMMISSIONER REGALADO: A hundred percent,
3 and that's why my item said that it could not
4 -- it would not and cannot be taller than what
5 was already approved by Coral Gables. Coral
6 Gables approved The Thesis. There's a series
7 of buildings that are a lot taller than what
8 this RTZ item states, and that's by design.
9 I'm not making a judgment call on what has been
10 approved by the City Beautiful, but I
11 specifically limited this development to its
12 surrounding areas, and it has to be compatible
13 with its surrounding areas, and actually
14 smaller than what has already been approved.

15 MR. PARDO: The one thing that we do not
16 have in the City of Coral Gables, stepping
17 down, when the height is at a certain point,
18 it's not so much toward US-1, but it's more
19 toward the residential area. I mean, it's
20 common sense. The City of Miami has it. There
21 should be absolutely no reason why it can't be
22 implemented here.

23 And the second part is, having a landscaped
24 buffer area, continuous area, where mature
25 trees can grow abutting that area. Not now,

89

1 but within years, where they can get up to 45
2 feet in height. Giving them space to do that,
3 I think, would be very good, to be able to
4 buffer the negative impact.

5 COMMISSIONER REGALADO: Right. The
6 landscaping is something that I include in all
7 of my applications. This would be no
8 different. Obviously you want a buffer.

9 Again, we're very early in the process on
10 the County side. We'll see what happens as we
11 go to Committee, and it moves forward, but the
12 idea was that Coral Gables could also mirror
13 some of this and start having those
14 conversations, and those are all requirements
15 that you can also discuss with Staff and make
16 recommendations.

17 MR. PARDO: I have one final question for
18 you, and one for our attorney. The final
19 question is, when you look at the timing, you
20 know, it's very overwhelming to receive this
21 package on a Friday afternoon and you're going
22 through hundreds of pages, and not only this
23 application. Unfortunately, I read everything,
24 and I'm looking -- am I misunderstanding, are
25 you under a time table crunch? In other words,

90

1 from your first motion, to your second one, is
2 there a four-month limit or did I misread that?

3 COMMISSIONER REGALADO: The timing on the
4 City side is not something that I control. I
5 can tell you --

6 MR. PARDO: I'm sorry, on the County side.

7 COMMISSIONER REGALADO: This item went to
8 First Reading and now goes to Committee and
9 then goes before the full Board. So, yes, that
10 item is already moving through the County
11 Commission.

12 MR. PARDO: Right, but you still have
13 access to be able to amend it?

14 COMMISSIONER REGALADO: Yeah. We still
15 have the public hearings. You know, it still
16 has the final reading. It just had the First
17 Reading. The only time that we can speak on an
18 item is when it goes to First Reading. So
19 there will be an opportunity, at Committee, and
20 at the Second Reading.

21 MR. PARDO: Right, because the thing is
22 that the rest of -- the devil is in the
23 details, and there are a lot of details in
24 there, where I found many discrepancies within
25 our own Staff's, you know, whatever. And maybe

91

1 it's because they were trying to do too much,
2 you know, in a short period of time.

3 COMMISSIONER REGALADO: Are you speaking to
4 what was presented here at Coral Gables or the
5 item that is before the County Commission,
6 because they're two different things?

7 MR. PARDO: No, in the Coral Gables
8 component. What I wanted to make sure is that
9 there is enough time to vet this properly at
10 the City of Coral Gables side, you know, to
11 make sure that everything, you know, works well
12 and we iron out the kinks out of this.

13 COMMISSIONER REGALADO: I mean, of Coral
14 Gables, I really can't. I have no way of
15 knowing like how -- if you want to speak to
16 timing.

17 MS. GARCIA: After we got the notice in
18 May, we reacted as quickly as we could, to try
19 to research what was being proposed,
20 highlighting our concerns, discussing them with
21 you, to have a, more or less, complete draft of
22 our ordinances that we do for the overlay
23 districts within our City. I don't know if
24 that answers your question or not.

25 Our process is, Planning and Zoning,

92

Commission on First and Second Reading. The County process --

MR. PARDO: Until the public hearing today, there are many items there, in your components, that I think have to be looked at by this Board, you know, before taking a final action on something like that.

COMMISSIONER REGALADO: The only thing that I would add, the developer has opted to go with the County. I think that it's important that the City of Coral Gables is given another option.

What are the options? These are privately owned parcels. Their options are Coral Gables, right, or whatever municipality, RTZ, if they're within the SMART zone, or Live Local. They can move within those options however they please. We have nothing to do with that. All we can do is respond to their requests.

So, in terms of the timing, that's what I'm saying. In terms of the timing, there's really -- we have our process, Coral Gables now is initiating their process, but this is not a County owned parcel.

MR. PARDO: So this, at this point, is the

93

City driving the bus or is the County or the developer, which one of the three?

COMMISSIONER REGALADO: Well, the developer initially chose the City of Coral Gables, went through a process with Coral Gables for a period of time. I don't know how long that was, but I know you all saw the project. And now they've made the request to use the RTZ.

The City is now offering an alternative. I have no way of knowing how that alternative will be received by anyone in that overlay district. There is no way that we would know that.

MR. PARDO: Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Attorney, my last question, which is about precedent, any other project, outside of this zoning, cannot pull in or use, you know, this as a precedent for this particular project, which is a good concern that was raised by the neighbors, and I just want to make sure that you're in agreement with that?

MR. COLLIER: Well, the point of precedent is, precedent is only precedent if the Board says it's precedent. So I can't tell you that, just because one area was developed, does that

94

serve as precedent for another area. It's only precedent if a Board believes it to be precedent, and sometimes it's not viewed as precedent, it's viewed as a separate entity or issue.

I can say that, with regard to what is before us, the County has their own process. I think it's the City's desire to have a say, but we would like to try to match you as close as possible, so we can keep the process within the City, rather than having -- rather than seeding the zoning jurisdiction to the County. We don't want to have a choice.

The County is position is, we can take jurisdiction, because under our -- this is their argument, I'm familiar with it, because I was an Assistant County Attorney for 36 years, so I understand that they believe they have jurisdiction to take these areas relating to Metrorail, and they can take jurisdiction, and while the County will have a -- while the City will have a seat at the table in the decision-making process, there will be other seats besides the City's seat.

The City is trying to convince the County

95

that we've got a process, we are close, but not exact, but some of the places that we're different on have a rational basis for why they're different, and we're hoping to show the County, even though you've got a public hearing next Tuesday, where, once it's -- if it's approved at that public hearing, it goes to the County Commission for final adoption. So they're on a track. I don't know how long it will be, but they're moving.

So the City wants to try to say to the County, "Listen, before you make that decision, give us a chance to come up with a process that will come very close to what you're trying to accomplish."

MR. PARDO: And that's why the Commissioner is here.

MR. COLLIER: That's why the Commissioner is here, and that's why there is a certain urgency to the application.

MR. PARDO: Mr. Chairman, those are all of the comments I have.

CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: What I'd like to do, I was informed that a Zoom, the reason it's not working, is because the City needs to restart

96

1 it. What I'd like to do is take a break brief,
2 so the City can restart the Zoom, and there's
3 people that are waiting to speak.

4 So what I'd like to do is, take a short
5 break, maybe about five minutes -- I don't know
6 if it takes longer, so the City can restart
7 their Zoom and we can listen to those people.

8 Thank you.

9 THE SECRETARY: Everyone on Zoom, please
10 make sure you use the Zoom link 378709513.

11 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: We'll take a
12 five-minute break.

13 Mrs. Cruz, thank you for coming and your
14 dedication. It's nice to see you in person.

15 (Short recess taken.)

16 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: If everybody would
17 please have a seat. I've been told that we've
18 resolved the issue with Zoon and we will go
19 ahead and get started.

20 What I'd like to do is open up the public
21 comment for a little bit first, and I'd like to
22 ask Ms. Maria Cruz, if she would please come up
23 and speak.

24 MS. COLLIER: She needs to be sworn in.

25 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: If you would raise

97

1 your right hand, please.

2 (Thereupon, the participant was sworn.)

3 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you, ma'am.

4 MS. CRUZ: Mrs. Maria Cruz, 1447 Miller
5 Road. I'm sorry that I had to come in like
6 this. I have a sister in the hospital. That's
7 why I was Zooming. And I could hear the people
8 talking, but you all could not hear them. So
9 I'm here. I got in the car, came here, because
10 this is important.

11 The first comment I had is, it's
12 interesting, our City, the people that
13 represent us, they've been talking to the
14 Commissioner, they've been talking to
15 Miami-Dade, they haven't been talking to the
16 residents. We have not been asked. Nobody has
17 said, "Okay, how about you? What do you want
18 us to say on your behalf?" No. They're
19 cutting deals, without talking to us, and then,
20 "This is what we're proposing."

21 No, we are the taxpayers. We are the
22 people that they represent. They should listen
23 to us first, before they propose anything,
24 because, guess what, we may be agreeable, we
25 may not be. They need to hear us first.

98

1 Let me tell you, this is the same thing
2 that has happened with the waterway and the
3 bridges, because, you know what, Miami-Dade
4 decided, this is how we're going to do it and
5 forget about what the people want. You know
6 what, we have a vote. We have a voice. We pay
7 taxes. They need to listen to us. That's
8 Number One.

9 Number Two, I'm mesmerized. I, almost 80
10 years old, I'm going to get in my car, go to
11 Metrorail, park there, get on Metrorail, get
12 off Metrorail, go on the mover, then, you know,
13 I'm going to West Palm Beach, connect with this
14 and that and the other thing? How many people,
15 that live in Coral Gables, is going to do that?
16 If not, what, we're going to get on the
17 trolley, to get to the bus? Come on, guys.

18 This is a city where most of us have cars.
19 We expect to go with -- driving our car. When
20 I get in my car -- like today, if I have to
21 wait for Metromover, I couldn't have made it
22 here. You know, we, this City, our residents,
23 are car driven. We're not going to get on a
24 bus, with strangers, or God forbid me, what if
25 they have COVID or what if they have some

99

1 disease, I'm going to sit next to a stranger?
2 Think about our population. You know what, I'm
3 almost 80 years old. I can tell you, I will
4 not do it, and most of our elderly will not do
5 it. That's bananas.

6 Number Two, the University of Miami should
7 be responsible for their housing. I remember
8 Bill Harnett telling me, many moons ago,
9 because this has been so long, that the
10 University of Miami had an agreement with the
11 City about the number of people that they could
12 enroll. I guess we've forgotten that or we
13 have agreed to disregard it, so now we --
14 we have to make it possible for those students
15 to be housed here, because the University
16 doesn't provide the housing that they need.
17 It's our job now. And you know what, the
18 interesting part is, most of the students that
19 come to the University, whether they pay out of
20 pocket or they take loans or they get grants,
21 they are paying upwards, I hear, of \$80,000 a
22 year, and they are -- they need affordable
23 housing?

24 You know why, because they live by
25 themselves, and they don't work, and so you

100

1 know what, we have to provide affordable
2 housing for them. Explain that one.

3 And the third one is, any of us that live
4 near the University of Miami, and I live half a
5 block, when they tell the University of Miami
6 students, "Do not drive," go by my house, look
7 across the street, and look at all of the
8 plates from New Jersey, North Carolina,
9 whatever, whatever. They're not residents.
10 They're the students. They park in front of
11 our homes. They disregard -- I'm telling you,
12 our neighborhood is full of student housing.
13 We have so many houses, that house students,
14 that have five, six cars in front of their
15 houses. Enough is enough.

16 Now, I was -- I'm telling you, I was
17 driving, taking notes, okay. We're comparing
18 it to South Miami. We're not South Miami.
19 We're not South Miami. And that area is not a
20 business area. We're infringing on the
21 residents, on the people that bought their
22 homes to have a nice home in a beautiful city,
23 City Beautiful, and now we're going to make it
24 easy for the people that are transient, because
25 University of Miami are not residents, they're

101

1 transient. They come, they'd be here for some
2 time, and then they leave, and we have to
3 accommodate them. It's not right. It's not
4 fair.

5 This is not something that we want, and I
6 bet you that if you were to ask most of the
7 residents, they will tell you, it is not our
8 problem. We should not have to be providing
9 housing -- every time I hear, it's student
10 housing, student housing. That's not our
11 business.

12 Let me tell you, when some of these big
13 buildings were built, they were not student
14 housing. They were going to be rentals, but
15 not student housing, God forbid. Yeah, they
16 were student housing, and we were lied to.
17 Enough is enough. You all represent us. Come
18 on.

19 You know, what, first of all, the City
20 should not be talking, on our behalf, without
21 asking us what we want. That's Number One.
22 Somebody needs to let our Commissioners know
23 that nobody talks for me, before they tell me,
24 and give me a chance to talk about it. That's
25 Number One.

102

1 Number Two, the University needs to step up
2 to the place. They, instead of building -- you
3 know, they keep building. Build housing. Do
4 it, or restrict the number of out-of-towners
5 that come here, because you cannot provide
6 housing. You know, don't tell the parents,
7 "Oh, yeah, there's buildings that you can
8 rent," No. Parents should know that when they
9 go to the University, the University should
10 look after their kids. I'm sorry. Wrong is
11 wrong. Thank you.

12 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you for coming,
13 Ms. Cruz.

14 Jill, how many people do we have on Zoom?

15 THE SECRETARY: We have a few that had
16 signed up, so I'm going to try this again.

17 MR. BEHAR: Well, we only had two others.

18 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: We had two. Ms. Cruz
19 came, so we have two people. Let's call those
20 two individuals.

21 MR. BEHAR: Mr. Senior and --

22 MR. BUCELO: David.

23 MR. BEHAR: -- and David.

24 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Senior, can you
25 please --

103

1 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Could you call David,
2 the next individual?

3 THE SECRETARY: He's not connected.

4 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: He's not connected, so
5 We only have Mr. Senior?

6 THE SECRETARY: Correct.

7 MR. SENIOR: Hello.

8 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Yes, hi, how are you?
9 If you would like to be sworn in, we need to
10 see you. You can still speak, if you'd like,
11 without being seen.

12 Mr. Senior, we can see you now -- we can't
13 see you now.

14 MR. PARDO: Your mic is not on.

15 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Your mic is muted, Mr.
16 Senior.

17 MR. SENIOR: Unmute, okay.

18 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Now I can hear you.
19 Yes, sir.

20 MR. SENIOR: Okay. So you want to swear me
21 in?

22 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Only if we can see
23 you, and we can't, so --

24 MR. BEHAR: Check your camera.

25 MR. BUCELO: He has his finger on the

104

1 camera, I think.
 2 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Is your finger on the
 3 camera, sir?
 4 MR. SENIOR: Oh, maybe. Sorry.
 5 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: If we can now just
 6 turn the camera to you. It's okay. Maybe you
 7 can just turn towards the camera.
 8 MR. SENIOR: Wait a moment, because it's
 9 hard for me otherwise.
 10 Okay. I got it now.
 11 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: If you would please
 12 raise your right hand.
 13 (Thereupon, the participant was sworn.)
 14 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you.
 15 Go ahead, sir.
 16 MR. SENIOR: Okay. I live at 6012 San
 17 Vicente Street, which is, you know, about two
 18 blocks across from -- (Unintelligible).
 19 Anyway, the traffic here is horrendous.
 20 You know, at times, in Hardee, it's like a
 21 snake, going so (Unintelligible.)
 22 And, then, when it goes to Maynada,
 23 (Unintelligible) goes to the left. When you
 24 try to make a left at US-1, you know, I used to
 25 do where The Thesis is -- (Unintelligible) --

105

1 now next to The Marks.
 2 Once a thousand people or more are going to
 3 be living in that building, you know, I can't
 4 see it. I mean, traffic is horrendous. The
 5 developers, they do the building and they don't
 6 live here, but the people that make Coral
 7 Gables the way Coral Gables is are the
 8 residents. I've been living here since 1961,
 9 okay, in this area, and I love it, but it's
 10 getting difficult by the day.
 11 You know, we just -- you know, we can
 12 fight, I guess, with the State, with the
 13 County, but don't let us live like we've been
 14 living. You know, how can they change all of
 15 the rules? You know, I remember when President
 16 Reagan came to Miami when he was president and
 17 he saw the Metrorail. His comment was, "Oh,
 18 that's a white elephant that they've done
 19 here," like a waste of money, okay.
 20 (Unintelligible.)
 21 You know, that shouldn't be to the
 22 detriment of the people that live in the area
 23 you know. You know, the traffic is bad.
 24 (Unintelligible).
 25 Like the Mark talking about three or four

106

1 thousand more people living in that small area.
 2 You know, it's just -- the people that live
 3 south, like I do, you know, are affected.
 4 We're affected, you know. We've got to see how
 5 we can fight this, because it's just not fair
 6 that outsiders can dominate what gets done on
 7 this City, and by outsiders, I'm talking the
 8 State, the County, okay, the developers.
 9 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you, sir.
 10 MR. SENIOR: Coral Gables, works very hard
 11 -- okay. I thank you so much for letting me
 12 talk.
 13 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: No, thank you. Thank
 14 you for bearing with us.
 15 MR. SENIOR: Okay.
 16 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you, sir.
 17 Jill, the other gentleman, David, is not on
 18 anymore, correct?
 19 THE SECRETARY: That is correct. We have
 20 Pat Block.
 21 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Was he on before?
 22 THE SECRETARY: Yes.
 23 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Okay. And that's the
 24 last person?
 25 THE SECRETARY: Correct.

107

1 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Okay.
 2 After this gentleman, we'll go ahead and
 3 close the public hearing.
 4 MR. BEHAR: Was he already signed up from
 5 before?
 6 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Yes. Jill said that
 7 this gentleman was signed up from before.
 8 MR. SENIOR: We sent various messages to --
 9 she's coming through now.
 10 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Your microphone is
 11 muted. If you could please unmute. Can you
 12 hear us?
 13 MS. PARKER: Yes.
 14 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you. If you'd
 15 like to be sworn in, we do need -- in San
 16 Francisco, perfect.
 17 MS. PARKER: I'm sorry.
 18 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: That's okay. Could
 19 you raise your right hand, please?
 20 MS. PARKER: Yes.
 21 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you.
 22 (Thereupon, the participant was sworn.)
 23 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you.
 24 Go ahead, please.
 25 MS. PARKER: I have a question, because

108

1 somebody in the meeting, a Commissioner --
 2 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Could you state your
 3 name and address, for the record, please?
 4 MS. PARKER: Sorry. It's Pat Parker, 720
 5 Coral Way, Coral Gables, Florida.
 6 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you.
 7 MS. PARKER: Yeah. I have lived in South
 8 Gables, on Sunset and on Portillo, and my
 9 family has lived on South Alhambra, and what
 10 the developers are getting away with is really
 11 a big problem, and one of the Commissioners or
 12 somebody on your dais said that when the people
 13 from The Mark didn't get their way, they went
 14 to Miami-Dade and got this overlay done.
 15 That's not fair, it's manipulative, and it's
 16 not what Coral Gables -- if Coral Gables says,
 17 no, it's no, and if you can then go to Dade
 18 County and get Coral Gables overwritten, I
 19 think Coral Gables has to take a stand on that.
 20 That's not fair.
 21 And everybody I know said the traffic is
 22 absolutely horrendous. When they were doing
 23 The Paseo, your traffic study said it would
 24 have no effect on traffic, and I spoke at that
 25 time and I said, "Even a kindergartner knows

109

1 that if you have that many people, it is going
 2 to affect traffic." It's been terrible.
 3 And that tiny little park, you know, for
 4 the waterway, they tried to put in townhouses,
 5 and we were concerned about the garbage pickup
 6 and stuff affecting the children in the park.
 7 Now, I don't think anybody can park in the
 8 park, and it's very dangerous for children and
 9 other people.
 10 I think Coral Gables has to take a stand
 11 and not be bullied by Dade County, or, more,
 12 bullied by a developer who can run to Dade
 13 County and get your's overturned. If they want
 14 to do eight feet, you said seven feet, and now
 15 what did they accomplish? They've accomplished
 16 maybe thirteen feet?
 17 So I think we have to really look at, that
 18 as the City, as the Commission, that we can't
 19 be bullied by even Dade County. We're part of
 20 Dade County, but we're our own municipality,
 21 and Coral Gables has always been of the people,
 22 for the people, by the people, and somewhere we
 23 got lost.
 24 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you, ma'am.
 25 Thank you for your comments.

110

1 I'm going to go ahead and close it again
 2 for public comment.
 3 Sue.
 4 MS. KAWALERSKI: Thank you. And thank you,
 5 Commissioner Regalado and Anthony. It's good
 6 seeing you in a different context. But I have
 7 some questions for the Commissioner, if I
 8 might.
 9 Thank you so much.
 10 COMMISSIONER REGALADO: Of course.
 11 MS. KAWALERSKI: I think you mentioned
 12 that -- the developer is Landmark, I believe,
 13 right, Landmark out of Athens, Georgia, and, of
 14 course, we know Landmark, because they created
 15 the Venera project. It is student housing.
 16 They're a student housing developer. So they
 17 came and lobbied you to get this on the
 18 Commission agenda.
 19 COMMISSIONER REGALADO: They made a request
 20 to be considered for the RTZ.
 21 MS. KAWALERSKI: Okay. And you sponsored
 22 the legislation to make that happen?
 23 COMMISSIONER REGALADO: Yes.
 24 MS. KAWALERSKI: So, as the sponsor of this
 25 legislation, can you slow down this process,

111

1 because you're hearing tonight residents that
 2 have no idea what's going on in their
 3 neighborhood and how it's going to affect them,
 4 Number One? It's summertime, and a lot of
 5 those residents that are going to be directly
 6 affected aren't even around. Can you, as the
 7 sponsor of the legislation, slow the process
 8 down?
 9 COMMISSIONER REGALADO: I have already put
 10 in -- this process has already started. I came
 11 before the Commission -- and I think that
 12 that's important. I came before the
 13 Commission, before this started, and explained
 14 to them, and answered all of their questions
 15 regarding this application, and that was like
 16 -- yeah, if you can get -- June 10th.
 17 So, again, I mean, we had a discussion
 18 about it. We've talked about it in the past.
 19 I met with Coral Gables when the RTZ was put
 20 in. As I mentioned earlier, the RTZ had a
 21 two-year period, in which the municipalities
 22 had to consider doing these overlays and
 23 figuring out if they were going to change their
 24 Comp Plan. So the process has already started,
 25 and that was my point earlier to Felix. The

112

process has already started.

I think that it's great that Coral Gables is considering making changes to their Comp Plan, and I've been happy to meet with them and discuss with them all of the different options that they have, and like I mentioned, this is the first RTZ that comes with an interlocal, where the city gets a seat at the table.

So I have no regrets as to how we have entered to this point. I really have done everything to have Coral Gables' participation, just like I did with South Miami and just like I've done with all of my cities.

MS. KAWALERSKI: All right. But you're hearing tonight residents that are saying, first I heard about this, was within a couple of days. So now you're actually hearing from the people that are going to be directly impacted, forget the Commission and forget the City Administrators.

COMMISSIONER REGALADO: Respectfully, Sue, I hear from people all of the time, and I'm happy to sit here and listen to them, and I spoke to them during the break.

MS. KAWALERSKI: Yes.

113

COMMISSIONER REGALADO: And we're happy to receive their calls and their e-mails, but if we were to stop a governmental process just because someone says that they did not know about it, government would not function, and you should know that, as a County employee.

MS. KAWALERSKI: So, I mean, you're going to take these comments and say, tough luck?

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

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

COMMISSIONER REGALADO: Your characterization is incorrect and I disagree with you.

114

MS. KAWALERSKI: Okay. We can agree to disagree, but --

COMMISSIONER REGALADO: Respectfully.

MS. KAWALERSKI: But let me ask you something, you were talking about the SMART plan, and you were talking about the impetus for creating RTZ zones, Rapid Transit Zones, was because the County was going to create all of these fantastic transit ways, whether it be more rail, bus, rapid bus. Kendall was going to be an east-west corridor.

COMMISSIONER REGALADO: I didn't say that. I said that the nodes were created in the 1970s with a plan, and that the County, in this area, did build the Metrorail. The Rapid Transit Zone is an attempt to utilize existing investments in transit, and if you would listen to our County meetings, you would hear that my fellow Commissioners complain about how this district, in particular, has more access to transit than any other districts. There are districts that don't have any access to transit, and that's why the Rapid Transit Zone was created, in order to incentivize people to use transit, so that the County can then take

115

into account and comply with the promise that was made when I was ten years old.

So what happened, you know, while I was a child and with the half penny, really is out of my hands. I just try to do the best that I can, with the tools that we have been given.

MS. KAWALERSKI: Okay. So a lot of residents were saying, you know, you're asking people to use a Metrorail system that goes from Dadeland station to basically Downtown and the off-shoot to the airport, okay. One of your fellow Commissioners, Oliver Gilbert, was quoted as saying, We misplanned. We told the public that it would cost "X" amount of dollars and we were wrong. It's going to cost triple the amount. We have no money. I'm paraphrasing one of your Commissioners, okay.

COMMISSIONER REGALADO: Oliver Gilbert, who was the Chair of the County Commission, made it a priority to do the north corridor, which was promised when the half penny was done. That is currently in the NEPA study, as are other transit plans.

The Federal Government was, for many years, only funding SMART starts. Even that funding

116

1 has now been paralyzed. And if you've been
2 following the State budget, we actually have
3 issues with the match that was provided by FDOT
4 originally for the northeast corridor, which
5 goes all of the way to Aventura.

6 So I don't think that you can make a
7 blanket statement, whether you're quoting
8 Oliver Gilbert or not, about a 35-year process.

9 MS. KAWALERSKI: Okay. But you make a
10 great point. There's really no money to build
11 transit at this point in time. So we're stuck,
12 at this point in time, with the bus rapid
13 transit system, that's going to connect to the
14 Metrorail, basically a north-south corridor, no
15 money for east-west or whatsoever, okay, at
16 this point in time.

17 COMMISSIONER REGALADO: Well, at this point
18 in time, the County has several NEPAs and the
19 NEPAs are funds. There are projects that we're
20 moving forward with, but they take a long time.
21 You know, the County has also invested in lots
22 of other options, that do require people to
23 make connections, as do all forms of
24 transportation. I don't think that you can
25 assume that there's one form of transportation.

117

1 But to your point, one of the reasons that
2 we're investing in the RTZ is to have users
3 where they can walk to these stations and use
4 transit. That's the entire point.

5 MS. KAWALERSKI: Okay. So, to that
6 point -- I don't know, do you still sit on the
7 TPO, the Transportation --

8 COMMISSIONER REGALADO: We all sit on the
9 TPO, yes, and I am the Chairman of Bicycle and
10 Pedestrian Safety.

11 MS. KAWALERSKI: Fantastic.

12 Okay. So, to your point, it's kind of like
13 the cart before the horse. We're forcing all
14 of the people into a dense area, to use
15 Metrorail, that isn't going to be expanded for
16 ten, twenty, thirty, forty years, okay, and if
17 we did force them to use Metrorail, guess what
18 they're saying to us -- guess what the TPO is
19 saying, they're not using Metrorail.

20 Headline, Transit Ridership has Declined
21 Steadily." So all of the TPO studies, these
22 are studies from 2022, all of the way up to
23 this year --

24 COMMISSIONER REGALADO: That includes
25 buses, and it is not true of Metrorail.

118

1 Actually, Metrorail is being used more now than
2 ever, because of the development, in part, of
3 the Rapid Transit Zone and the investment that
4 we have made in upgrading our stations, which
5 were thirty years old before the development.

6 MS. KAWALERSKI: Well, I don't know what
7 I'm reading here, then, because I have a
8 pre-pandemic to current study here, and it says
9 that levels of ridership are down 14 to 26
10 percent.

11 COMMISSIONER REGALADO: That includes
12 COVID.

13 MS. KAWALERSKI: I know it includes COVID.
14 This is 2019. COVID started in 2020.

15 COMMISSIONER REGALADO: But the decline
16 that you're talking about includes COVID.

17 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Sue, if you can, if we
18 could allow the Commissioner to answer the
19 question.

20 MR. BEHAR: Correct, because I don't think
21 this is --

22 MS. KAWALERSKI: Okay. There's a point I'm
23 getting to, because we're pushing RTZs, and yet
24 we have no -- why are we pushing RTZs, when
25 there is no transportation plan to allow these

119

1 people to go wherever they want to go?

2 COMMISSIONER REGALADO: Respectfully, the
3 RTZ item was passed over four years ago, and
4 it's the law on the books for the County, and
5 has been the marker for our Comprehensive
6 Master Plan. So, as far as any issues with the
7 RTZ, respectfully, that ship has sailed.

8 MS. KAWALERSKI: Okay. So, again, the
9 TPO -- again, all studies from the TPO -- you
10 sit on the TOP -- it says, "The transit use
11 decline attributed to Uber, Lyft and taxi use
12 by age group." The biggest groups that you're
13 trying to attract to an RTZ, which would be a
14 student population --

15 COMMISSIONER REGALADO: Those studies are
16 County-wide studies, Sue. That is not District
17 7.

18 MS. KAWALERSKI: Pardon me?

19 COMMISSIONER REGALADO: That is not
20 District 7. That is the entire County, and
21 there are parts of the County that have no
22 transit, as you yourself just pointed out.

23 MR. BEHAR: If I may, Mr. Chair. That may
24 not be a factual evidence, so I don't know
25 that -- if that should be continued to be

120

1 pushed on, something that the Commissioner is
2 saying to the Board Member that's not factual.
3 I think we should respect that.

4 MS. KAWALERSKI: All I'm doing in quoting
5 from --

6 MR. BEHAR: That may not be factual, Sue.

7 MS. KAWALERSKI: -- the transportation --
8 you can have this. I can put it into the
9 record.

10 MR. BEHAR: Yeah, you can put anything, and
11 it may not be factual.

12 COMMISSIONER REGALADO: But that's County-wide.

13 MS. KAWALERSKI: Are you saying that the
14 Transportation Planning Organization, which the
15 Commissioner sits on, is creating false
16 documents?

17 MR. BEHAR: County-wide.

18 COMMISSIONER REGALADO: That's County-wide.
19 We're not talking about County-wide. We're
20 talking about District 7. Those are different
21 facts, very different facts.

22 MS. KAWALERSKI: Okay. Fair enough.

23 By the way, I do have a breakdown of the
24 Douglas Station, and the Douglas Station has
25 gone up two percent, okay.

121

1 COMMISSIONER REGALADO: It was under
2 construction.

3 MS. KAWALERSKI: Pardon me?

4 COMMISSIONER REGALADO: It was under
5 construction. It was closed for eight months.

6 MS. KAWALERSKI: I understand that, but
7 it's only gone up two percent. So we're not
8 seeing a massive amount of people going to use
9 Metrorail and the TPO says, in fact,
10 ridership --

11 COMMISSIONER REGALADO: That's not true.
12 We were shuttling them to Grove Station,
13 because the Douglas Station was closed, because
14 we were repairing it.

15 MS. KAWALERSKI: Okay. All right. So, in
16 other words, what happens at the meeting next
17 week Tuesday? It's a public meeting. The
18 County Committee has a public meeting next
19 week, Tuesday, 9:00 a.m. How we are notifying
20 the residents directly affected about that
21 meeting that's happening less than a week from
22 now?

23 COMMISSIONER REGALADO: The County has no
24 changes in its notice requirements. We always
25 have Committee on the same week. All RTZ items

122

1 always go to Transit. They have been
2 published. We have told people about it.
3 There's no --

4 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Sue, just one thing.
5 If you have an issue that is with the County
6 and the overall, then that would be something
7 to bring up and actually attend that
8 transportation meeting at 9:00 in the morning
9 and bring up your issues.

10 MS. KAWALERSKI: Well, it's not my issues.
11 It's the residents' issues.

12 MR. BEHAR: Let them go then.

13 MS. KAWALERSKI: But they don't know that
14 the meeting is happening.

15 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Sue, I understand, but
16 I think, in this process, in our process, I'd
17 like to deal with what is the City's issue,
18 which is important, as opposed to what the
19 County's issue is.

20 MS. KAWALERSKI: Okay. All right, Mr.
21 Chairman, but with that said, what is the City
22 of Coral Gables going to do between now and
23 Tuesday at 9:00 a.m. to notify the impacted
24 residents that that is going to be their only
25 opportunity to speak to the County? What is

123

1 the City going to do?

2 COMMISSIONER REGALADO: It's not their only
3 opportunity. They will also have Second
4 Reading.

5 MS. GARCIA: Well, I've discussed this with
6 residents over the phone, through e-mails. I
7 have sent them links, where they could attend
8 this meeting. I'm not sure what else you think
9 we should do, as a Staff person, from the City
10 of Coral Gables, but they are, of course,
11 welcomed to join the meeting on Tuesday at 9:00
12 a.m.

13 MS. KAWALERSKI: Okay. And who's
14 representing the City of Coral Gables at this
15 meeting?

16 MS. GARCIA: We'll have our
17 intergovernmental manager there.

18 MS. KAWALERSKI: Okay. So we're going
19 through this process. Are we doing this for
20 not, because the Commission is going to do it
21 anyway? Are we here just because?

22 COMMISSIONER REGALADO: I have no way of
23 knowing what the Commission is or is not going
24 to do. It's a process.

25 MS. KAWALERSKI: Okay. But the Commission

124

1 voted unanimously, with two absent members,
2 unanimously for this, correct?

3 COMMISSIONER REGALADO: On First Reading,
4 yes, but we cannot discuss it at First Reading,
5 and that's why we have a Committee process.

6 MS. KAWALERSKI: Okay. And Commissioners
7 usually vote for each other's projects, so it's
8 probably going to be another unanimous vote,
9 wouldn't you say?

10 COMMISSIONER REGALADO: I have no way of
11 knowing that.

12 MS. KAWALERSKI: Okay. So let me ask you
13 this, are we wasting out time here?

14 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Sue, that's
15 inappropriate. I'm sorry.

16 MR. BEHAR: You're crossing the line there.

17 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: It's not for this --
18 if there is -- if residents have an issue with
19 the County, they need to go to their district
20 Commissioner and voice their opinion. If they
21 have an issue with the City, there's
22 appropriate channels within the City to voice
23 your opinion, also. Our job, on this Board
24 here today, is to listen to all of the
25 evidence, and at the end, make a determination,

125

1 based upon what we feel is the correct thing or
2 not. I'm not saying that you're right and I'm
3 not saying that you're wrong, but to
4 interrogate somebody as if they're on trial, to
5 me, it's just not appropriate.

6 MS. KAWALERSKI: Well, I'm sorry you don't
7 like my line of questioning, but we need
8 answers, because we haven't gotten them, okay.
9 The residents -- we're here to protect the
10 residents, okay. We're not here to protect
11 anyone else, except the residents.

12 COMMISSIONER REGALADO: Respectfully, Sue,
13 I am elected by the residents, and I also
14 represent the residents.

15 MS. KAWALERSKI: And I'm glad you do.

16 COMMISSIONER REGALADO: And I'm happy to
17 discuss it with them, whenever they want to.

18 MS. KAWALERSKI: I'm glad you do. It's
19 just that --

20 COMMISSIONER REGALADO: If you have any
21 specific concerns -- and by the way, you're
22 asking me about an item that isn't even on the
23 agenda. I'm here to help you navigate an item
24 on the agenda, that is a potential change to
25 your Comp Plan, that seeks to mirror the RTZ.

126

1 I'm not here to discuss the RTZ item that is
2 before the County Commission. That will occur
3 on Tuesday. And you're welcome to attend.

4 MS. KAWALERSKI: Okay. But because you
5 have all of this knowledge, I'm asking you
6 things like the SMART plan and RTZ, to have
7 some more information.

8 COMMISSIONER REGALADO: And I'm happy to
9 answer them. I'm just not in the mood to be
10 berated by you at 8:34 in the evening.

11 MS. KAWALERSKI: Well, I'm sorry if you
12 feel I'm berating you. I didn't intend to do
13 that, I'm not doing that.

14 COMMISSIONER REGALADO: You don't have a
15 question. You're just making a statement. And
16 you're within your right to make your
17 statement. It's just that you have other Board
18 Members that actually have questions and we can
19 do that, and then you can go back to saying
20 whatever you would like, but I would like to
21 answer their questions.

22 So unless you have a specific question --

23 MS. KAWALERSKI: I will move on, and I did
24 have a specific question at the beginning, and
25 I think the answer was, no, so thank you.

127

1 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you, Sue.
2 Robert?

3 MR. BEHAR: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

4 Commissioner, welcome, and I apologize for
5 the uncomfortable situation that we're putting
6 you through. First and foremost, I want to
7 express my gratitude to you, for your
8 commitment and willingness to work with Coral
9 Gables, limiting the height of the Gables RTZ
10 subzone to 120 feet, where 150 feet could be
11 possible, and limiting the area of the distance
12 of the station to those four particular
13 properties, one which is already complete,
14 built, and not, you know, further than we could
15 possibly go. Thank you.

16 Let's be very clear why we're here tonight.
17 There was a project that came to this Board
18 last year, which my firm was the architect at
19 the time. I'm no longer the architect to that
20 project. That project was an eight-story
21 building, with a maximum height of 96 feet,
22 fronting US-1, direct connection to the
23 Metrorail station, with a bridge that linked
24 the station to the site via the pedestrian
25 bridge.

128

1 Three of the Board Members of this Board
2 voted to deny the project. I had to recuse
3 myself, because it was my project. Three Board
4 Members voted to deny the project, three voted
5 for the project, and we know who they are. I
6 mean, it's clear.

7 Because of that decision, because the
8 application failed, it opened the door to
9 property owners to say, "Hey, we have the
10 option in Miami-Dade County to either go
11 through the RTZ, because of the proximity to
12 the Metrorail, or, in the worst case scenario,
13 we could go Live Local," and that will be
14 detrimental, because we cannot control that.

15 Before I finish and give my opinion, I want
16 to ask a couple of questions to Jennifer, and
17 one recommendation that I think -- Jennifer, we
18 are creating a 25-foot rear setback buffer,
19 landscaped buffer, because all of these
20 properties are in excess of 300 feet.

21 MS. GARCIA: Yes.

22 MR. BEHAR: I verified it, because the
23 property I was working with is in excess of
24 300. So, essentially, you're going to get a
25 25-foot liner park buffer abutting the

129

1 residential, correct?

2 MS. GARCIA: Correct.

3 MR. BEHAR: I tried to go through this over
4 the weekend and I read a lot of it, and I
5 understand the majority of it. There was one
6 that I missed, you know, that you brought up a
7 good point today, that maybe we could look at
8 it. We're proposing -- the Gables is proposing
9 that, on the US-1 property -- a project
10 fronting US-1, at a hundred feet, you step it
11 back 30 feet, right?

12 MS. GARCIA: Correct. 30 feet, up in the
13 air, vertical.

14 MR. BEHAR: Right. My recommendation would
15 be that, that setback -- that step back, let's
16 call it, it would be more advantageous to do it
17 maybe in the back area, not so much on US-1,
18 because US-1 is very a wide road. So I much
19 rather have the height on US-1 and not so much
20 on the back side. And I think that could make,
21 you know, more sense.

22 MR. PARDO: What I mentioned, Robert.

23 MR. BEHAR: Okay.

24 MR. PARDO: That's exactly what I
25 mentioned.

130

1 COMMISSIONER REGALADO: That's what you
2 meant by the step down?

3 MR. BEHAR: Yes, in the back --

4 MR. PARDO: In the back, not --

5 MR. BEHAR: -- you know, so that would
6 be -- those are the only two, you know,
7 questions and comments that I have.

8 In closing, if we don't approve this
9 tonight, we will end up with the County's RTZ
10 regulations, which will be, at minimum, 150
11 feet, with a much wider distance from the
12 station, or even worse, like I mentioned
13 before, we could end up with a Live Local
14 project, which none of us, including one of the
15 architects on this Board, will want to see
16 there.

17 MR. PARDO: It's only you and me.

18 MR. BEHAR: Okay. I didn't want to name
19 you, but -- so, to me, I think this is
20 something that we must take care of tonight,
21 and I will be prepared to make a motion to
22 approve this. Thank you.

23 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Alex.

24 MR. BUCELO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

25 And I want to say, I echo you thoughts.

131

1 First of all, Commissioner, I want to thank you
2 for being here and send my regards to your dad.
3 He's a good friend of ours.

4 I just had a simple question, because a lot
5 of the questions I had have been answered. You
6 had mentioned that the Gables -- what you're
7 seeing from the Gables is a good first step.
8 What is it that you would like to see more of
9 or less of? Have you guys had any
10 communications?

11 COMMISSIONER REGALADO: We did. We had
12 several meetings. You know, we've been more
13 than happy to meet with Staff and talk to them,
14 the same way that we did with South Miami and
15 the same way that we do with all of the cities,
16 in terms of what was the intent of the RTZ and
17 what we would like to see.

18 I disagree with the parking, and it's --
19 when we say that the County does not require
20 parking, what we're saying is that we're
21 allowing the developer to determine whatever
22 parking they need, based on whatever model they
23 have. We have yet to have an RTZ that does not
24 have parking. It just depends on who they are
25 building for and why.

132

1 Like I said, in the case of Box, they
2 decided to use the Metrorail parking, because
3 its student housing, that they decided would
4 not have parking. So they have access to the
5 parking lot at the Metrorail station, but
6 that's where it begins and it ends.

7 So I think it's important to give people
8 flexibility. They're all building different
9 products along the corridor, and that's been
10 one of the reasons that developers have chosen
11 the RTZ. So I think the elimination of the
12 paseo is good. I mean, to the point that was
13 made earlier about the setbacks, obviously, if
14 you start with so many setbacks, you start
15 limiting the amount of area that you can build
16 in, and that's what gives you the extraordinary
17 height, because if you can't build out, you
18 just go up. So I just caution them to be
19 concerned -- you know, be mindful of that, but
20 I think this is -- I think it's a good first
21 step.

22 I mean, I can tell you, the application
23 that is before us now is smaller than what
24 we're discussing, because we're saying that it
25 can't be bigger The Thesis.

133

1 MR. BUCELO: How big is The Thesis? I'm
2 sorry to interrupt you. How tall is The
3 Thesis?

4 MS. GARCIA: Well, The Thesis is 125 feet,
5 but the UM Gables One Tower is 150 feet.

6 COMMISSIONER REGALADO: Right, but I think
7 that the overall intent of the overlay is to
8 start having this conversation, right, in terms
9 of what can be done and what this corridor can
10 look like, utilizing Coral Gables, as opposed
11 to the County, or to Robert's point, Live
12 Local, which doesn't have any of these
13 limitations, right.

14 MR. BUCELO: And there will be time, if
15 this is not, quote/unquote, accepted to amend
16 it, change it, to at least, I guess, have some
17 sort of compliance or is Tuesday the deadline?
18 Like if the City were to submit -- if we were
19 to approve this motion and it carries, is there
20 still time to change the parking, if that's
21 something that's still an issue further down
22 the road or --

23 MS. GARCIA: Right. So this is only the
24 first meeting we're having on this, the
25 Planning and Zoning Board. It would go to

134

1 Commission, with the approval of this Board, in
2 August, and then the Second Reading, then
3 later.

4 COMMISSIONER REGALADO: Yeah, so that's
5 your process.

6 Again, I think, now we're confounding two
7 issues, right. One thing is the current
8 application that's before the County Commission
9 on one parcel. Right now what we're talking
10 about is an overlay district, that includes
11 this parcel, and what Coral Gables is looking
12 at doing in order to change its Comp Plan for
13 that footprint, two separate things.

14 MR. BUCELO: Thank you.

15 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you.

16 Nestor?

17 MR. HERNANDEZ: Thank you for coming and
18 answering all of these questions. I think I
19 echo Mr. Behar's sentiments, and in listening
20 to the residents' concerns, I think we're at a
21 point here where we're most restrictive versus
22 preemption, and where the Metrorail was built
23 way before its time, and the County put,
24 basically, the cart before the horse. I think
25 the RTZ -- and the County -- and the County

135

1 failed to develop timely with that very, very
2 forward thinking project. I feel initiatives
3 like the RTZ are the attempt to right that
4 wrong, and, therefore, given that the RTZ, as
5 you said, is done and we have to deal with the
6 laws on the books, I would -- and I think I
7 echo a lot of sentiments of the people that
8 have spoken here tonight, where, you know, I
9 grew up in Downtown, in the Roads, I'm used to
10 development and using the monorail and the
11 Metrorail, and people move to Coral Gables to
12 kind of get out of that, but it would be naive
13 for us to think that development, with the
14 growth of this City -- I don't think anybody
15 saw the growth 30 years ago to what it is
16 today.

17 And anybody who drives on US-1 can tell you
18 that when US-1 was built, it wasn't built for
19 the amount of people that we have or the cars.
20 Even taking away 50 percent of the cars, I
21 don't think it's going to, you know, suffice.
22 So I would rather Coral Gables have some sort
23 of input, instead of just being taken
24 completely out of equation, and I know it's
25 taxing on the residents to think there's going

136

1 to be these buildings going up, to service mass
2 transit, but I think that that's the point.

3 We do like to drive cars, but the point is
4 to get them to use mass transit, whether it'd
5 be students, whether it'd be people working
6 Downtown, whether it'd be people going to Palm
7 Beach.

8 I have a cousin who has -- we have a lot of
9 family in Palm Beach, and he takes the rail
10 every time he goes up there, and he lives a
11 block away from the Venetian Pool. So there
12 are people willing to do it. I think the
13 adage, if you build it, they will come, is
14 appropriate, but I think our input -- it would
15 be great to have some kind of input, instead of
16 having a developer cut us out or just go Live
17 Local.

18 So, again I echo these sentiments, and
19 something is better than nothing, at this
20 point.

21 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you.

22 We've heard a lot here tonight. I want to
23 start by saying, thank you. You took the time
24 to come and listen to us.

25 COMMISSIONER REGALADO: Of course.

137

1 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Whether it was good or
2 it was bad, but you took the time to come, and
3 I think that's part of the process.

4 COMMISSIONER REGALADO: I come from the
5 School Board. No worries.

6 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: But I do recognize
7 that.

8 I think we're at a point, within the City,
9 that we need to look at what our options are,
10 and if we don't make our own path forward or
11 have some input into the decision, it can only
12 be worse. The project that Robert spoke about,
13 that at one time he was involved with, which is
14 The Mark, the Board, in essence, turned it
15 down.

16 They went and said, "Okay, we're just going
17 to go with Live Local (sic)." I don't know if
18 it's so much, as what was spoken about here,
19 that to do student housing, you're giving them
20 affordable housing to those people. I think
21 the key, when you look at certain projects is,
22 for student housing, you have a certain amount
23 of units and a common area, and that allows you
24 to get within the percentage that you need to
25 be able to do the Live Local.

138

1 MR. BEHAR: This is not Live Local. This
2 is RTZ.

3 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: No. No. No. Right.
4 But what I'm saying is, the points that we have
5 bad is, the Live Local is the worst alternative
6 that we're getting to.

7 COMMISSIONER REGALADO: And what I would
8 add to that analysis is, in the corridor, the
9 top of workforce, which is 120 AMI, is under
10 market rate, significantly under market rate.
11 That's the issue.

12 So when you talk about workforce housing
13 and the price point for 120 AMI and you spread
14 that along the County, in many places, it's
15 above market rate, so it doesn't work. In this
16 corridor, it is significantly below.

17 MR. HERNANDEZ: Can I interject for a
18 second?

19 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Yes.

20 MR. HERNANDEZ: Sorry. I just have a one
21 question. If a developer does decide to go
22 Live Local, what input are they required to
23 take from the residents, from the City, from
24 the County?

25 MR. BEHAR: Zero.

139

1 COMMISSIONER REGALADO: Nothing.

2 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Nothing.

3 COMMISSIONER REGALADO: It's an
4 administrative process.

5 MR. HERNANDEZ: And I think that that's
6 something that needs to be conveyed to the
7 residents, that if a developer does go for,
8 let's call it, the nuclear option, whatever
9 they come and they say, it's just we're at the
10 behest of the developer and him complying with
11 Live Local.

12 COMMISSIONER REGALADO: Right. So Live
13 Local creates a statutory compliance, but it
14 has a two-fold loss. Not only do you not have
15 input or control over the density and
16 intensity, but you also lose the tax base.

17 MR. HERNANDEZ: Right.

18 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: And going forward,
19 the -- I'm looking at it not as -- the way I'm
20 looking at it is, not a specific project that's
21 before us, but the RTZ that's before us.
22 There's been a lot of talk about The Mark or
23 other projects. When those projects come
24 before us, that's when I will look at these
25 projects.

140

1 I echo, and my sentiment is the same as
2 Robert, as far as the step back, if that's
3 possible, and what Felix said. That makes a
4 lot of sense to me. I don't know if it's
5 doable or if it's possible, but if it is, that
6 does make sense. What I like about it is, if
7 I'm looking at a quarter mile distance, I'm
8 including a lot of other projects, and one of
9 the projects that was mentioned is the Gables
10 Waterway.

11 The way the Gables is looking at it right
12 now, it does not include the Gables Waterway
13 project. That's not to say that they cannot
14 come before us and ask. Anybody can come
15 before us and ask. It's up to us, and it's
16 ultimately up to the Commission, to make that
17 determination, not just us.

18 I do know that the properties that we're
19 looking at behind it are commercial properties,
20 which is a four-story apartment building, that
21 is behind --

22 MS. GARCIA: Yes, multi-family.

23 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: It's multi-family.

24 MS. GARCIA: Correct.

25 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: It's four-story --

141

1 MS. GARCIA: I believe so.

2 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: -- that's there. And,
3 then, behind that is also multi-family, and I
4 think the area is zoned duplex.

5 MS. GARCIA: Uh-huh.

6 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: So, to me, in a way,
7 it makes sense. I would like it to be able to
8 be stepped down in the back, as opposed to the
9 front, the way Robert said, if possible, but I
10 am in support of moving this forward, and I
11 think -- you know, unfortunately, there's a
12 meeting that's going before the transportation
13 on the 9th. I think if we don't act now, we
14 may not be able to act, and I think that's very
15 important. That's the way I read it, and
16 that's my understanding.

17 MR. BEHAR: Mr. Chairman, sorry to
18 interrupt you. It's five minutes to 9:00. We
19 must take a quick extension.

20 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Let's do that.
21 Anybody like to make a motion to extend the
22 meeting past 9:00?

23 MR. BUCELO: I'll move.

24 MR. HERNANDEZ: I'll second.

25 MR. BEHAR: For how long?

142

1 MR. PARDO: Just take into consideration
2 that I don't think we can get to the rest of
3 the --

4 MR. BEHAR: We're not. This is just, I
5 think, to conclude this item.

6 MR. PARDO: That's fine.

7 MR. COLLIER: May I suggest 9:15?

8 MR. BUCELO: 9:15.

9 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: So 9:15 is your
10 motion, Alex?

11 MR. BUCELO: Yes.

12 MR. HERNANDEZ: I second.

13 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Second.

14 Everybody in favor say, aye.

15 (All Board Members voted aye.)

16 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you. Sorry
17 about that.

18 So, for those reasons -- and I'm sorry, I
19 lost my train of thought a little bit --

20 MR. BEHAR: You're in support of the
21 project.

22 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: For those -- the fact
23 was that, going to the transportation on the
24 9th, we're not going to have a say as to what
25 we can do. You did say that you were here and

143

1 you spoke and you gave -- you spoke with the
2 City. I assume you spoke with the previous
3 City Managers. They didn't bring it at any
4 point before us. You know, I'm glad we have
5 Mr. Iglesias with us, the City Manager, because
6 he understood that it was important, and to
7 bring it forward right away, and for that I do
8 thank you.

9 That's really all of my comments.

10 MR. BEHAR: Then, Mr. Chair, I'm going to
11 make a motion to approve. I would like to put,
12 if we can, the step back, instead of being on
13 US-1, be on the back of the property, closer to
14 the residential.

15 MS. GARCIA: Just to be clear, right now,
16 the way it's drafted, it's 45 feet, and then a
17 ten-foot step back.

18 COMMISSIONER REGALADO: You're saying, like
19 the massing -- you want the massing towards the
20 road?

21 MR. BEHAR: Towards the front.

22 MS. GARCIA: Right.

23 MR. BEHAR: Right, Felix?

24 MR. PARDO: Correct.

25 MR. BUCELO: I'll second.

144

1 I'll make a motion for that.
 2 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Jennifer, you
 3 understand the motion?
 4 MS. GARCIA: Yeah. Just to clarify, right
 5 now, the way it's drafted today, there's a
 6 ten-foot step back above 45 feet in the back.
 7 MR. BEHAR: Then you can go up to a
 8 hundred, right? You could go up to 120?
 9 MS. GARCIA: On the back, yeah. So you're
 10 saying to have a greater step back --
 11 MR. BEHAR: Create an addition step back at
 12 a hundred feet. Instead of doing it in the
 13 front, do it on the back. You're not
 14 changing -- you're not losing anything. Just
 15 put it in the front.
 16 COMMISSIONER REGALADO: Massing -- it's a
 17 massing issue.
 18 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Correct. And that is
 19 on the first item, which on F-1, that we're
 20 taking up first.
 21 MR. BUCELO: With those changes, I'll
 22 second that motion.
 23 MR. COLLIER: Well, I think it's the F-2
 24 that's going to have the amendment with the
 25 step back.

145

1 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Right. So right now
 2 we're doing F-1.
 3 MR. COLLIER: So we have to have a motion on
 4 F-1. F-1 is the Comp Plan Amendment.
 5 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Correct.
 6 So Robert?
 7 MR. BEHAR: I'll make a motion to approve.
 8 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: We have a second.
 9 MR. BUCELO: Second.
 10 MS. KAWALERSKI: Where would the step back
 11 come into play, in this item or the next item?
 12 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: The next one. Let's
 13 talk about that, the step back, at the next
 14 item.
 15 We have a motion. We have a second. Any
 16 other discussion?
 17 THE SECRETARY: I'm sorry, who's the
 18 second?
 19 MR. BUCELO: I was.
 20 MR. PARDO: One question, Mr. Chair.
 21 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Yes, sir.
 22 MR. PARDO: My concern right now is that
 23 the footprint is specific and it's smaller, you
 24 said, correct?
 25 COMMISSIONER REGALADO: No. The

146

1 application that is before the County
 2 Commission is just one parcel.
 3 MR. PARDO: One parcel. But the graphics
 4 that we were shown --
 5 COMMISSIONER REGALADO: Right. The RTZ
 6 covers all of it, but the County is considering
 7 one parcel; however, but the issue is --
 8 MS. GARCIA: The overlay district.
 9 COMMISSIONER REGALADO: -- the overlay
 10 district, right. So it's the creation of an
 11 overlay district is the match.
 12 So this is not about --
 13 MR. PARDO: Your motion is for the entire
 14 district?
 15 MR. BEHAR: The motion that's being
 16 presented to us --
 17 MR. PARDO: Or only the application?
 18 MR. BEHAR: No. No. No. We're not
 19 dealing with the application.
 20 COMMISSIONER REGALADO: The application is
 21 at the County.
 22 MR. BEHAR: We're dealing with the City of
 23 Coral Gables, which encompassed those four
 24 specific properties, one is already built,
 25 which doesn't apply to that one.

147

1 MR. PARDO: That's what I wanted to make
 2 sure, because we're talking about two different
 3 things.
 4 MR. BEHAR: We're talking 1150, 1190, 1250,
 5 1320 and 1350. Those are the four addresses
 6 that we're applying this to. I don't care, I
 7 mean, what the County is doing.
 8 MR. PARDO: Perfect. That's clear.
 9 Second thing, on this particular -- through
 10 our City Attorney, on this particular issue
 11 that we have right now, this motion, I wanted
 12 to make sure that -- do we express our concern
 13 about the improvement -- what should be an
 14 improvement to Caballero and US-1, which is the
 15 chocking point of this entire neighborhood?
 16 Does that go in now or would that be in the
 17 second application?
 18 MR. COLLIER: I think it should be in F-2.
 19 F-1 is really just overarching --
 20 MR. BEHAR: And that really should be on
 21 project specific, because we put conditions on
 22 projects.
 23 MR. PARDO: Right. But Robert, what I
 24 wanted to make sure was that we didn't miss the
 25 boat by voting on this and missing it.

148

MR. BEHAR: Okay. Fair enough.

MS. KAWALERSKI: And I've got one question. If we pass this, can the County still trump our overlay?

COMMISSIONER REGALADO: Yes. The County has home rule.

MS. KAWALERSKI: Okay. So regardless of what we do right now --

MR. COLLIER: That's the position -- I should say, that's the position of the County. And they've taken that position, by the way, on other station projects, where they've essentially taken jurisdiction on it.

MS. KAWALERSKI: Okay. So, regardless if we vote this in, the County can come and say --

COMMISSIONER REGALADO: The developer chooses. The developer chooses what path they take, and the point of the County has always been, meet us at our zoning. We prefer that the developer chooses -- as long as you have something that's comparable, and like I said, that's what happened in South Miami.

The South Miami Sunset Place did not come to the County to be included in the RTZ. They worked it out with South Miami. And that's

149

happened all over the County.

MR. BEHAR: What I could tell you, because the density would still be limited to 125 units per acre.

MS. KAWALERSKI: Right.

MR. BEHAR: I did a quick massing study, you're never going to reach the potential height on the buildings.

MR. PARDO: Because of the massing --

MS. KAWALERSKI: Okay. I just want to know -- I want to get it clear, we vote on this, and the developer for the Waterway project says, "We're going to bypass Coral Gables altogether, let's not even bother filling out an application, let's go to the County," can that happen?

MR. PARDO: No, because they're outside of the envelope of the node.

COMMISSIONER REGALADO: Of this item. (Simultaneous speaking.)

CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: One at a time, so the court reporter can please take it down.

MS. KAWALERSKI: So, in other words, no matter what we do here, the developer can bypass Coral Gables altogether and go directly

150

to the County, because now the County says, yeah, okay, apply for an RTZ zone development? You don't have to even deal with those Coral Gables people.

COMMISSIONER REGALADO: For four years, this has been an option. For four years, this has been an option, an option that has been taken up by many parcels all over Miami-Dade County, in several districts, including my own.

MS. KAWALERSKI: Okay. But now they're seeing the first opportunity in Coral Gables. This is now a great opportunity in Coral Gables.

COMMISSIONER REGALADO: This opportunity is available County-wide.

MR. PARDO: Mr. Chairman, I think there's a confusion. I think the Commissioner is speaking about one thing. Sue is speaking about another.

CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Correct.

MR. PARDO: The waterway project, which is on the other side of the canal, I'm looking at it on Google Map, that is over 1,320 feet away. Why is that important? That's a quarter of a mile.

151

CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Correct.

COMMISSIONER REGALADO: That project is in what is our RTZ overlay, but there has not been an item brought to include that in the RTZ. Everything along the entire corridor is in the County's RTZ, everything along the SMART path. So everything is available to those developers, just like Live Local is available to them, by virtue of having a commercial zoning.

MR. PARDO: You're talking about the SMART corridor? Only the SMART corridor?

COMMISSIONER REGALADO: Right. Yeah, the RTZ is only the SMART corridor.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Commissioner, it's fair to say that the further you get away from a hub or a station, the less density you're allowed? Is that fair to say? So if you get half a mile or a mile away from, I guess, Dadeland station, which would be still considered to be RTZ?

COMMISSIONER REGALADO: That is correct. It is about distance.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Right. So, I guess, the closer you are, the more density you get. The further you are, the less density you get.

COMMISSIONER REGALADO: And one issue that

152

1 has not been brought up, but comes up all of
2 the time, the RTZ does not include residential.
3 It only includes commercial. Because that's
4 another issue that comes up all of the time.

5 You can't take R-1 and pour it into the
6 RTZ, just like you can't take and R-1 and pour
7 it into the Live Local, right. So there is an
8 underlay of zoning. There would have to be an
9 upzoning at the municipal level, in order to
10 qualify for the parameters within the Rapid
11 Transit Zone.

12 MR. BEHAR: So the Gables waterway project,
13 what is the zoning on that?

14 MS. GARCIA: MX1, I think, mixed with MF3.

15 MR. PARDO: 45-foot height limit, four
16 stories.

17 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: The F-1 part, but the
18 other part is --

19 MS. GARCIA: It's a mix of mixed-use, as
20 well as multi-family, yes.

21 COMMISSIONER REGALADO: Multi-family,
22 mixed-use, that's all game, for Live Local, for
23 RTZ and for whatever Coral Gables decides to
24 do.

25 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: So we have a motion.

153

1 We have a second. Any other discussion?

2 Let's call the roll, please, Jill.

3 THE SECRETARY: Felix Pardo?

4 MR. PARDO: Yes.

5 THE SECRETARY: Robert Behar?

6 MR. BEHAR: Yes.

7 THE SECRETARY: Alex Bucelo?

8 MR. BUCELO: Yes.

9 THE SECRETARY: Sue Kawalerski?

10 MS. KAWALERSKI: No, with the caveat that
11 this is a waste of time.

12 THE SECRETARY: Nestor Menendez?

13 MR. HERNANDEZ: Yes.

14 THE SECRETARY: Eibi Aizenstat?

15 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Yes.

16 MR. BEHAR: I make a motion on F-2, with
17 the proposed --

18 MR. COLLER: So with the step back to be on
19 the back side.

20 MS. GARCIA: With the additional step back
21 at 100 feet.

22 MR. BEHAR: At the back side.

23 MR. PARDO: Robert, read it specifically
24 into the record, please.

25 MR. BEHAR: The proposed 30-foot step back,

154

1 instead of being on US-1, for it to be on the
2 rear of the properties.

3 MS. GARCIA: For those deep --

4 MR. BEHAR: For those properties.

5 MS. GARCIA: Right, at 100 feet.

6 MR. BEHAR: At 100 feet.

7 MR. BUCELO: I second that motion.

8 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: We have a second by
9 Alex.

10 MR. PARDO: So there are two setbacks on
11 the back side?

12 MR. BEHAR: There's two step backs.
13 There's one at 45 feet --

14 MR. PARDO: I didn't hear the first one.

15 MR. BEHAR: -- and the other one at a
16 hundred feet.

17 MR. PARDO: Okay. And I would like to
18 condition that. Are we in discussion --

19 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: We are in discussion,
20 sir.

21 MR. PARDO: So, in discussion, again, the
22 intersection of Caballero and US-1 -- you know,
23 when I looked at the Staff observation, they
24 basically said that, because there wasn't an
25 increase -- I was disappointed, because they

155

1 basically said -- there you go. "In
2 conclusion" -- this is the memorandum from our
3 Public Works Director -- the last paragraph,
4 "In conclusion, because the proposed zoning
5 change does not alter the currently permitted
6 residential density of 125 units per acre, the
7 increase to building height and potential
8 additional square footage achieved through
9 amendments to the Future Land Use Map and
10 Zoning Map and the application of Transfer of
11 Development Rights, will not result in a
12 decline in the level of service for public
13 infrastructure below the minimum standards
14 established by the City's Comprehensive Plan."

15 Mr. Chairman, I think it's important that
16 we put an improvement component observation,
17 correctly done, by professionals, to look at
18 that intersection, which has been a problem --

19 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: But is that even --

20 MR. PARDO: -- on Caballero and US-1.

21 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: I'm not disagreeing
22 with you, but I don't know if that is before
23 us. I think that comes before us --

24 MR. BEHAR: We can do that here, or is that
25 a project specific, that is responsible to

156

1 address those concerns, which are very valid
2 concerns?

3 MR. PARDO: Isn't that what we're doing
4 right now?

5 MR. BEHAR: No.

6 COMMISSIONER REGALADO: So, Felix, as your
7 County Commissioner, I'm happy to work with the
8 Manager, looking specifically at Caballero. We
9 don't need an actual project in order to look
10 at Caballero. The issue is that, when you look
11 at zoning, you're looking at the green book,
12 and what FDOT considers an F, D, C street.
13 It's very different from what you and I
14 experience while we're on the intersection.
15 It's two different standards.

16 So even if you were to consider some
17 limitation to the overlay, that limitation
18 would be written by the FDOT standard, which
19 it's very circular. We're happy -- I'm happy
20 to work -- you know, if the Commission and the
21 Manager want us to look at Caballero, we're
22 happy to work together and look at Caballero
23 and see what can be done.

24 I mean, there's no -- if you have a street
25 that you believe is near failure, there's no

157

1 need to necessarily wait for a development in
2 order to address whatever that issue is. We
3 can address that issue through a request from
4 the City and I'm happy to do that.

5 MR. BEHAR: Commissioner, if you'll give us
6 your commitment that you will do that --

7 COMMISSIONER REGALADO: Of course. Of
8 course. I'm happy to do that.

9 MR. BEHAR: We'll get the Manager to do
10 that with you. I think the residents will be
11 very pleased and happy about it.

12 COMMISSIONER REGALADO: Of course.

13 MR. PARDO: It is a bottleneck, and just
14 two projects that were already built there,
15 just made it substantially worse, and being a
16 level F road, per FDOT, it doesn't make it any
17 better.

18 COMMISSIONER REGALADO: And the only thing
19 that I can say to that is, whenever we have
20 those conversations, we're limited because
21 imminent domain no longer allows us to take,
22 you know, and to widen the roads, but when
23 development does come to those areas, then you
24 can request an easement for widening, if a
25 widening is determined to be one of the

158

1 solutions or to change the configuration of the
2 lanes. Those are all things that can occur,
3 once the property owners come and request
4 something of the City or the County, but we're
5 limited in our ability to take, in order to
6 resolve congestion and street failure.

7 CITY MANAGER IGLESIAS: Mr. Pardo, we'll be
8 happy to work with the Commissioner, the FDOT
9 and our Public Works Department to see what we
10 can do to minimize the impact of the problem at
11 that intersection.

12 MR. PARDO: Okay.

13 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you.

14 We have a motion. We have a second. Any
15 other discussion?

16 MS. KAWALERSKI: I have a question.
17 Commissioner, can we have some kind of
18 assurance that what is being discussed here
19 will end up in the actual plan of that
20 developer?

21 COMMISSIONER REGALADO: What do you mean?

22 MS. KAWALERSKI: The step backs we're
23 talking about, right. We're talking about the
24 massing towards the front.

25 MS. GARCIA: Well, right now, the

159

1 legislation that the City is doing, for the
2 overlay district that we're proposing, to be
3 consistent with what the County is proposing,
4 but we're not controlling where the developer
5 will go. They may go to the County or they may
6 go to the City.

7 MS. KAWALERSKI: No, I'm not talking about
8 that. We were talking about your proposal and
9 Mr. Felix's proposal to have --

10 MR. BEHAR: It would be as part of the
11 regulations.

12 COMMISSIONER REGALADO: Overlay. That's
13 the Coral Gables --

14 MR. BEHAR: But we cannot control if they
15 go directly to the County. We're hoping that
16 those three properties will go through the
17 Gables, our proposed RTZ program.

18 MR. PARDO: And our recommendations are
19 going to go to the Commission anyway, where
20 they may tack on other things or even take it
21 to our own Commission. They can tack on or
22 take off.

23 MR. BEHAR: And remember, we're going to
24 have a member of the City of Coral Gables at
25 those County Commissions. At that time, that

160

1 person is the one that will say, hey, we have
2 these regulations. Can we try following those
3 regulations?

4 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: We have -- we're
5 limited on time right now. We have a motion.
6 We have a second. I'd like to call the roll,
7 please.

8 THE SECRETARY: Robert Behar?

9 MR. BEHAR: Yes.

10 THE SECRETARY: Alex Bucelo?

11 MR. BUCELO: Yes.

12 THE SECRETARY: Sue Kawalerski?

13 MS. KAWALERSKI: No.

14 THE SECRETARY: Nestor Menendez?

15 MR. HERNANDEZ: Yes.

16 THE SECRETARY: Felix Pardo?

17 MR. PARDO: Yes.

18 THE SECRETARY: Eibi Aizenstat?

19 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Yes.

20 Thank you again.

21 MR. COLLER: We need a motion for deferral
22 of the balance of the --

23 MR. BEHAR: We will. Commissioner, please
24 say hello to your father, Tomasito. Thank you.

25 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you.

161

1 The time I have right now is 9:08. So we
2 have time to make a deferral.

3 MR. BEHAR: I'll make a motion to defer all
4 of the other items until the next available
5 meeting.

6 MR. COLLER: What's the date and time of
7 the next meeting? I don't know -- are you
8 going to re-notice that --

9 MS. GARCIA: Yes, we will.

10 MR. COLLER: Oh, you will?

11 MS. GARCIA: Yes. It's August 13th.

12 MR. COLLER: August 13th, okay.

13 MR. PARDO: And I wish that you would
14 calculate the amount of time that you think,
15 because there are a couple of items there that
16 may go long, so if you put them all on the same
17 one, then you don't have any time for all of
18 that.

19 MR. BEHAR: If something else is coming
20 new, maybe that may have to be for the
21 following meeting. How many items we got
22 coming, three?

23 MR. COLLER: So this is just three, three
24 that we're deferring.

25 MS. GARCIA: Right.

162

1 MR. BEHAR: So those are the first three,
2 and if you calculate, like Mr. Pardo said,
3 calculate the time, maybe we could add a couple
4 more -- if not -- I don't think they're big
5 items. I went through them.

6 MR. PARDO: I just don't want them all
7 lumped in there.

8 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: So we have a motion to
9 defer. Who seconded it, please?

10 MR. BUCELO: I do.

11 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Alex is on a roll
12 tonight.

13 MR. COLLER: You can do it as a voice vote.

14 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: So we have a first and
15 a second. Everybody in favor to defer say,
16 aye.

17 (All Board Members voted aye.)

18 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Anybody against? No?
19 Thank you.

20 Is there a motion to adjourn?

21 MR. BUCELO: I move.

22 MR. HERNANDEZ: I'll second if

23 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: The two new people,
24 Alex, and Nestor seconded. Everybody in favor
25 to adjourn say, aye.

163

1 (All Board Members voted aye.)

2 (Thereupon, the meeting was adjourned at
3 9:13 p.m.)

164

C E R T I F I C A T E

1
2
3 STATE OF FLORIDA:
4 SS.
5 COUNTY OF MIAMI-DADE:
6
7
8

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

15
16 DATED this 14th day of July, 2025.
17

18 

19
20 -----NIEVES SANCHEZ-----
21
22
23
24
25