

Page 153

1 MR. TORRE: Right.

2 MR. BUCELO: Second.

3 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: We have a second.

4 Let's take a roll. All in favor say, aye.

5 (All Board Members voted aye.)

6 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Okay.

7 MR. TRIAS: Mr. Chairman, do you want to do

8 Alexan?

9 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Let's read the

10 items -- Mr. Coller, would you read the items

11 into the record, please? That would be --

12 MR. COLLER: E-9 and E-10?

13 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Yes, sir.

14 MR. COLLER: Okay. E-9, an Ordinance of

15 the City Commission of Coral Gables, Florida

16 granting approval of a Planned Area Development

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

18 Section 14-206, "General Procedures for Planned

19 Area Development" for a mixed-use project

20 referred to as "Alexan Crafts" on property

21 legally described as lots 5 thru 27, Block 28,

22 Coral Gables Crafts Section, Catalonia Avenue

23 301, 309, 317, 323, 325, 333, 341 Malaga

24 Avenue, Coral Gables, Florida; including

25 required conditions, providing for a repealer

Page 155

1 Development, PAD, and also Conditional Use

2 review for Mixed-Use, similar in process to the

3 previous example. The property, as you can

4 see, is most of the block that is by Salzedo,

5 Catalonia and Malaga, not all of the way to Le

6 Jeune. It doesn't go all of the way to Le

7 Jeune.

8 So there's what we have, in terms of the

9 existing condition. Mostly it's Single-Family;

10 however this went through a very extensive

11 discussion during the Zoning Code update and

12 this area was Rezoned to Mixed-Use, which

13 allows for the project as proposed.

14 The current Land Use and Zoning are

15 Commercial Low Rise intensity and Mixed-Use 1,

16 which are consistent with the general vicinity

17 of the area. Now, the first request, the PAD,

18 just as before, it has some minimal

19 requirements, in terms of area and dimension

20 and so on, the one acre, as we know.

21 The significant issue here and the one that

22 matters is that there's a maximum height of 77

23 feet and also six stories in the Zoning Code.

24 Because of the PAD, they're requesting to do

25 seven stories, since there are six, which is

Page 154

1 provision, severability clause and providing

2 for an effective date.

3 Item E-10, a Resolution of the City

4 Commission of Coral Gables, Florida granting

5 approval for Conditional Use Mixed-Use Site

6 Plan pursuant to Zoning Code Section 2-200

7 "Mixed Use Districts" for a mixed-use project

8 referred to as "Alexan Crafts" on property

9 legally described as lots 5 thru 27, Block 26

10 (sic), Coral Gables Crafts Section, Catalonia

11 Avenue 301, 309, 317, 323, 325, 333, 341 Malaga

12 Avenue, Coral Gables, Florida; including

13 required conditions; providing for a repealer

14 provision, severability clause and providing

15 for an effective date.

16 Items E-9 and E-10, public hearing.

17 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you.

18 MR. TRIAS: May I have the PowerPoint,

19 please?

20 Mr. Chairman, in addition, there were some

21 letters, there were some e-mails that were

22 provided, and most of them were favorable,

23 unlike the prior project. So that is part of

24 the record.

25 The project, again, has Planned Area

Page 156

1 allowed under the PAD rules, according to the

2 City Attorney interpretation, and it's also

3 something that is being reviewed right now as a

4 Comprehensive Plan amendment to make it

5 official and clear in the Comprehensive Plan.

6 So the architect will explain the design.

7 I won't go into great detail due to the time of

8 the night, but it does comply with the

9 requirements.

10 That is the conceptual rendering. What I

11 was showing before is a Site Plan. The Site

12 Plan is accurate, just to make it clear for the

13 public, that that is accurate, in terms of

14 dimension. The renderings are a little bit

15 less accurate, but they give you a sense of the

16 architectural quality of the project.

17 This project also went several times to the

18 Board of Architects. I believe it was three

19 times at least, maybe -- was it more than three

20 times; three times -- three times, and it was

21 very clearly debated and discussed.

22 Now, DRC reviewed this in May of 2021; the

23 Board of Architects three times, as I said.

24 Then the Neighborhood Meeting took place in

25 December, and then the Planning and Zoning

1 Board is today. Letters were sent to property  
 2 owners in a radius of 1,000 feet. This time,  
 3 they're all within the city limits. The public  
 4 notice, two times letters were sent to property  
 5 owners, three times the property was posted,  
 6 then the website posting happened three times,  
 7 and we had one newspaper advertisement for  
 8 today's meeting. Staff recommends approval  
 9 with conditions.  
 10 So I'll stop there.  
 11 MR. NAVARRO: Thank you, Mr. Chair, Board  
 12 Members. Jorge Navarro, with offices at 333  
 13 Southeast 2nd Avenue. Thank you for taking the  
 14 time to extend the meeting. I know you're all  
 15 here as volunteers and we appreciate everything  
 16 you do for the City.  
 17 We've had several neighbors that have been  
 18 patiently waiting this evening. In the  
 19 interest of time, I know you've had a long  
 20 agenda, we've appointed one or two class  
 21 representatives to speak on their behalf, but  
 22 we have about eight residents here in support.  
 23 My colleague, Devon Baker, is going to submit  
 24 44 petitions that we have, from the owners of  
 25 the Crafts Section, in support. It's very rare

1 this situation, because a PAD gives us the  
 2 design flexibility to do an additional story  
 3 within the allowable building height and to  
 4 open up the ground area, and what that's  
 5 allowed us to do is to provide greater  
 6 setbacks, provide larger sidewalks, and it's  
 7 allowed us to accommodate a 7,000 square foot  
 8 park, that, as part of that, we are going to be  
 9 relocating two of the specimen trees that are  
 10 on-site to that park, to create a really shaded  
 11 nice active area, with seating areas and with  
 12 world class art that we're excited to tell you,  
 13 we've been a working with an artist named  
 14 Vaughn Spann to bring some art work to that  
 15 park, which I think would be in line with  
 16 everything that the City's been working  
 17 towards.  
 18 I think your Planning Direction mentioned,  
 19 we're providing three times the amount of open  
 20 space that's required. It's been a project  
 21 that has been thoroughly reviewed, has gone  
 22 through an extensive review process, and you  
 23 can see we submitted it in May of 2021. We  
 24 actually completely re-design of the project  
 25 after the City adopted it's new Mediterranean

1 that you see an entire area come together to  
 2 support a Rezoning, but this is -- and just to  
 3 quickly give some background, and I know that  
 4 this item has been before you in the past, the  
 5 Rezoning of the Crafts Section, but this was an  
 6 area that really was unsuitable for  
 7 Single-Family, and the residents in this area  
 8 have dealt with issues of speeding cars, noise,  
 9 you know, disruptions from living right next to  
 10 the Central Business District, that as a  
 11 response, after a lengthy public hearing  
 12 process, this area was Rezoned to MX1. That's  
 13 what the Commission found was appropriate for  
 14 this area, as a transition into the Central  
 15 Business District.  
 16 We are the first project coming in, and I  
 17 think Mr. Torre said it best, right, this is  
 18 setting the development trend that is the  
 19 City's future vision for this area. I'll let  
 20 Albert walk you in detail through the Site  
 21 Plan, but we're proposing a 263-unit Mixed-Use  
 22 project. We're not doing retail on the ground  
 23 level. Instead we're doing 22 live-work units.  
 24 It's a 2.11 acre parcel and one of the things  
 25 that we've done is, we're asking for a PAD in

1 Bonus program, and this new Coral Gables  
 2 Mediterranean style. This project was  
 3 unanimously approved by the Board of  
 4 Architects, which we're very proud of, and  
 5 we're excited to present it to you, and we hope  
 6 we can count on your support here, as well. I  
 7 know we have a few neighbors on Zoom, as well,  
 8 that may want to speak.  
 9 Thank you very much. With that, I'll  
 10 introduce Albert Cordoves and we're here to  
 11 answer any questions.  
 12 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you.  
 13 MR. CORDOVES: Can we please have the  
 14 PowerPoint presentation? Thank you.  
 15 Good evening, Mr. Chair, Members of the  
 16 Board. My name is Albert Cordoves, with Corwil  
 17 Architects. First and foremost, thank you for  
 18 being here today, and, you know, reviewing our  
 19 presentation, especially this late.  
 20 We are truly excited to be here today. As  
 21 Jorge mentioned, this has been a real team  
 22 effort to get this project to where it is  
 23 today. It's been a team effort from our  
 24 client, from all of our consultants, from City  
 25 Staff that's worked with us, and from the Board

Page 161

1 of Architects. We went three times, and I  
 2 think we have, obviously, what we believe is a  
 3 beautiful project, a very boutique project, one  
 4 that we can truly be excited for many years to  
 5 come.  
 6 And, again, the goal was, essentially, when  
 7 we had commissioned -- when we got commissioned  
 8 for this project, it truly felt like a  
 9 designer's dream, in terms of having almost a  
 10 city block. So we wanted to really put out  
 11 something different. Instead of the zero  
 12 setbacks, we went into expanded setbacks, we  
 13 went to larger pedestrian realm, because the  
 14 goal was truly, how can we improve this  
 15 pedestrian realm and take it to the next level.  
 16 It's what we did and that's how we culminated  
 17 it with a park, with the articulation of  
 18 courtyards into the mass itself, to break it  
 19 down further, with larger expanded sidewalks  
 20 for better trees, better canopies, and we, as a  
 21 result of that, instead of a ten or twenty  
 22 percent open area, we're just under thirty  
 23 percent.  
 24 And obviously the other goal was to  
 25 essentially provide, almost 90 percent of the

Page 163

1 So, all in all, we're extremely happy. In  
 2 light of time, I'd like to leave it open for  
 3 any questions that you might have, and hope for  
 4 your support on this one. Thank you.  
 5 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you.  
 6 I'd like to go ahead and open it up for --  
 7 MR. TORRE: I have a question --  
 8 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Yes, go ahead, Mr.  
 9 Torre.  
 10 MR. TORRE: -- Mr. Chair. So I remember we  
 11 saw this, and just from my memory, what was  
 12 the -- we didn't reject it, did we just defer  
 13 it for you to go back to the Board? I know you  
 14 went back to the Board, right? So that was  
 15 what was needed? Did we have anything that  
 16 needed to be done or --  
 17 MR. CORDOVES: No.  
 18 MR. TORRE: -- was it just the  
 19 architecture --  
 20 MR. CORDOVES: It was only architecture, yeah.  
 21 MR. TORRE: Right. That they were getting  
 22 bonuses or you were getting bonuses for not  
 23 having something Mediterranean, that was --  
 24 MR. CORDOVES: The first time we introduced  
 25 the project to the Board, it was designed in a

Page 162

1 ground floor is activated by the use of our  
 2 live-work units and our amenity spaces. The  
 3 parking itself, as we come up through the  
 4 stories, you will see that it is totally  
 5 internalized and it's been totally lined with  
 6 active spaces throughout the entire building.  
 7 The ground floor, again, if I may come back  
 8 to it, we have provided one main paseo,  
 9 vehicular and pedestrian paseo, where we took  
 10 advantage of it in minimizing the curb cuts,  
 11 again improving the pedestrian realm, and from  
 12 that paseo, we actually have access to our  
 13 loading, internalized loading, for our project  
 14 and access to our internalized parking garage,  
 15 as well.  
 16 We also have a paseo on the west side,  
 17 which, again, with more setbacks than the Code  
 18 required, and as you come up, the last thing we  
 19 did to really articulate the massing and keep  
 20 it within the overall height is, we broke out  
 21 the seventh floor and provided our pool deck  
 22 level at that particular area. Centralized  
 23 with the overall project, we count with  
 24 approximately 15,000 square feet of amenity  
 25 pool level area at that particular height.

Page 164

1 more contemporary style, and the direction for  
 2 the City and the Board, in order to approve the  
 3 Mediterranean bonuses, was to go more in the  
 4 traditional style. So we went back for the  
 5 second time.  
 6 MR. TRIAS: Sir, you may be thinking of  
 7 when this was Rezoned, which was part of the  
 8 Zoning Update. These properties were Rezoned  
 9 and they came before you at that time. That  
 10 was not part of the process.  
 11 MR. TORRE: No. No. They were already  
 12 Rezoned, so we discussed that this was already  
 13 in the Zone, it was appropriate. I think you  
 14 had to get seven floors, and then there was a  
 15 discussion about Med Bonus or not Med Bonus,  
 16 and that's when it went back to the  
 17 Mediterranean design.  
 18 MR. CORDOVES: Exactly.  
 19 MR. TORRE: But I don't remember us having  
 20 any issues with the project per se, more than  
 21 that issue with the bonus --  
 22 MR. CORDOVES: Correct. Correct. Yeah.  
 23 And as soon as we re-designed the project in a  
 24 more traditional style, we went back to the  
 25 Board, and it was extremely well received. The

1 third time was just very minor comments that  
 2 they had observed actually the first time they  
 3 saw it redesigned, but thank you.  
 4 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you.  
 5 Let me go ahead and open it for public  
 6 comment. Jill, how many speakers do we have on  
 7 this?  
 8 THE SECRETARY: Six, and one on Zoom.  
 9 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: And one on Zoom?  
 10 THE SECRETARY: Yes.  
 11 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Okay. Would you call  
 12 the first speaker, please?  
 13 THE SECRETARY: Maria Blet. Maria.  
 14 MS. BLET: Hi --  
 15 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: If you can come up to  
 16 the microphone, please.  
 17 MS. BLET: I was going to say, I'm Maria  
 18 Blet, 323 Malaga, and I'm conceding my time to  
 19 Maria Mendez (sic).  
 20 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: You have to speak into  
 21 the microphone.  
 22 MS. BLET: Oh, I apologize. Again, Maria  
 23 Blet, 323 Malaga. I'm totally in support and I  
 24 think this is really cool and modern and  
 25 Mediterranean tractional and I totally support

1 street, are my trees, and actually the project  
 2 saves all of the trees in the back of my yard.  
 3 All of the oak trees will be relocated, so this  
 4 will be guarded for the beauty of Coral Gables.  
 5 And down the road, if you look at the  
 6 drawings and renderings of this beautiful  
 7 project, it's really coming back to the  
 8 Mediterranean idea of Coral Gables, 'cause I  
 9 think, in the last 25 years I am here, I've  
 10 seen a couple of sins committed, and I think,  
 11 right now, when you look at the Plaza complex  
 12 in Ponce de Leon, and now this project, I think  
 13 there's a -- it's coming back to the -- a  
 14 little bit modern twist, which I think we all  
 15 want, but back to the Mediterranean idea.  
 16 So we're all in favor here, and I speak --  
 17 actually, I'm one of the few speakers for all  
 18 of the homeowners, and like I think it's very  
 19 special that all of the homeowners on the whole  
 20 block came together in support of a project  
 21 like this. So I think you should take the  
 22 advantage of this and move forward. And thank  
 23 you very much, also, that you already saw this  
 24 issue and you already were in support of  
 25 upzoning it, you know, and that the

1 it.  
 2 Thank you so much for your time.  
 3 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you.  
 4 MS. BLET: And I'm conceding to Maria  
 5 Mendez (sic).  
 6 THE SECRETARY: Saul.  
 7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: We're good.  
 8 THE SECRETARY: Stefan Seuss.  
 9 MR. SEUSS: Yes. Good evening and thank  
 10 you very much for your time. My name is  
 11 Steffan Seuss -- sorry -- and I live at 340  
 12 Catalonia Avenue for three and a half years.  
 13 I've lived on and off between the Gables and  
 14 Coconut Grove for 25 years, so I really know  
 15 the development happening here around in our  
 16 neighborhood, and -- very beautiful  
 17 neighborhood, and I just wanted to emphasize  
 18 again on this family neighborhood versus a more  
 19 commercial neighborhood.  
 20 I live here. I have two kids. When you  
 21 walk on Catalonia Avenue west of Le Jeune, you  
 22 see trees and families with the stroller and  
 23 birds. And if you come to our side, there's  
 24 nothing like that. The only trees, as a matter  
 25 of fact, you'll see when you drive down the

1 Commissioners went through and upzoned it to a  
 2 more commercial approach. Thank you very much  
 3 for your time.  
 4 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you.  
 5 THE SECRETARY: Maria Menendez.  
 6 MS. MENENDEZ: Good evening, Mr. Chair. I  
 7 need a few minutes. I think my neighbor,  
 8 Maria, was trying to relinquish some of her  
 9 minutes to give to me, if you could please bear  
 10 with me. I have a few things --  
 11 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: And I do want to say,  
 12 welcome back.  
 13 MS. MENENDEZ: Thank you. Thank you so  
 14 much, and thank you for your time. I know how  
 15 hard it is, especially at this time, to be here  
 16 and deliberating over these issues, so thank  
 17 you for your work and for your volunteering.  
 18 Good evening. For the record, my name is  
 19 Maria Alberro Menendez. I live with my family  
 20 at 322 Catalonia Avenue. We have lived there  
 21 for over 28 years, and we support the proposed  
 22 development.  
 23 This area, our area, has changed immensely  
 24 over the last seven years. To the east, the  
 25 Plaza of Coral Gables, just one block away from

Page 169

1 our home, has changed the City's skyline  
 2 forever. This project has eight, fourteen,  
 3 seventeen-story buildings, with building  
 4 heights of over 190 feet. It has more than two  
 5 million square feet and over 2,200 parking  
 6 garages (sic). Also to our east, less than a  
 7 block away -- a block away from our home is  
 8 another development, seventeen stories, 179  
 9 feet high, an additional 260 parking spaces.  
 10 To our north, a developer, the City, and  
 11 Mercedes Benz, just two blocks from our home,  
 12 entered into a three-way property swap  
 13 agreement. The exchanged resulted in Mercedes  
 14 Benz taking over the City's old police and fire  
 15 station, bringing the dealership activities  
 16 closer to our home, now a block away. The City  
 17 took over the land that was owned by the  
 18 developer for the new public safety building,  
 19 north of Alhambra Plaza, and the developer took  
 20 the land owned by Mercedes Benz, where it  
 21 intends to build what has been advertised as  
 22 sky homes. This development, this high-rise  
 23 development, is less than 600 feet away from  
 24 our neighborhood.  
 25 Also to the north, just 200 feet from our

Page 171

1 impact in the surrounding roadway network." On  
 2 Page 10 of the City Staff report, the facts  
 3 about the proposed projects are provided in  
 4 detail. In summary, the project's density, the  
 5 City permits 125 units per acre and a maximum  
 6 FAR of 3.5 for this area. The developer  
 7 proposes 125 units per acre and an FAR of 3.39,  
 8 below what the City permits.  
 9 Building height, the City permits 77 feet.  
 10 The developer proposes 77 feet. Parking, the  
 11 City requires a minimum of 357 parking spaces.  
 12 The developer proposes 364, more than what the  
 13 City requires. Landscape open space, the City  
 14 requires a minimum of twenty percent of the  
 15 development. The developer proposes 28.32  
 16 percent of the development, more than what the  
 17 City requires.  
 18 In regards to the developer's request for a  
 19 seven-story building, the City Staff report, on  
 20 Pages 7 through 9, states the following  
 21 comments, "While the project is seven stories,  
 22 only six stories is allowed, it is within the  
 23 maximum allowable height of 77 feet. Such  
 24 departure from the Zoning Code regulation  
 25 allows the project to reduce the ground floor

Page 170

1 home, along Palermo Avenue, sits high-rise  
 2 zoned parcels that, if assembled, can result in  
 3 another 16-story 190 feet high structure.  
 4 So, needless to say, my neighbors and I are  
 5 located in a growing urban Commercial area.  
 6 Our area, where the development is proposed, is  
 7 an enclave. To the south, we're separated from  
 8 other Residential neighborhoods by University  
 9 Drive, a four-lane collector, with a protective  
 10 Do Not Enter sign posted on Salzedo,  
 11 prohibiting vehicles from entering the  
 12 neighborhood.  
 13 To the west, Le Jeune Road, a four lane  
 14 highway -- four lane State highway, with a  
 15 landscaped median, acts as a barrier protecting  
 16 the neighborhoods to the west from our area.  
 17 The City's Planning and Zoning Board Staff  
 18 report outlines the key and facts and reasons  
 19 for why this development should move forward  
 20 and obtain your recommendation.  
 21 A traffic impact study prepared by a  
 22 traffic engineering firm has been reviewed and  
 23 approved by the City's Engineer, concluding,  
 24 and I quote, "The proposed development, Alexan  
 25 Crafts, is not expected to have a negative

Page 172

1 building coverage and building massing, thereby  
 2 creating additional opportunities for  
 3 additional landscaped open space areas for the  
 4 public benefit." The report further states  
 5 that seven stories is allowed through a PAD  
 6 process, pursuant to the City Attorney's  
 7 opinion. The development is a PAD development.  
 8 The Staff report also stated that the  
 9 proposed Mixed-Use project is compatible and  
 10 complies with the intent of the Zoning Code  
 11 Mixed-Use and PAD requirements and performance  
 12 standards. It serves -- and this is from the  
 13 report, it serves as an orderly transition from  
 14 the Central Business District to residential  
 15 neighborhoods and the re-development of this  
 16 property fulfills the objective of the City to  
 17 attract Mixed-Uses with public open spaces in  
 18 an urban environment.  
 19 Finally, as it's been mentioned, this  
 20 development has gone before the Board of  
 21 Architects three times and the design has been  
 22 redesigned twice, including all of the  
 23 suggestions from the Board and the City. On  
 24 December 9th, 2021, the Board of Architects  
 25 granted the development the Mediterranean

1 design architectural design.  
 2 Thank you, Board, for your attention and  
 3 your consideration of this project.  
 4 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you.  
 5 THE SECRETARY: Henry? No.  
 6 Maria -- Maria Perera.  
 7 MS. PERERA: I want to say, thank you to  
 8 all of you for being here.  
 9 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: If you would please  
 10 state your name and address.  
 11 MS. PERERA: My name is Maria Perera, 333  
 12 Malaga, and I support the project, and I think  
 13 it's great. I just wanted to say that. And  
 14 thank you for the opportunity. And we need  
 15 your approval, so hopefully you approve it.  
 16 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you.  
 17 THE SECRETARY: The next speaker is on Zoom  
 18 and needs to be sworn in.  
 19 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Who's the next  
 20 speaker? Will you call them, please?  
 21 THE SECRETARY: Mayra Joli.  
 22 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Ms. Joli, can you  
 23 raise your right hand, please, to be sworn in?  
 24 (Thereupon, the participant was sworn.)  
 25 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you.

1 afraid of hurting the project, because it will  
 2 represent money that the developers would not  
 3 be getting, but, then, at the end, what are we  
 4 here for?  
 5 We were how many, about 45 the last time I  
 6 checked, participating; now maybe 16 or maybe  
 7 less. What are we here for, just to beg so  
 8 somebody, you know, allow a little bit of this  
 9 Shangri-la to remain what it is? Residents, we  
 10 cannot compete with the large amount of money  
 11 that have been poured into our City Hall, for  
 12 these Commissioners and this Mayor just to  
 13 approve and Rezone, and, now, after six of  
 14 these buildings are built, then the seventh  
 15 building or eight, nine and ten, they're going  
 16 to be just saying, well, we're protected,  
 17 grandfathered by that first massive building.  
 18 How many cranes you can see in the sky,  
 19 when you go down to US-1? Coral Gables don't  
 20 supposed to have sky rises. Bird Road -- you  
 21 may as well just go back to Homestead and come  
 22 back through US-1 in Coconut Grove somewhere  
 23 just to go -- and go from one place to the  
 24 other. We have a City Manager working against  
 25 us, all of them, and the City -- the Coral

1 MS. JOLI: Mayra Joli, 700 Jeronimo Drive.  
 2 Well, I guess all of the residents who have  
 3 been in the dais, they have approved the  
 4 project, I guess they have spoken. They are  
 5 the ones that are going to be directly impacted  
 6 by this project, if, in fact, they're going to  
 7 continue residing there. Maybe it's a good  
 8 investment for them to have this project there.  
 9 The developers want to change the essence  
 10 and the fabric of what is Coral Gables and want  
 11 to change it into an apartment complex haven,  
 12 and I guess, we, as residents, and the  
 13 residents -- and speaks for the residents of  
 14 Coral Gables, as well, the ones that really  
 15 love what is Coral Gables and the preservation  
 16 of what is exactly the vision of George  
 17 Merrick, I can see that we lost. We have no  
 18 way out of this.  
 19 The Coral Gables City Attorney is against  
 20 us, working on behalf of the developers. Our  
 21 Mayor -- City of Coral Gables Mayor is working  
 22 on behalf of the developers. The  
 23 Commissioners, we have to fight them tooth and  
 24 nail, just for them to listen to the concerns  
 25 of the residents. I heard that everybody is

1 Gables City Hall is the same chicken with  
 2 different feathers. We never win. Residents  
 3 of Coral Gables, we lost this battle. Coral  
 4 Gables is doomed to be destroyed. It's just  
 5 the sad reality. We just have to live with it.  
 6 Good-bye.  
 7 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Bye. Thank you.  
 8 Next?  
 9 THE SECRETARY: Jacqueline -- one second.  
 10 MR. WEBEL: Do you hear me?  
 11 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Yes, we do. Would you  
 12 raise your right hand -- oh, actually, if you  
 13 don't mind, before you speak, because we're  
 14 going to be running out of time, is there a  
 15 motion to extend the meeting a little bit  
 16 longer?  
 17 MR. TORRE: Let's give it ten more minutes.  
 18 I'll make a motion.  
 19 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Can we say to at least  
 20 9:45?  
 21 MR. TORRE: Yeah.  
 22 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: 9:45. There's a  
 23 motion.  
 24 MR. BUCELO: Second.  
 25 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: We have a second by

Page 177

1 Alex. Everybody in favor say aye.  
 2 (All Board Members voted aye.)  
 3 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Anybody against? No.  
 4 Go ahead, please. Can you put the  
 5 gentleman back on? Thank you for raising your  
 6 right hand.  
 7 (Thereupon, the participant was sworn.)  
 8 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you, sir. If  
 9 you could start by stating your name and  
 10 address, please.  
 11 MR. WEBEL: Good evening, Chair, Members of  
 12 the Board, esteem neighborhood. My name is  
 13 Julio Webel, 309 Malaga Avenue. I've been here  
 14 for thirty years, and I have two perspective of  
 15 what's happened in these thirty years and how  
 16 this area has evolved, and that's the reason I  
 17 support this project, because a change has  
 18 brought onto the area a needed response.  
 19 From -- what used to be a quiet  
 20 neighborhood is no longer that, and so an  
 21 urbanistic and architectural response has to be  
 22 in place, and I consider the Alexan Crafts  
 23 project the proper one, for two reasons. One,  
 24 urbanistically, it transitions well from the  
 25 edges of the lower structures, like the San

Page 179

1 architect --  
 2 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Sir, we're talking  
 3 about the project on E-9 and E-10.  
 4 MR. PARDO: That's correct. And the other  
 5 one was a PAD, and one of the things that he  
 6 talked about was the length of PADs, length of  
 7 buildings, which is, you know, one of the  
 8 concerns that I have with this particular --  
 9 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: You have -- you're  
 10 concerned about the length of this building; is  
 11 that correct?  
 12 MR. PARDO: Correct, but --  
 13 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Okay. Continue,  
 14 please.  
 15 MR. PARDO: -- they were able to break down  
 16 some of the massing, you know, through the  
 17 re-design, with the help and assistance of the  
 18 Board of Architects.  
 19 But at the same time, keep in mind that one  
 20 of the biggest issues here is, these are 263  
 21 units. This is the first of three blocks that  
 22 were changed by the Former Commission, two of  
 23 the Commissioners that sit on that Board now.  
 24 The reason that that's important is, because  
 25 when you take 263 times three, that's over 700

Page 178

1 Sebastian and smaller areas west of Le Jeune  
 2 and University Drive, onto the larger buildings  
 3 that rise Downtown. And, also, architecturally  
 4 speaking, I believe the architect has  
 5 successfully interpreted -- what other  
 6 architects do, which is copy Mediterranean  
 7 motif, this architect has interpreted the  
 8 Mediterranean vocabulary into a more  
 9 contemporary response.  
 10 So, with that, I support this project, and  
 11 thank you for your time.  
 12 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you.  
 13 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Pardo.  
 14 (Thereupon, the participant was sworn.)  
 15 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you, sir.  
 16 MR. PARDO: Good evening, Mr. Chair, Board  
 17 Members. Thank you so much for listening to  
 18 the public. I want to be sincere, that the  
 19 project looks different than what was  
 20 originally presented, and that is the positive,  
 21 I think. I do not minimize some of the  
 22 observations that were made by some of the  
 23 Board Members this evening on the other project  
 24 that was looked at, the Madeira project.  
 25 Luis Revuelta, a very distinguished

Page 180

1 units that are going to be built in that area,  
 2 and the impact is going to be great. With all  
 3 deference to Maria, that I've known for many  
 4 years, she did quote the traffic report as  
 5 having no negative impact on the adjacent  
 6 roadway, well, the adjacent roadway, quite  
 7 honestly, is Le Jeune Road, which is Level F,  
 8 and you can't make it any worse than that.  
 9 That's why it's basically negating a zero.  
 10 The biggest problem I see is that Staff  
 11 said, correctly, that the applicant is only  
 12 allowed six stories in height, and that the  
 13 seven stories is now being magically waived  
 14 through, as an interpretation by the City  
 15 Attorney, which now goes into kind -- right  
 16 into legislature and to changing the Code. If  
 17 they change the Code, so be it, but as far as  
 18 this particular project, it's seven stories.  
 19 So the justification for the stories was to  
 20 add that park. Well, the park is approximately  
 21 4,800 square feet, about sixty by eighty feet.  
 22 If they would reduce a certain amount of units,  
 23 they could double the size of the park. Right  
 24 now, on the Seventh Floor, they have 42 units  
 25 on the Seventh Floor, so they were actually

Page 181

1 able to get more units on the Seventh Floor,  
 2 than keeping it six stories and not having the  
 3 park, and that is something that Staff did not  
 4 analyze or mention, and keep in mind that the  
 5 Board of Architects is continuously told that  
 6 they can't get into the, quote/unquote, Zoning  
 7 matters.  
 8 Well, if they can't get into the Zoning  
 9 matters, I think this Board has the ability of  
 10 doing that. Keep in mind that a PAD is  
 11 something that goes through the Planning Board  
 12 first, after the Board of Architects, and then  
 13 to the Commission. The PAD is not automatic to  
 14 the maximum amount of units. The Planning and  
 15 Zoning Board has the ability to say, reduce the  
 16 size of the project, so we can give you the  
 17 additional units that you're getting. No one  
 18 suffers that way.  
 19 You could tell them, "Make the green area  
 20 bigger, lose some units, if you have to,  
 21 therefore we'll give you that seventh floor,"  
 22 but they are not doing that, and it's up to the  
 23 Planning Board to do that and make that  
 24 suggestion, so ultimately the Commission will  
 25 be able to address that.

Page 183

1 who has a PAD request, that is not automatic,  
 2 to not the maximum height -- in height, but  
 3 also floors. So they want something, and I  
 4 think it's your job to be able to say, you  
 5 know, Staff, we kind of disagree with some of  
 6 the things that you've said, and really put  
 7 that to them.  
 8 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you.  
 9 MR. PARDO: And I appreciate again your  
 10 time, but I want to make sure that the Planning  
 11 Board always understands that they have the  
 12 ability to say, we'll approve it, subject to  
 13 this. Thank you.  
 14 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you, Mr. Pardo.  
 15 Anybody else, Jill?  
 16 THE SECRETARY: No more speakers.  
 17 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: No more speakers. At  
 18 this time, I'd like to go ahead and close the  
 19 floor --  
 20 MR. NAVARRO: Let me clarify one comment,  
 21 Mr. Chair.  
 22 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: -- to speakers, and  
 23 then I'll let you do your rebuttal. Go ahead,  
 24 please. No, no, go ahead.  
 25 MR. NAVARRO: So thank you very much. I'll

Page 182

1 The last thing I want to say is that, I  
 2 understand that 42 neighbors are for this  
 3 particular project. The neighbors are 42  
 4 sellers. They're selling their properties so  
 5 they can develop this project. And it's their  
 6 right to do that, but it's a distortion of  
 7 reality that everybody is really happy with  
 8 this particular project, because once they're  
 9 gone, there's going to be on those three blocks  
 10 over 700 units that are going to be built in  
 11 that area, which today may have about 50 homes,  
 12 Single-Family homes, and that's all.  
 13 I do think they have compelling reasons and  
 14 I empathize with them, but the empathy should  
 15 also go both ways, as far as the Planning Board  
 16 and the Commission, in trying to reduce the  
 17 height of -- or the Seventh Floor or make the  
 18 park area, that would be needed for those 263  
 19 units, make it at least twice as big. And just  
 20 keep in mind, 4,500 square feet, the backyard  
 21 of my Single-Family home has about the same  
 22 amount of green space, only in the backyard,  
 23 without counting the front yard.  
 24 So it's important for the Planning Board to  
 25 do a little horse trading with the applicant,

Page 184

1 keep my comments very brief. But I did want to  
 2 clarify, because, you know, this has been  
 3 a long process and we have been working with  
 4 the neighbors, through the Rezoning process and  
 5 through the Site Plan process, and we did take  
 6 Mr. Pardo's comments and we did digest them and  
 7 listened to them, because we do have a PAD, but  
 8 this PAD normally requires twenty percent open  
 9 space, we're providing thirty percent open  
 10 space. Most projects would have gone right to  
 11 the setback. We have a ten-foot setback and  
 12 we've gone back an additional ten feet. That  
 13 allows you to have very large sidewalks, and it  
 14 gives you the ability to plant large shade.  
 15 Additionally, having additional open space, it  
 16 creates a real pedestrian environment, which  
 17 this portion of the City historically has not  
 18 had. They have very little trees and very  
 19 small sidewalks.  
 20 Even though we are asking for a seventh  
 21 story, the maximum building height under MX1 is  
 22 77 feet. Our building is 74 feet four inches,  
 23 and the middle portion of the building, in  
 24 working with your Planning Staff, we have  
 25 carved out and reduced that down to 64 feet



Page 185

1 eight inches. So we have a much smaller  
 2 volumetric massing than would be allowed, if  
 3 this project did not have a PAD.  
 4 Lastly, and this is what I wanted to give  
 5 credit to Mr. Pardo about was, listening to his  
 6 comments, we have almost doubled the size of  
 7 the park. It's gone from 4,000 to almost 7,000  
 8 square feet, but it's not just the park space  
 9 that we're creating, we've actually committed  
 10 to also build out that park, by relocating  
 11 those trees, so now that park will have shade,  
 12 which most of the new parks that have been  
 13 developed don't have that capability. We have  
 14 the capability of relocating on-site trees,  
 15 creating a shade environment, and also  
 16 re-developing that park, which is also an  
 17 additional public benefit. We have less FAR,  
 18 less density and less height than allowed, and  
 19 we are in full support of the Staff conditions  
 20 and ask for your approval here this evening.  
 21 Our entire team is here to answer any  
 22 questions.  
 23 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you. Venny.  
 24 MR. TORRE: Yeah. I'd like to, you know,  
 25 call out some positives, because I think,

Page 187

1 help.  
 2 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you. Alex.  
 3 MR. BUCELO: I have no comments. But I  
 4 think it's -- again, I got to become familiar  
 5 with that area like a year or so back when I  
 6 was running, and I'm glad to see all of the  
 7 neighbors come together and support a project.  
 8 So I'll leave it with that.  
 9 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you.  
 10 MR. REVUELTA: The project is not  
 11 requesting an increase in density?  
 12 MR. TRIAS: No, sir. It's --  
 13 MR. REVUELTA: It's just putting in an  
 14 additional (inaudible) --  
 15 MR. COLLER: Could you put your mike? Yeah.  
 16 MR. TRIAS: The history, the Coral Gables  
 17 Zoning Code, at different times has measured  
 18 height and stories at different times, and in  
 19 2004, they combined it, and in most of the  
 20 designations, there's a maximum height and a  
 21 number of stories. That is very relevant in  
 22 the Med Bonus design, and it's a point that  
 23 Mr. Pardo had brought up multiple times in this  
 24 project.  
 25 It was codified in the final update of the

Page 186

1 again, these things create trends and hopefully  
 2 people listen and follow through with some  
 3 positives.  
 4 The sidewalk width issue is really a big  
 5 deal and I think that's one of the things that  
 6 Mr. Pardo spoke about, some things that could  
 7 be done to offset the PAD and the density and  
 8 so forth, but I think this extra width of the  
 9 sidewalk here is a big deal. I'm a very big  
 10 proponent of what happens on the ground floor  
 11 and what people experience most is what's  
 12 happening on the ground floor, and I think  
 13 that's huge.  
 14 And the other thing is, the carving out of  
 15 these courtyards I think is very well thought  
 16 out, and I think that's really another big plus  
 17 to have unblocked -- remove the blockiness and  
 18 create this sort of inside feeling, with more  
 19 light to the tenants. That's also a good  
 20 thing.  
 21 Overall, I think, you know, the improvement  
 22 is there, so I want to make those positives,  
 23 you know.  
 24 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Thank you.  
 25 MR. TRIAS: I'm just here if you need any

Page 188

1 Code that we did recently, 77 feet and six  
 2 stories; however, the City Attorney  
 3 interpretation said that in case there is a  
 4 PAD, the number of stories could be different,  
 5 as long as it was consistent with the maximum  
 6 height.  
 7 Now, there's an amendment to the Zoning  
 8 Code that says that specifically, going through  
 9 the process right now. So that is the policy  
 10 of the Commission, also.  
 11 MR. REVUELTA: Well, in my opinion, I think  
 12 that to avoid this kind of debates and  
 13 confusion, I still don't understand why it  
 14 cannot be seven stories, 77 feet and call it a  
 15 day. Is there any --  
 16 MR. TRIAS: Because that is the nature of  
 17 the Zoning Code of Coral Gables, confusion.  
 18 MR. REVUELTA: Thank you, sir, for your  
 19 clarity and sincerity on that.  
 20 MR. TRIAS: Now, I could write a very  
 21 simple Zoning Code, but that would not get  
 22 approved by the City Commission.  
 23 MR. TORRE: It gives us more work.  
 24 MR. REVUELTA: I guess it allows us to be  
 25 here until ten o'clock at night. That's a

1 great incentive.  
 2 MR. TRIAS: But I thank everybody, and, in  
 3 fact, you know, Mr. Pardo's discussions about  
 4 Mediterranean architecture I think have  
 5 influenced this project and made it much  
 6 better, in terms of the architectural design.  
 7 MR. REVUELTA: I see absolutely no problem  
 8 with the request, and actually, at some point,  
 9 I'd like to make a recommendation, a separate  
 10 motion, of course, that the Code just basically  
 11 get simplified; it's 77 feet, seven stories.  
 12 Some developers are going to say, I want to do  
 13 six, because I want to have higher ceilings, I  
 14 want to have a bigger ground level. So at that  
 15 point --  
 16 MR. TRIAS: Mr. Revuelta, I spent three  
 17 years trying to do that and I failed miserably.  
 18 MR. REVUELTA: Well, I don't want to add to  
 19 your misery, so I'll stay shut, but these are  
 20 the kinds of things that, as an architect, does  
 21 frustrate me. I will take this opportunity,  
 22 again, to bring to the City Commission,  
 23 hopefully, that, in this area, I see a major,  
 24 major mistake, and I'm not blaming anybody in  
 25 particular, with the Future Land Use Map.

1 you that there was plenty of discussion on  
 2 that.  
 3 MR. REVUELTA: Well, I don't know if the  
 4 rest of my colleagues agree, but I would like  
 5 to make a separate motion after this, that I  
 6 would like the City to review this, because I  
 7 think this can be a huge problem in the future  
 8 for the City, in my opinion, and the neighbors.  
 9 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Venny.  
 10 MR. TORRE: In the interest of time, I'm  
 11 going make a motion for approval.  
 12 MR. REVUELTA: Second.  
 13 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: You want to make a  
 14 motion for approval --  
 15 MR. TRIAS: With conditions.  
 16 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: -- with the  
 17 conditions?  
 18 MR. TRIAS: Yeah, the standard conditions  
 19 that we have.  
 20 MR. TORRE: The standard conditions, which  
 21 I'm completely aware of, and understand what  
 22 they are, yes.  
 23 MR. REVUELTA: Second.  
 24 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: We have a second.  
 25 THE SECRETARY: Sorry, we need two motions.

1 Lot 34 has, in the front, the high density  
 2 classification, and, to me, University Drive is  
 3 the line that basically separates this, meaning  
 4 the high density district, which I am in  
 5 agreement with, but we have a Single-Family  
 6 Home District just south of San Sebastian and  
 7 University Drive that needs to be protected,  
 8 and I want to be able to -- every time that I  
 9 can -- make a reminder to the City that this  
 10 Lot 34, which is high density classification,  
 11 which is, I think, MX3, needs to be, in my  
 12 opinion, studied and actually changed to the  
 13 same classification that the last two of Block  
 14 34 has, which is a low density.  
 15 I know this has got really nothing to do  
 16 specifically with this application, but it's  
 17 something that I want to take the opportunity,  
 18 every time I can, to remind everybody that this  
 19 is a problem, because this can set an ugly  
 20 precedent to continue further south and further  
 21 south.  
 22 MR. TRIAS: Everything you see in that  
 23 Zoning Code, everything in the Map, are  
 24 deliberate decisions of the Commission.  
 25 Nothing was done by chance. And I can assure

1 MR. COLLER: There are two items, so we'll  
 2 do --  
 3 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: We'll do one first.  
 4 MR. TORRE: One is the PAD and one is the  
 5 actual approval of the --  
 6 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Right.  
 7 MR. TRIAS: PAD and Mixed-Use Site Plan.  
 8 They're separate items.  
 9 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: So we're doing the E-9  
 10 first.  
 11 MR. TORRE: Which is PAD?  
 12 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Correct.  
 13 MR. COLLER: Correct. We're doing E-9  
 14 first and we can do a similar motion on E-10,  
 15 with conditions.  
 16 MR. TORRE: Okay. So this is a motion for  
 17 E-9, PAD approval. Motion for approval with  
 18 conditions as per staff.  
 19 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: With conditions. And  
 20 you second it?  
 21 MR. REVUELTA: I second it.  
 22 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Any discussion? No?  
 23 Call the roll, please.  
 24 THE SECRETARY: Venny Torre?  
 25 MR. TORRE: Yes.

1 THE SECRETARY: Luis Revuelta?  
 2 MR. REVUELTA: Yes.  
 3 THE SECRETARY: Alex Bucelo?  
 4 MR. BUCELO: Yes.  
 5 THE SECRETARY: Eibi Aizenstat?  
 6 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Yes.  
 7 What about E-10?  
 8 MR. TORRE: I'm sorry. The next one is  
 9 E-10, for the Site Plan approval, as presented  
 10 by Staff -- as proposed by Staff, approve  
 11 motion.  
 12 MR. REVUELTA: Second.  
 13 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: We have a second. Any  
 14 discussion? No? Call the roll, please.  
 15 THE SECRETARY: Alex Bucelo?  
 16 MR. BUCELO: Yes.  
 17 THE SECRETARY: Luis Revuelta?  
 18 MR. REVUELTA: Yes.  
 19 THE SECRETARY: Venny Torre?  
 20 MR. TORRE: Yes.  
 21 THE SECRETARY: Eibi Aizenstat?  
 22 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Yes. And you wanted  
 23 to make a --  
 24 MR. REVUELTA: I would like to make a --  
 25 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: A recommendation.

1 MR. TRIAS: Mr. Chairman, I would request,  
 2 at least E-1 and E-2.  
 3 MR. TORRE: Which is E-1 and E-2?  
 4 MR. TRIAS: Which is the Downtown height at  
 5 205 feet. The reason I'm saying that is  
 6 because the Commission was very clear on the  
 7 direction they want to take. And to continue  
 8 the process, because there's a Comp Plan  
 9 amendment, we need a recommendation from you.  
 10 MR. TORRE: Just to help out the  
 11 Commission, I will make a motion for ten more  
 12 minutes.  
 13 MR. REVUELTA: Second.  
 14 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: There's a motion for  
 15 ten minutes. We have a second. Any  
 16 discussion? No? All in favor.  
 17 (All Board Members voted aye.)  
 18 MR. TORRE: This is a recommendation going  
 19 back to the Board -- to the Commission. We  
 20 have a quorum of four. I'm going to be against  
 21 this item.  
 22 MR. TRIAS: You can vote against it.  
 23 MR. COLLER: So let me read E-1 and E-2.  
 24 E-1, an Ordinance of the City Commission  
 25 granting approval of proposed amendments to the

1 MR. REVUELTA: -- recommendation to the  
 2 City that they need to look into Block 34 and  
 3 the high density designation, that its east  
 4 most parcel facing Ponce de Leon needs to be  
 5 carefully studied and hopefully changed to be  
 6 in context with the rest of the block and to  
 7 protect the south district of -- south of  
 8 Santander.  
 9 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Okay. Do we have a  
 10 second?  
 11 MR. TORRE: Second.  
 12 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Venny second. Any  
 13 discussion? No? Call the roll, please, on  
 14 that.  
 15 THE SECRETARY: Alex Bucelo?  
 16 MR. BUCELO: Yes.  
 17 THE SECRETARY: Luis Revuelta?  
 18 MR. REVUELTA: Yes.  
 19 THE SECRETARY: Venny Torre?  
 20 MR. TORRE: Yes.  
 21 THE SECRETARY: Eibi Aizenstat?  
 22 CHAIRMAN AIZENSTAT: Yes.  
 23 MR. COLLER: So I think we need a motion to  
 24 defer -- are we going to hear any more items  
 25 tonight?

1 text of the City of Coral Gables Comprehensive  
 2 Plan, pursuant to expedited state review  
 3 procedures and Zoning Code Article 14,  
 4 "Process," Section 14-213, "Comprehensive Plan  
 5 Text and Map Amendments;" to provide that the  
 6 maximum number of floors in the Comprehensive  
 7 Plan shall not apply to any Planned Area  
 8 Development (PAD) upon City Commission  
 9 approval, and to allow an additional height  
 10 bonus in return for limiting density for  
 11 qualifying PADs within the Central Business  
 12 District; providing for a severability clause,  
 13 repealer provision, and providing for an  
 14 effective date.  
 15 Item E-2, an Ordinance of the City  
 16 Commission providing for text amendments to the  
 17 City of Coral Gables Official Zoning Code,  
 18 Article 2, "Zoning Districts" Section 2-500  
 19 "Planned Area Development," to provide that  
 20 upon City Commission approval, the maximum  
 21 number of stories in any PAD shall not apply;  
 22 and to create a "Height Bonus to PAD Minimum  
 23 Development Standards in the Central Business  
 24 District" providing additional height with a  
 25 limit of density for qualifying properties upon