

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item F-1
February 9, 2021
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Raul Valdes-Fauli
Vice Mayor Vince Lago
Commissioner Pat Keon
Commissioner Michael Mena
Commissioner Jorge Fors

City Staff

City Manager, Peter Iglesias
City Attorney, Miriam Ramos
City Clerk, Billy Urquia
Planning and Zoning Director, Ramon Trias

Public Speaker(s)

Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk
Karelia Carbonell
Javier Banos
Stefan Zeus
Tania Cruz Gimenez
Sheryl Gold
Rhonda Anderson
Maria Ason
Henry Yaniz
Richard Formoso
Jackson “Rip” Holmes
Alain Yaniz
Brooks Miller
Gracie Perrera (phonetic)
Gordon Sokoloff

City Commission Meeting
February 9, 2021

Agenda Item F-2 - Ordinance of the City Commission of Coral Gables, Florida providing for text and map amendments to the City of Coral Gables Official Zoning Code by amending Article 1, “General Provisions”; Article 2, “Zoning Districts”; Article 3, “Uses”; Article 4, “Urban Design and Public Improvement Standards”; Article 5, “Architecture”; Article 6, “Landscape”; Article 10, “Parking”; Article 14, “Process”; and Article 16, “Definitions.”

Enrique Bernal
Carlos Gimenez
Maria Cruz
Thomas Snook
Maria Blett
Sue Kawalerski
Janera Seralta (phonetic)
Debbie Register

Agenda Item F-1 [5:15 p.m.]

An Ordinance of the City Commission of Coral Gables, Florida providing for text and map amendments to the City of Coral Gables Official Zoning Code pursuant to Zoning Code Article 14, "Process," Section 14-212, "Zoning Code Text and Map Amendments," by amending the following provisions: (1) Article 1, "General Provisions," creating new zoning districts: Multi-family 3 (MF3), Multi-Family 4 (MF4), Mixed-Use 1 (MX1), Mixed-Use 2 (MX2), Mixed-Use 3 (MX3), and Design/Industrial District Overlay; and deleting: Multi-Family Special Area (MFSA), Commercial Limited (CL), Commercial (C), Industrial (I), and the north and south Industrial Mixed-Use Overlay Districts, and making the appropriate zoning map amendments to effectuate these changes; (2) Article 2 "Zoning Districts", creating new zoning districts and associated provisions, deleting floor area ratio requirements in certain districts, and permitting uses in certain zoning districts; (3) Article 3 "Uses", allowing certain uses in new zoning districts, and updating Telecommunication provisions; (4) Article 4 "Urban Design and Public Improvement Standards", refining public realm requirements; (5) Article 5 "Architecture", updating zoning districts to be consistent with Article 2; (6) Article 6 "Landscape" updating and increasing certain open space requirements; (7) Article 10 "Parking" updating certain parking requirements; (8) Article 14 "Process"; revising processes for zoning applications, clarifying procedures for receipt of Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs), and expanding Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs) receiving sites to include the Design & Innovation District; and (9) Article 16, "Definitions", updating certain definitions; providing for a repealer provision, severability clause, codification, and providing for an effective date.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: We have a full house, so we will take up the time certain items, ordinances on second reading. And I have a statement before we start.

City Clerk Urquia: Mr. Mayor, just really quick, before you proceed, I wanted to clarify something. During the public comments, it was the City Clerk's Office that missed the request to speak from the last three speakers, but the request had been made earlier and then that was why I requested to speak. It was an issue that I missed the request to speak.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: I'm sorry; say that again.

City Clerk Urquia: During the public comments, when you reopened the public comment, it was because the City Clerk's Office missed those last three requesters.

Vice Mayor Lago: Okay.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay.

City Clerk Urquia: Alright. Thank you, sir.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: We're going to consider now the Zoning Code changes, and I want to share with you some photos of Miracle Mile from the '20s, '30s, '40s and '50s. And throughout the many meetings, we have heard several speakers talk about going back to the glorious era, "glorious era." I do believe -- I do not believe that there's anyone that wants to go back to an entire Miracle Mile. Look at Miracle Mile in the '20s, '30s, '40s and '50s. We had a J. Byron's. We had a -- that's Miracle Mile. That's Miracle Mile in the '30s. Look at it, what a wonderful street. No median strip, no beautification, Miracle Mile in Coral Gables. Did you see those? Put the pic -- pass the pictures again. These pictures clearly demonstrate that the Mile has evolved and has evolved in a positive way, with a median strip and the streetscape project. Evolving is a way of

moving forward and surviving. We've also heard countless people talk to us about decreasing what is presently allowed. What is presently allowed is six stories. Presently, six stories are allowed, or 70 feet, and we're not making any changes to that. We're not increasing that. What we're trying to do, ladies and gentlemen is simply -- is simplify the Code and prevent Miracle Mile from having parking structures on the Mile that will make Miracle Mile a place that is not pedestrian-friendly with cars entering and exiting. Reducing the current rights of property owners is not allowed. It is something we simply cannot do. Simply put, it is illegal to reduce what is presently allowed. Do not take my word for it; there's an act. Florida is a state that provides relief to property -- to private landowners when a law, regulation or ordinance inordinately burdens, restricts or limits private property without amounting to a taking under the US Constitution. This law has been in effect since 1995, when the State of Florida enacted the Bert Harris, Jr. Private Property Rights Protection Act. This act provides a specific process for landowners to seek relief when their property is unfairly affected by government action. So, we cannot reduce what is allowed; six stories, 70 feet. As part of this act, claims exist if a government entity inordinately burdens an existing use of real property or a vested act -- a vested right to a specific use of real property. When the act was amended in 2008, 2011, they did not change the substance. What these amendments do is expedite, on the contrary, the claims process and extent protection, making it less difficult for landowners to make a claim. According to this act, if an inordinate burden occurs when a governmental action directly restricts or limits the use of real property, such that the owner is unable to attain the reasonable investment back, expectation for the existing use or vested right to a specific use, temporary burdens or those impacts caused by a government action, they have a right of action. We've also heard -- and today even -- that the process was hurried. The process has not been hurried. There has been nothing hush hush or rush rush about the process. And Mr. Trias has not hidden anything under his necktie or table or whatever it is. We have held numerous meetings, more than 25 to date, including four Sunshine meetings. And organizations, like the Coral Gables Neighborhood Association have been in the know now since the beginning. And we have records of their president, Sue Kawalerski, attending early meetings, as demonstrated by our sign-in sheets. Additionally, we have advertised the process widely and posted it on social

media. There's no hidden agenda here. During the last three meetings, we have heard from 67 people, 67 people we have heard from. Many of them have spoken multiple times, including Ms. Kawalerski, four times, and several others; Javier Banos, three times -- including today, four -- Ms. Kawalerski, four, including today; Thomas Snook, four times, including today; Gordon Sokoloff, four times; Karelia Carbonell, twice; Rhonda Anderson, three times, and four including today. People have spoken. People have expressed their opinions, and we have taken them into account. Let us move forward and do what is right for Coral Gables. Madam City Attorney, F-1.

City Attorney Ramos: Yes, sir. F-1 is an ordinance of the City Commission of Coral Gables, Florida providing for text and map amendments to the City of Coral Gables Official Zoning Code pursuant to Zoning Code Article 14, "Process," Section 14-212, "Zoning Code Text and Map Amendments," by amending the following provisions: (1) Article 1, "General Provisions," creating new zoning districts: Multi-family 3, Multi-Family 4, Mixed-Use 1, Mixed-Use 2, Mixed-Use 3, and Design/Industrial District Overlay; and deleting: Multi-Family Special Area, Commercial Limited, Commercial, Industrial, and the north and south Industrial Mixed-Use Overlay Districts, and making the appropriate zoning map amendments to effectuate these changes; (2) Article 2 "Zoning Districts", creating new zoning districts and associated provisions, deleting floor area ratio requirements in certain districts, and permitting uses in certain zoning districts; (3) Article 3 "Uses", allowing certain uses in new zoning districts, and updating Telecommunication provisions; (4) Article 4 "Urban Design and Public Improvement Standards", refining public realm improvements -- requirements; (5) Article 5 "Architecture", updating zoning districts to be consistent with Article 2; (6) Article 6 "Landscape", updating and increasing certain open space requirements; (7) Article 10 "Parking", updating certain parking requirements; (8) Article 14 "Process"; revising processes for zoning applications, clarifying procedures for receipt of Transfer of Development Rights, and expanding Transfer of Development Rights receiving sites to include Design & Innovation District; and (9) Article 16, "Definitions", updating certain definitions; providing for a repealer provision, severability clause, codification, and providing for an effective date. This is a public hearing item. Mr. Trias.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Mayor, I would like to start with an introduction by Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, the City consultant.

Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk: Thank you, Ramon. Liz Plater-Zyberk. I should start out, first of all, apologizing to the Commission that I cannot stay through the continuation of this discussion, as I teach a class this evening at the University, appropriately so, Adaptation to Climate Change. Following Mr. Hamra's (phonetic) comments this evening, I thought I would point out that among the many improvements to the Code is the addition of a chapter on the topic of resilience and sustainability. Thank you for allowing me to start you off by pointing out that we have, as you've pointed out, Mayor, heard the various comments and questions, and I feel compelled to tell you that in fact, all of those have confirmed that we were correct in addressing the very concerns that we heard repeatedly. That was part of the analysis at the outset of the process, namely the concern about scale, size and height of buildings. And so, we are ensuring, with the series of updates, that we will be encouraging a smaller scale through some of the updates that we are proposing, a smaller scale. And especially for Miracle Mile, with -- you know, we've explained it many times in the various ways that we would encourage smaller buildings. Well, I know that you have expressed your support for most of the updates, and you wished to give the residents additional time to comment and to provide opinions, I would like to encourage this evening that you pass the updates that your Planning Department is recommending for the Zoning Code. They have been very thoroughly considered, and I think that you've certainly heard the comments from both sides, both from those people who -- the supporters, as well as the detractors. So, with great confidence, we're encouraging you to go forward.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: When were you hired? When were you hired?

Commissioner Keon: '17?

Ms. Plater-Zyberk: Pardon me?

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: When were you hired by us to do these updates?

Ms. Plater-Zyberk: More than two years ago.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: More than two years ago.

Ms. Plater-Zyberk: Yeah.

Commissioner Keon: 2017.

Ms. Plater-Zyberk: Thank you.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: 2017, so this has been going on since 2017, and we're in 2021 now. Thank you.

Ms. Plater-Zyberk: Yes, thank you. And I'll be departing, unless you have questions for me right now.

Vice Mayor Lago: Thank you.

Commissioner Keon: I only want to thank you.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Thank you, Mayor. I don't have a presentation. I think everybody has seen the PowerPoint already.

Vice Mayor Lago: Yep.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: I think -- all I want to say is I want to thank you for the opportunity to listen to the neighbors that we've done in the last few meetings. It has been a very, very productive exercise, and I think that we've been able to provide all of the public information to anybody who has requested that. So, I'll be here. I think all the topics are well known. The second reading before you, F-1, deals with the Code, except Miracle Mile. As you requested, that has been separated; that's coming later. And of course, it does not deal with the amendment for the Crafts Section either. It's simply the bulk of the issues. The only change that I would recommend, the only additional issue that I would recommend as far as the overall Code is that I think we should have an FAR for the MF2 and MF4, the mixed use -- the high density residential -- an FAR of 2 or 2.5, with Med bonus. I think that that's a very good recommendation; that's consistent with what the Commission approved for North Ponce a few years ago, so it would make the Code internally very consistent. So, that's the only change at this point, and if you have any questions, I'll be here to help you through the discussion.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: So, F-1 excludes...

Commissioner Keon: That's in F-1?

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Does not deal with Miracle Mile or the Crafts Section.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: That's correct.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Is that correct? Okay, thank you. Alright, Commissioner Fors.

Commissioner Fors: Mayor, the first Sunshine meeting that I attended after being elected, which was now soon going to be two years, dealt with the zoning update. I've seen and heard from many residents who were at that meeting and subsequent meetings regarding the context of the entire Zoning Code update and revision. You know, there are a lot of things in this zoning -- proposed Zoning Code and update -- F-1, I'm speaking about only -- which are very good and that I know that residents support. All residents support increased open space requirements, mandatory setbacks on Le Jeune and US-1 restrictions to site plan amendments and various other changes, which I think the most important thing for me is that those changes are designed to incentivize -- as our consultant just explained and as Mr. Trias has explained many times -- smaller scale development. At the various community hearings, Mr. Trias had said something that continues to resonate with me, which is that when you look at the larger buildings that we hear the most complaints about, those are the direct result of the Zoning Code as it is written today. If you do not make revisions to it, you are going to get more of the same. Why? Because it's the only option. Are the measures that we are taking here going to actually result in smaller development? I don't know. You'd need a crystal ball to figure that out. What I do know is that not revising them and tweaking them will result in more of the same, because folks will build on their land, and the only feasible option they will have is to assemble it in larger assemblages and create these bigger buildings that we look at and wish were more in line with what I think people envision for the City of Coral Gables. I received many emails that said that they were against the Zoning Code in its entirety. I don't think anybody can say that because there are various different things in there. You can certainly disagree with one particular measure; it could be Miracle Mile, it could be the Crafts Section. But for the most part, there are so many items in there that are truly just revisions and updating and clarifying and codifying things that we have already been implementing for years now that were simply not written in our code, and for that reason, separating the other issues -- and by the way, I want to make clear, Mr. Trias, F-1 does not permit for taller buildings anywhere in the City, is that right?

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yeah, that's correct.

Commissioner Fors: Okay, so for that reason, you know, I don't view this as something that's being hurried because it was one of the first things on my agenda when I was elected. In fact, I view it as something that's been delayed. And while we can talk about -- more carefully about some of the specific areas of concern, F-1, with those severed, is something that I believe it's incumbent upon this Commission to get done already. One of the first meetings as a Commissioner, I remember something that Commissioner Mena said, which is that he does not wear delay as a badge of honor. This was going on before I was elected. It continued to go on through today's date, and I'm personally ready to move forward with the F-1 portion of the Zoning Code.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you, Commissioner Fors. Commissioner Keon.

Commissioner Keon: I agree with what Commissioner Fors has said. I -- you know, we have in our Code now, we have low rise at 45 feet, we have midrise at 70 feet, and then we go to high rise at 190 feet. We don't have that in between, and we don't encourage that in between. Because people -- once they assemble the parcels where they can build, they might as well build to the highest they can build, and that's where we end up with the 190 feet. So, that is the highest building that will ever -- that has ever been built in the City. It is the highest building that's ever been allowed in the City, and there's nothing in this that will increase it. Hopefully, what we will get is that 100- to 120-foot building, that's the middle on decent parcels of land and discourage those very high buildings. After serving my first four years here as a Commissioner and into the -- my second term, I went to the Manager and asked her if we could take a look at some of the issues in the Code that kept coming back to us all the time and were problematic, and they were site specific that were -- where there were conflicts. The issue of mixed-use zoning or mixed-use buildings was not in our Code. And so, we either had to go from multifamily to commercial or commercial to multifamily, and the regulations for each were very different. And so, then it became, so which ones are you entitled to. If you go to this, are you entitled to this? If you go to this, are you entitled

to this? And it became, you know, an ongoing discussion with developers and land use attorneys as to what by right they could have. This -- these updates clarify all of those issues. It puts mixed use in our Code, and it makes it very clear what you have to do to comply with the Code as it now will be written if we adopt these. These are good measures that make our Code much more transparent. It makes -- it takes care of ambiguities and conflicts that had existed in the older Code. So, I also support this item.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you. Commissioner Mena.

Commissioner Mena: Yes. You know, I think Commissioner Fors really hit the nail on the head on a couple -- on really the entire process here and what we have in front of us. And I'm not just saying that because he quoted me, but because I thought he was on point with his remarks. You know, we've gone through a really extensive process here, I know I've participated in all the public meetings I think the only one I missed actually was the Chamber of Commerce, the recent Chamber of Commerce one. But I've otherwise listened to all the comments. I've had a lot of emails, a lot of one-on-one meetings, a lot of phone calls. And with respect to this particular item, F-1, I really think there's a lot in here that is really an improvement on what we have now. And to the point that Ramon has been making and that Commissioner Fors just echoed, you know, I do think that in a lot of ways, this is designed to improve the quality of the projects that get built, and in a lot of ways, actually reduced the scale of a lot of those projects. Just to sort of forecast a little bit where I am, big picture, as to this item, F-1, there are two aspects of it that I would be supportive of F-1 if we perhaps -- and I don't know how realistic it is to do this, but if there's a way to sort of defer on two aspects of it. If there's not, I'll ask staff to advise me on how else to proceed. But my -- the two items for me that I still have some concerns about are the removal of the FAR limitations -- and Ramon, maybe you can walk me through what it was that you just were describing. I think you said MF2 and MF4.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Which are the ones that deal with the higher density residential, and we eliminated the FAR from those originally.

Commissioner Mena: So, what would you be -- setting aside MF2 and MF4 then, what would you be removing FAR limitations for? For all other multifamily?

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: No, no, those are the only two multifamily of any consequence. MF3 is mostly town houses and so on.

Commissioner Mena: Right.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: You can also have it there if you choose to, but you know, that's really...

Commissioner Mena: Right.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Not as necessary. But what I'm recommending is that based on the input that I received and thinking about this with the City Manager and with the consultant, is that the 2.0 and 2.5 for Med bonus Level II, which is the same as we have in the North Ponce Overlay, has proven to be effective in the different projects that we've had through the last few years for North Ponce for the MF2 category that we currently have in the Code. So, I think that's a good solution, and certainly it alleviates the concern that has been expressed by many people.

Commissioner Mena: So -- okay, so it sounds like we're on the same page on that, actually. So thank you for clarifying that. So, that was one item. The other was the parking minimums, and I'm not -- to be clear, I'm not here taking a position opposed to reducing those minimums. I would just like to have some further discussion on it, and particularly in the context of Miracle Mile,

which I don't anticipate taking a final vote on today, frankly. We'll see what happens when we get to that item. But I'm not going to be supporting what's currently proposed on Miracle Mile today. And so, if it's acceptable to my colleagues, and if it's something that you think is doable, I would ask that -- I would support F-1 if, in addition to the FAR issue, we could also, for now, defer on the parking minimum reduction as we continue the discussion on some of the other items that we're going to continue to have.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: That's possible, but what I would advise is that the parking minimums have a bigger impact on Miracle Mile than in the rest of the downtown, so...

Commissioner Mena: And let me be clear.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yeah.

Commissioner Mena: I frankly, if I was forced to vote on parking minimums, I would probably support it on some level, maybe not the exact reduction we have. But I don't see any rush. I think we can proceed with the other items in here.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Sure.

Commissioner Mena: I think we can table that aspect of this while we continue to discuss Miracle Mile and everything else, and then, you know, we'll make a final decision on it at the opportune time. But that's -- again, as far as F-1, that's where I am today. I would be supportive if those two items were amended accordingly.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Alright. Vice Mayor.

Vice Mayor Lago: Thank you, Mayor. I'll be brief. You know, I -- first off, I'd like to thank all the residents for their input and staff's efforts over the last few years to bring this hopefully to fruition today. I'll be voting no on F-1, and -- like I voted in the first reading. But there's two main issues that really concern me and why I think that we need to have a little bit more discussion, even though I'm ready to vote today on the Crafts Section, and I will be voting no on Miracle Mile also if you take...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yeah, but we're in F-1.

Vice Mayor Lago: No, no, go ahead, Mayor. And I'll be voting no on Miracle Mile also. My two big concerns are, obviously, the FAR. I think the FAR should be -- remain intact. It should not - the cap should not be removed or reduced. I also have a big issue with parking reductions. Ramon, you've been here for a few years. This would be the second time in five years that we've reduced parking requirements.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yes, I believe so.

Vice Mayor Lago: So, let me tell you why it's a big issue, and I want people to really understand that. We keep reducing parking requirements, which allow developers to not have to build so many parking spaces, correct?

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Right.

Vice Mayor Lago: To me, if we're going to implement a remote parking strategy, I want to make sure the City receives as much bang for their buck as possible. So, if a developer is going to develop a project and use remote parking, we shouldn't reduce the parking, because that means they're going to be paying less into the fund. To me, I think that's only a one-sided benefit. I think that we need to really, really, you know, be careful. I am in favor of remote parking,

especially in the industrial area. When you're talking about the industrial area, it has over 2,000 parking spaces in Miracle Mile, and I think that it's something that we need to go back to and have a conversation, a serious conversation with Miracle Mile as the owners of that property, you know, and obviously, we lease it to that entity, but we need to have a serious discussion about remote parking. Because I'm in favor of remote parking in the Design District, as newly-minted by our City Manager. I think it's an opportunity to really bring something great and beautiful, reduced projects in scale, but I'm in favor, because we already have the existing parking. We have 2,000 parking spaces, and that's why I wrote the ordinance for the Design District to allow small lot sizes to go vertical, two and three stories because they could use the parking from Miracle Mile, or from an adjacent building that had excessive parking. So, I mean, I think that what I would like to see is a little bit more discussion on the item in reference to F-1. I'm ready to vote today, if they want to vote. My vote continues to be no; it's been consistent since the beginning. I will not be voting in favor of Miracle Mile today. And what I would like to vote is in reference to the Crafts Section, which I'm in support of, considering Commissioner Mena's comments from the last two or three meetings that we've had. Yes, Miracle Mile.

City Manager Iglesias: Yes. Vice Mayor, just to discuss parking, with the comments you said and Commissioner Mena. When we do -- when we build buildings right now, we're building very good buildings. I think if you look at -- as a construction person, you know, our Codes are fairly strong now, and our buildings are going to the last 50, 60 -- 50 years, if they're built to Code. So, we are looking at a transition in transportation that's occurring now, yet we're building structures that are going to be effective 50 years from now. So, the question is, when do we start that transition, right? When is a good time to say, "Let's look at this and tweak it a little bit so that we can start this transition." Because people say five years; I don't believe -- I don't think it's five years, but let's say it's 15 years. Well, we have a 50-year building -- a 40-, 50-year building, and we have a 15-year transition to that. So -- and Commissioner Mena, we have to look at that, at what we're building now. What we're building now is going to affect us 40, 50 years from now. So, when do we start -- when do we look at the trends? When do we look at this transition from

one transportation means to maybe a separate transportation means, where we're talking about autonomous parking, various other issues, which are going to really change the -- and if we're saying it's not going to happen in 40 years, then we're in really sad shape...

Vice Mayor Lago: Mr. Manager.

City Manager Iglesias: If it's not going to happen in 40 years.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay, let's go on.

City Manager Iglesias: So, I'm just saying that that's what we're trying to do.

Vice Mayor Lago: And I understand that.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: The Vice Mayor has said that he's going to vote against and...

Vice Mayor Lago: But my point -- but my final point is...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: What?

Vice Mayor Lago: My final point is, I think that we need to -- and it's an issue of -- like I was talking about the parking reductions. We're reducing parking again, so that means that when people apply for remote parking, they're going to be buying less parking spaces, which is going to hurt the City, in my opinion. But when you look at the issue, it's just like we did for North Gables. In North Gables, we increased the density from 50 units an acre to 100. To me, that benefit of the developers immensely -- I voted no against that. I thought that was too excessive, in my feeling and my opinion. If you look at the projects that are coming before us in North Gables, developers are not stopping at a hundred units an acre. They're coming in, and you know very well, at 115,

120 units an acre. So, even with a redefined Code and a reduction in parking, I know it's up to the Commission to hold the line, but what's going to end up happening is when you reduce parking for a second time, they're going to come with even less parking spaces, and they're going to come for even more units. So, the point is, there needs to be a public benefit component. We're reducing parking, we're adding more density, we're adding more intensity. To me, we have to be very thoughtful when we do this because we're going to change what's made this City so special. So, to me, that's my opinion, and I'm -- if you want to take the vote, I'm more than willing to take the vote.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you.

Commissioner Fors: Was Commissioner Mena's question answered about the feasibility of postponing a vote specifically on the parking reductions.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yes. You have the ability to do that, yes.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Madam -- we've heard from the Commission.

City Attorney Ramos: This is a public hearing item, sir. We should see if there's anyone who wishes to speak.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Mr. Urquia.

City Clerk Urquia: Mr. Mayor, we have about 19 speakers right now.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay.

City Clerk Urquia: Before we start calling speakers, I just wanted to let everyone know this is on agenda item F-1, not on the Crafts Section or Miracle Mile.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: This has nothing at all to do with Miracle Mile or the Crafts Section.

City Clerk Urquia: Okay.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Will you call the first speaker?

City Clerk Urquia: Yes, sir. The first speaker is Ms. Carelia Carbonell.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Two minutes, right? Madam City Attorney?

City Attorney Ramos: It's up to you how long you'd like to give them, sir.

Karelia Carbonell: Hi.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: We'll give you two minutes, please, 19 speakers.

Ms. Carbonell: No, I -- now I heard that this is not about the Miracle Mile and Crafts Section, so I'm going to defer. Thank you.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you.

Ms. Carbonell: I'll speak on that topic.

City Clerk Urquia: Okay. The next speaker is Mr. Javier Banos.

Javier Banos: Good afternoon, again, members of the Commission. Just to point out the same issue that we had prior to this, I think Commissioner Fors gave a well-reasoned, respectable understanding as to why this is something that should be passed. But I believe, at some point in time, Commissioner Mena expressed some concerns as to what should -- more modifications, and Commissioner Lago gave a well-reasoned concerns as to why it should not. I think most of the discussion, since October when this was put on first reading, by every member of the community has been on the other two items that are present. We have not had a change to flesh out every item in this particular -- on F-1, in particular. I think the public will benefit from an item by item understanding, as Commissioner Fors pointed out, of what the changes are, why they're needed and how they're going to impact the daily lives. I think that perspective, that ability to discern how this is something that is important to them is missing, despite the many meetings that the City may have had. This is something you -- Mr. Trias breathes and understands on a daily basis. Most folks are not -- don't have that understanding. So, I believe -- I will encourage you to postpone this item, give a full-fledged understanding of what it is. And you don't have -- you know, you're our representatives. This is representative of democracy. You don't have to govern by the populous. It doesn't have to be direct democracy, but I think a little better understanding of what is in this particular item and it will impact their lives, on an item by item basis, will benefit the public and educate everyone, and you'll have more buy-in. Because at this point in time, I think everyone is skeptical of all the changes because of the comments such as the comments that were made by the Mayor earlier, and as illustrated by his attitude towards Mr. (INAUDIBLE). Thank you.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you. Mr. Banos, for the record, this is your fifth appearance on this issue, fifth.

Mr. Banos: Mr. Mayor, if I may reply. I'm welcome to an enter in every single...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: No, no, you can speak...

Mr. Banos: Item (INAUDIBLE).

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Ten times, but don't say that you haven't given an -- you haven't been given an opportunity to be heard. Next, Mr. Urquia.

Mr. Banos: I don't think I said that, sir. And I resent your continued desire to head back at every resident. We get to...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: And every resident...

Mr. Banos: Talk to you, sir, yes.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: You've spoken five times...

Mr. Banos: Every...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: On this issue, Mr. Banos...

Mr. Banos: Every single resident, all you have done...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: And yet, you accuse us of not allowing the public to speak.

Mr. Banos: (INAUDIBLE) insulting Mr. (INAUDIBLE).

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Five times.

Mr. Banos: You directly insulted...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Mr. Urquia, will you call the next speaker?

Mr. Banos: (INAUDIBLE). It is unacceptable, your behavior to the community.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Very unacceptable. Yes, thank you.

City Clerk Urquia: The next speaker is Stefan Zeus.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Who?

City Clerk Urquia: Stefan Zeus.

Stefan Zeus: Yes, yes, good evening. Good evening, Mayor, Vice Mayor and Commissioners. And my name is Stefan Zeus. I'm living here in Catalonia Avenue for over three years -- three and a half years, and off and on in between Coral Gables and Coconut Grove for the last 20, 22 years, and so, I know a little bit about the development here. And I -- or we actually, everybody on the street, is in support of the rezoning, and also, of the rezoning of the Crafts Section. And this is now going on for over 10 years, this rezoning approach, and for three years, as far as I'm also involved. And I think at this point, it should not be -- there should not be a platform for some residents who have nothing to do with our neighborhood, who don't live in our neighborhood actually to hijack this process in the last minute. There were nobody -- really, there was no voice heard. As far as I know, most people, everybody from the homeowner association doesn't live here in our area. I think we all know that this area right off Le Jeune, is -- I don't want to say -- is not a family neighborhood, whatever you want to call it. And you know, as John Steinbeck once said, you can't make out of a pig, a racehorse. I don't want to call my neighborhood a pig; it's very beautiful, but it's definitely not a family neighborhood with chirping birds and families pushing strollers around. So, I just want to give you a vision in your head when you make a

decision. So, when I take somebody who has no idea of this administrative concept of zoning, you know, somebody from wherever. And I'd take him by the hand and walk him down Catalonia Avenue on the left side, meaning the west side of Le Jeune, and then cross over to the right side of Catalonia Avenue and Le Jeune to see this is a total different area. This is not a family neighborhood. So, I think it's at the time where we should name what it is and just move forward now with the rezoning of this whole area. Thank you very much for your effort actually to move this forward. Thank you.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you.

City Clerk Urquia: The next speaker is Ms. Tania Cruz Gimenez. Ma'am, go ahead.

Tanya Cruz Gimenez: Good evening, Tanya Cruz Gimenez. I'd like to speak on Miracle Mile and the Crafts Section.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: We're not on that topic yet, Ms. Cruz Gimenez.

Ms. Cruz Gimenez: That's fine, but I was called in and so...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: You what?

Ms. Cruz Gimenez: I'm going to speak. I was called to speak, so unless you want to defer me until that item.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Well, we will defer you, and we will recognize you when that time comes, which is Items 3 and 4.

City Clerk Urquia: Okay, the next speaker...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Absolutely, you will have the right to speak at that time. We're now -- not on that topic.

City Clerk Urquia: Samantha Duran.

Samantha Duran: Hi, my name is Samantha Duran. I'm a disability activist, as well as the Disabilities Coordinator of the Miami-Dade Young Democrats, the secretary of the Democratic Disabilities Caucus of Florida. And my foremost issue with Coral Gables is the fact that the City has neglected accessibility for the disabled community.

Commissioner Mena: Wow.

Ms. Duran: Twenty-six percent of the population has a disability and...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Miss, we're talking about a Zoning Code.

Ms. Duran: Well, yes, it has -- it pertains to the Zoning Code because accessibility is about zoning codes. Parking is about zoning codes. When 12,922 of your population has a disability, it is unacceptable that people like me who are wheelchair users can't go to your businesses because I cannot park. It's very seldom that I find disabled parking available. And for someone who has a wheelchair, I cannot use a regular parking spot because I cannot assemble my wheelchair and go into facilities. So, you know, when 26 percent of the population has a disability, you should care about these issues because really, it's affecting businesses. And I find it unacceptable that this isn't even something that we're talking about.

Commissioner Mena: Thank you, ma'am.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you, ma'am.

Commissioner Mena: I just want to say, you know, I really, genuinely appreciate those comments. I would just -- I don't know how active you are in our City's disability affairs efforts or not, so if you are, I apologize. If you're not, I would just want you to be aware of the fact that the City has really taken extraordinary steps to address disability affairs issues. We have a Disability Affairs Board that looks at all sorts of issues that the City deals with. We have staff dedicated to that issue.

Vice Mayor Lago: A coordinator.

Commissioner Mena: A direct coordinator on that issue. Our Parks and Recreation Department has opened special facilities for people with disabilities. We have events all the time. It's an issue we really take to heart and actually take a lot of pride in the efforts that we've undertaken. That's not to say we're perfect, that's not to say there may not be areas where we can improve. So, to the extent you have areas that you think we can do better, I certainly welcome your input. I would ask you to please contact us and give us particulars. Perhaps, we can even connect you with our staff members and our Disability Affairs Board so that they can consider the ideas that you have. But I just want to convey to you that I know everybody up here takes very seriously those issues, and everybody on our staff takes those issues very seriously, and that goes not only for physical disabilities, but also for people with autism and other conditions. And so again, we really take it seriously. We try very, very hard to be an inclusive city which fights for those issues. I think we've been awarded things by various associations for some of our efforts. I don't have our resume handy on this issue, but I'll just reiterate that we take a lot of -- we take it very seriously. And so again, if you have specific items where you think we can improve, please contact us. We will do whatever we can to consider those and try to weave them into any efforts we have. But I want you to know that it's an issue that the City takes very seriously and has made a lot of efforts to address and improve over the years.

City Manager Iglesias: And if I may...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: I would like to echo...

City Manager Iglesias: Say that since we're dealing with the Zoning Code, our Development Services Department takes very seriously enforcing the Florida Building Code accessibility...

Vice Mayor Lago: ADA.

City Manager Iglesias: In all the projects to ensure that we provide as much accessibility to all our structures. And our Building Official, our Building Director and Development Services Director all are very, very adamant about making sure that we enforce properly the Florida Building Code accessibility for all buildings and all construction.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you very much, and I invite you to get involved because it is -- and I echo the City Manager's and Commissioner Mena's comments. It is an issue that we take very, very seriously in all aspects, including autism, including physical disabilities. And we really try to appoint to our committee the best people possible, so I invite you to get involved. Next.

City Clerk Urquia: Next speaker is Ms. Sheryl Gold.

Ms. Duran: Can I add something?

Commissioner Mena: Yes, please. Go ahead.

Ms. Duran: I really appreciate you bringing that to my attention. However, I do believe that the City can become more accessible and -- well, this is -- this pertains to F-5, but whenever I go to

Miracle Mile, I literally cannot find parking, and I spend more than like an hour driving around trying to find accessible parking. And it's very dangerous for wheelchair users to park in regular parking spots because it's street parking. So where I assemble my wheelchair is where people are driving by. My equipment costs -- my wheelchair cost \$16,000 and insurances only pay for wheelchairs every five years. So, if someone were to run over my wheelchair, I literally would not be able to get around.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you, ma'am. Thank you very much.

Commissioner Mena: Yeah, thank...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Next.

Commissioner Mena: Really -- I just want to reiterate. Thank you for that feedback. Like, you know, I mean it when I say that we really would welcome any specific feedback you have, so you just gave a good example. And again, I would love to connect you with our Disability Affairs personnel and board, so that they can look on a more micro level at some of the issues that are of concern to you as somebody who, frankly, is somebody who's impacted by these things and has real-world insight that we may not always have. And so, I welcome it. I mean it when I say -- please, my email is mmena@coralgables.com. All of our emails are on the City's website. If you contact us, I will do whatever I can to connect you with the right people so that we can elicit your feedback and really evaluate what we can do to improve. We take a lot of pride in what we do, but again, we recognize you can always do better. You know, nobody has a perfect score on these issues, and so whatever we can do to improve, we'll...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you.

Commissioner Mena: Try.

Vice Mayor Lago: You know, and another point...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay, let's go on.

Vice Mayor Lago: If I can just add a point to Commissioner Mena's statement. We're in the process right now -- you mentioned municipal parking garages and the importance and the cost of your equipment, obviously, for your daily use and getting out of the car and how dangerous it is. Right now, we're in the process of designing a world-class municipal parking garage to be located on Andalusia. So, like Commissioner Mena mentioned, listen, your feedback is important to us. We just hired an architect. We're going through the process of design. So, right now -- and I welcome you, I welcome your friends, experts, to please get involved. My previous board members of the Planning and Zoning Board, Rhonda Anderson used to be very involved; still is very involved in ADA issues, and she used to bring it up constantly at the Planning and Zoning Board. But I welcome your comments, just like I welcome everybody's comments, like Commissioner Mena mentioned, while we're designing this project to make it as accessible for all and to be as inclusive as well. So, please...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: We all do.

Commissioner Mena: Take Commissioner Mena's comments and please join us so that we can, you know, make a world-class facility even better.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Mr. City Clerk, let's go on with the next speaker, please.

City Clerk Urquia: The next speaker is Ms. Sheryl Gold.

Sheryl Gold: Good evening, Mayor and Commissioners. Sheryl Gold, 721 Biltmore Way. I moved to Coral Gables five years ago to escape overdevelopment and loss of resident quality of life. I was attracted to the tree canopy, Mediterranean architecture, and the historic low-rise character of the city. I never anticipated the nonstop construction, increased density and scale of projects impacting my new neighborhood. I've attended seven meetings, including the one sponsored by the Chamber to inform myself about the zoning rewrite. To date, my concerns have not been addressed. I listened intently as Mr. Trias and the consultant repeatedly blamed the existing Zoning Code for big projects and claimed the objective of the zoning rewrite is to encourage smaller buildings. I have come to understand this is very misleading. The problem is not the Zoning Code, but the zoning map. The problem originates with developers asking for all types of exceptions, then staff goes to great lengths to justify its positive recommendation. The planning boards give a nod and a wink, and then the Commission votes to approve these projects. Coincidentally, as an example, Ponce Park Residences is coming before the Planning and Zoning Board tomorrow. The developer is requesting an amendment to the City plan for the vacation of a segment of University Drive, a public street, plus a public alleyway. The height of the building as of right is 50 feet, or 77 with Med bonus, but they're requesting -- after multiple conditional uses, TDRs, Med bonus, vacating the taxpayers' property -- the building height increases from 50 feet to 190 and a half feet.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Please conclude, ma'am. Your time is up. Please conclude.

Ms. Gold: Excuse me, I'm trying to conclude. I thought I was allowed three minutes.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: You're allowed two minutes. Please conclude. Go ahead.

Ms. Gold: The point is that no matter what happens with the Zoning Code, everything has to do with the egregious, egregious circumvention of the intent of the Zoning Code by the developers and by everyone that votes along the way to approve these projects.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you, ma'am.

Ms. Gold: So I'm asking you...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you very much. Let's go on, Mr. City Clerk.

Ms. Gold: Of course, you know, you cut me off.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yes, I did.

City Clerk Urquia: The next speaker, Mr. Mayor, is Ms. Rhonda Anderson.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Ms. Anderson, welcome back. You have two minutes.

Rhonda Anderson: Okay, technical difficulties. On F-1, I've got four points to cover for you.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Two minutes.

Ms. Anderson: The first -- I understand and if I'm interrupted, you're cutting into my two minutes, so please just listen. Parking minimums in the North Ponce area repeatedly were insufficient when I saw projects in front of the Planning and Zoning Board. Yet, because it was as of right, according to the Code as its currently written, you're taking away parking areas for historic buildings and burdening areas already burdened with insufficient parking as well. So, I urge you to vote no as to F-1. This needs a lot more detail to it. Second item has to do with -- is part of the parking issue, dealing with town homes, in which there's been a request for one-car garages irrespective of the number of square feet, the number of bedrooms in the facility, which is just going to result in destruction of neighborhood swales and parking green spaces throughout our city. It's not geared

to the number of bedrooms, and therefore, should not be approved. Number three, multi-use buildings. This was a matter that was discussed in front of the Planning and Zoning Board. The requirement for retail in all of these multi-use buildings, requiring it to be part of the building is drawing away from Miracle Mile and resulting in empty retail in buildings that have been sitting vacant for over 10 years. If you don't know what I'm talking about, take a look at the five -- six-story building on the north end of Ponce, in the 8 to 900 block area, and you'll see that vacant retail that's been there for over 10 years. Reduction or removal of FAR absolutely should not be done. And my last point has to deal with disability access. And I would mirror the comments of Ms. Duran. The City has a long way to go with disability access. I would suggest, as I have before, a day in the life with City employees going around the city...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you, Ms. Anderson.

Ms. Anderson: Excuse me, one last point.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Please.

Ms. Anderson: Salvador Park doesn't even have accessible parking. We don't have van accessible parking on the Mile. We have...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you.

Ms. Anderson: Work to do.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you very much. Thank you, and your comments are always welcome, and this is the fifth time you appear before us. And as I say, your comments are always welcome. Next.

City Clerk Urquia: Next speaker is Maria Ason.

Maria Ason: Hi. My name is Maria T. Ason. I live at 325 Malaga Avenue. I'm in support of the actual zoning code update. I think that's a great improvement for our city, as well in support of the Crafts Section rezoning. My neighbors and I have been waiting for the change of zoning in the Crafts Section for more than 10 years. An additional three years...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Do you want to...

Ms. Ason: For the zoning update.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Miss, hello? Do you want to postpone your comments until we get to the Crafts Section? They will be much more effective at that time, and we will recognize you then, of course.

Ms. Ason: Sure, no problem.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Alright, go ahead.

City Clerk Urquia: Okay. The next speaker is Henry Yaniz.

Unidentified Speaker: Can you call again a name, Billy?

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: You want to go on to the next one, and then we'll come back?

City Clerk Urquia: Mr. Yaniz?

City Attorney Ramos: Yes.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: What?

Henry Yaniz: Yeah, we're -- Can you hear me?

City Clerk Urquia: Yes, sir.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yes, we can.

Mr. Yaniz: Oh, okay. Yeah, good evening. Thank you, Mr. Mayor and Mr. Vice Mayor and Commission. Commissioners, you guys have been great, all of you, in welcoming our comments, and we're here to support the rezoning update, as discussed. We're at 330 Catalonia Avenue. I'm here with my wife. My mother-in-law, who's 90 years or old, lives in that house at the time. We've been waiting a very long time, over 10 years, having to do with all of the rezoning issues, and we have participated in any number of --we feel very welcome to share our comments in any number of Commission meetings and planning meetings in the zoning area. It's been many years, three years, we've participated, as I said, in a bunch of these meetings. And we'd like to see no more delays and that the vote be taken supporting the F-1. We are from that area, and sometimes folks speak from outside, and we'd like to be heard and be sure that this is taken up and finally approved.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you, sir. Thank you very much.

Mr. Yaniz: Thank you for your time and thank you for listening to us once again.

City Clerk Urquia: The next speaker is Richard Formoso.

Richard Formoso: Hi. My name is Richard Formoso. I live at 301 Malaga Avenue, in the Coral Gables Crafts Section. I just wanted to speak briefly and say that I am in support of the changes to that.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Sir, do you want to --? As I said to prior speakers, do you want to save your comments until we get to the Crafts Section? They'll be much more effective at this -- at that point. And we will certainly recognize you.

Mr. Formoso: I have no comments on the Crafts Section. I'm just making comments on F-1, and I would like to say that I'm insupport...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay.

Mr. Formoso: Of the changes...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Go ahead.

Mr. Formoso: Made to the Zoning Code under F-1. That's the end of my comment, so thank you.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you very much. Thank you very much for your participation.

City Clerk Urquia: Okay, next speaker is Mr. Jackson "Rip" Holmes.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Mr. Holmes.

Jackson "Rip" Holmes: Yeah, how are we doing? Thank you. I hope you can appreciate that when you're sitting at home, and there's so many people, you never know when you're going to be called, so I finally got myself dressed up here. I'm really alarmed that the City would have so

little respect for the citizens that you won't answer the questions; maybe it's not too late, you can answer it now, as to the impact of the FAR changes on the respective categories. Vince Lago was heroic to help some citizens who were listening understand that these relaxation of FAR requirements have an impact. There's no FAR requirement, I understand, on multifamily buildings.

Commissioner Mena: We're removing that, Rip.

Mr. Holmes: Say it again, please.

Commissioner Mena: Just to answer your question, since you asked for an answer, we discussed earlier the fact that we're proposing to approve F-1 but remove the aspect of it that removed the FAR limitations, so there will not be a removal of the FAR limitation.

Mr. Holmes: Oh, now, this is -- pinch me, pinch me, please. You're saying that you're leaving the FAR requirements on all of these matters as is?

Commissioner Mena: Yes.

Mr. Holmes: So, this actually...

Commissioner Mena: We...

Mr. Holmes: Am I hallucinating or just confused?

Commissioner Mena: We heard your -- we heard a lot of the...

Commissioner Keon: I think it's as is.

Commissioner Mena: Resident feedback, and to your point, we listened, and that was one of the changes we're making.

Mr. Holmes: Alright, so Mr. Mena, I got to tell you something. You're my Christmas surprise here. Forgive me because this is so critically important. This means everything. You're taking the whole FAR changes off the table; it's not part of this vote.

Commissioner Mena: It looks like Mr. Trias...

Mr. Holmes: Is that true?

Commissioner Mena: That's my understanding. It looks like Mr. Trias wants to clarify something, so let me give him an opportunity to do that, and you'll have your time to speak, Mr. Holmes. Just a second.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: (INAUDIBLE) same FAR that you, as a Commission, approved some two or three years ago for the North Ponce. Currently, the FAR has a sliding scale that is very complicated, that is very difficult to predict what the outcome is going to be. That is the practical issue for MF2. I would never recommend the current sliding scale to anyone.

Commissioner Mena: Right.

Mr. Holmes: Okay, so should I ask you to interpret that please, Commissioner Mena?

Commissioner Mena: Yeah, the FAR, Rip, specifically for MF2 and MF4 -- is that right, Ramon?

Commissioner Keon: Yes.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yes, that's correct.

Commissioner Mena: Yeah, the...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: The multifamily, yes.

Commissioner Mena: Right, so that's the multifamily that you referenced is going to be two and two and a half. Is that what you said?

Commissioner Keon: Two point five.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yes, two for regular buildings, and two and a half for Med II.

Commissioner Mena: Which is consistent with what was approved in North Ponce several years ago. And again...

Mr. Holmes: But still, this is a change, though. This is a change, so you're not taking the FAR changes off the table; you're going to be voting on a change in the FAR, correct?

Commissioner Mena: The proposal that was in the proposed amendment -- the proposed item, F-1, was removing FAR limitations altogether. We're not doing that.

Mr. Holmes: I get you, so it's half a loaf. Alright, but what then about the other two FAR questions. Are you taking changes off the table or are you voting on changes?

Commissioner Mena: I'm not sure I follow your question, I apologize.

Commissioner Fors: There are no other FAR changes on F-1, correct?

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Right, that's correct. That was the only issue.

Commissioner Fors: And by the way, I want to clarify something. I'm on the same page regarding the FAR. I didn't mention in my initial comments because I had gone out of my way and happened to discuss that and learned that we would be recommending the 2.0, 2.5. As we know, I wasn't able to speak to Commissioner Mena about that in private due to the Sunshine Law, but that's the only reason I did not mention it in my initial comment.

Mr. Holmes: Well, I appreciate you saying that, but I need from both of you all and Mr. Lago clarification here. There's three areas of FAR that are of concern to me, and it has to do with the three categories. One is, I believe, regular residential; there's a proposed loosening of those requirements. One is to do with apartment buildings. There's a proposed loosening, giving developers more rights as to FAR. And then there's a proposal of eliminating an FAR requirement -- as I understand it -- with multifamily buildings. So, I think you need to clarify...

Commissioner Fors: All of that is off the table.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Mr...

Mr. Holmes: Say it again, please.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Mr. Holmes, your time is up.

Commissioner Fors: All of that is off the table.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: And we clarified here, but your time is up, sir. Thank you very much for your participation.

Mr. Holmes: Mayor, you're not telling the truth. I'm sorry to say this.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: We're not telling the truth?

Mr. Holmes: Can we get some clarification, please?

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: What?

Commissioner Mena: Yeah, I think Commissioner Fors was trying to respond to you.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay.

Commissioner Fors: Well, actually, I shouldn't say all of it's off the table, but that's what staff is recommending now, to not make any changes that involved removing FAR from any designation, none of the three designations that you mentioned. So, those...

Mr. Holmes: Yeah.

Commissioner Fors: All will have...

Mr. Holmes: Alright, but the thing is...

Commissioner Fors: FAR consistent with what...

Mr. Holmes: Only one of them...

Commissioner Fors: We've done in the Ponce area.

Mr. Holmes: Only -- are you saying there will be no changes except that for multifamily buildings, there will be a minimum FAR, whereas there was not going to be. Is that correct?

Commissioner Mena: Ramon, you want to (INAUDIBLE)?

Commissioner Keon: Yes, there is a minimum FAR, and it's 2 and 2.5 with Med bonuses. Previously, there was a sliding scale FAR that was somewhat unpredictable and very difficult to work with, that left you without great assurance as to what the FAR was going to be. This is a much more...

Mr. Holmes: Alright. I assume that's on multifamily.

Commissioner Keon: Predictable way of assessing FAR or imposing FAR and should work much better and be far more predictable and very...

Mr. Holmes: I assume you're speaking out...

Commissioner Keon: Transparent. No...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Mr. Holmes...

Mr. Holmes: I assume...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you very, very much. Do you want to go on to the next one?

City Manager Iglesias: If we could clarify that the FAR is in additional to all the other restrictions that apply...

Commissioner Keon: Yes.

City Manager Iglesias: To multifamily that we have discussed already.

Commissioner Keon: Yes.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Alright, okay, Mr. -- let's -- next one.

City Clerk Urquia: Next speaker is Alain Yaniz.

Alain Yaniz: Yes, hi. Thank you. I was going to speak on behalf of -- in support of the Zoning Code, and more specifically, the Crafts Section, so I'm going to defer my comments till we get to that section.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you.

Vice Mayor Lago: Thank you.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: We will recognize you then.

City Clerk Urquia: Next speaker is Ms. Sue Kawalerski.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Ms. Kawalerski, you're on.

City Clerk Urquia: Okay. We'll go ahead and proceed then.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Let's go on to the next one, and then we'll come back to Ms. Kawalerski.

City Clerk Urquia: The next speaker is Brooks Miller.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Mr. Miller. Okay.

Brooks Miller: Resident of the City of Coral Gables. I think many of you know who I am and I'm an attorney. And I have to tell you that one of my primary problems with all of this is not only the lack of notice concerning the changes, but the technical terminology that we're dealing with. When we had the hearing the other day between Mr. Trias and Ms. Zyberk, I didn't understand a thing of it, and I'm a guy that deals with complex international securities law. Okay, so the problem that we have is a lack of communication. The communication needs to be -- and Commissioner Fors is correct that if we understood what was going to be done here, that we would be in support of it. And so given the hundreds of thousands of dollars we have paid to Ms. Zyberk's firm, why don't we get that? Because I would be happy to be in the same position as Mr. Fors and Vice Mayor Lago, that say, "Look, okay, some of these changes need to be made," but the residents don't understand that. All we see is (INAUDIBLE). We see that monstrosity that was built on the west side of US-1, north of Ponce. We see the monstrosity being built on Ponce. Now, this gets to be a question of the City Attorney, and that is the Mayor started this whole program out with the statement that the City cannot reduce -- or I should say, increase -- the obligations on a developer based upon the Code or the City's laws. So, I'm hearing that at the same time I'm hearing, "Well, we need to implement this new Code because it will save us of all the bad things that happened under the old Code." And that's where you're losing people because we don't see that; we don't understand that. It simply seems to us to be a continuation of the endless gifts -- and there's no other way of saying it -- to the developers, starting with (INAUDIBLE), going through the rest of the stuff here that we've seen now being built, where that one building on the

west side of US-1 -- if I put my window down and I'm riding in the passenger seat, I can about touch that building with my hand.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you very much, sir.

Mr. Miller: We don't want to see that again. And if what...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you. Thank you very much, sir.

Mr. Miller: We're faced with here...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Your time is up.

Mr. Miller: In fact, save us...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: And I would -- if you're an attorney, I would like...

Mr. Miller: Then I think we need to...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: For you to consider...

Mr. Miller: Understand that that's what we need to...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Will you cut him off? Thank you, sir. I would invite you to look at the Florida Statute, Bert J. Harris, Jr. Private Property Rights Protection Act about the rights of property owners. And you say that we have not -- communication. This has been going on for three years, sir. Where have you been? We've had -- in the last three, four months, we've had five meetings and about a hundred people have spoken, some several times, but a hundred people

has spoken. Where were you? I totally refuse the accusation that we have been -- that we have not been transparent and that we have not communicated with the people. Will you go on, Mr...

City Clerk Urquia: Yes. Next speaker is Ms. Gracie Perrera (phonetic).

Gracie Perrera: Yes, hello. Thank you for allowing me to speak. My name is Gracie Perrera. The address is 333 Malaga Avenue. And I am speaking in support of the Zoning Code update. I will be brief. I don't want to take up any more of your time, but I do want to conclude by thanking the Mayor and the Commission. And just to remind you to please approve the Crafts Section rezoning that I know is coming up and this Zoning Code update because the residents of this section have been waiting too long. Thank you very much.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you. Next.

City Clerk Urquia: Next speaker is Dr. Gordon Sokoloff.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Mr. Sokoloff, you're welcome.

Gordon Sokoloff: Hi, there. Mayor, I appreciate your saying that you and the Commission are going to do what's right for Coral Gables, as long as we understand that Coral Gables is really made up of your constituents, the people that make up Coral Gables. Sixty-five people out of about 50,000 doesn't seem like a big representation. And I would just like to bring up one of the things that I brought up several times before and ask a simple question. And that is that the Zoning Code rewrite was written by Plater-Zyberk and her board made up mainly of developers, architects and attorneys. It was written in fairly confusing language, which I hear all the time, and Ramon Trias is always trying to clarify things. It would be, like I said before, like me -- you coming into my dental office and I hand you X-rays. And I hand them to you and I say, "Here, read them. If you have any questions, just get back to me and ask me." I have asked, as the TAB Chairman --

and many people have asked you all -- for a simplified version, a layman's version of all these codes. This thing was written a thousand pages. There are 19 major amendments, 49 minor amendments. Why did you not provide that for your citizens and maybe we would understand it better and maybe support it even better, but you never did. I would like to hear someone address that question.

Commissioner Mena: I would -- Dr. Sokoloff, there's a memorandum -- no doubt you've seen from staff -- dated October 2020. It's the "major/minor updates to Zoning Code" memo that I believe was prepared by Mr. Trias and his team. Again, just -- I'm not going to -- it's not a thousand-page document. It's an eight-page document just to -- I'm just going to go on the first two on page one as an example. Number one is required open space. It says increasing required open space in multifamily 2 and multifamily 3, from 25...

Mr. Sokoloff: Pardon me, Commissioner.

Commissioner Mena: If I may finish answering your question and then...

Mr. Sokoloff: I have...

Commissioner Mena: I'm happy to hear from you. You said you wanted an answer and we haven't answered, so I'm trying to answer.

Mr. Sokoloff: Well, you don't have to read that to me.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Mr. Sokoloff, please let the Commissioner speaker.

Commissioner Mena: Then I won't answer it. It's okay.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: We're going to cut you off if you continue interrupting the Commissioner.

Commissioner Mena: No, it's okay. If you don't want an answer, I won't answer.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: If you don't want to hear the answer, then you...

Mr. Sokoloff: Not eight page.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Will not hear the answer.

Mr. Sokoloff: Well, those eight pages are not understandable either; that's my point. I've had that -- those eight pages, and those are...

Commissioner Mena: I was reading through one as an example to see what it is that you find confusing about it. But again, I'm not going to argue with you. You know, it seems like you have your mind made up. I understand your position.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: That memo was written in...

Commissioner Mena: But my answer...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Very simple language.

Commissioner Mena: To your question is that that is the document that you're referencing. If you don't feel it's adequate, I respect your opinion; I disagree, but I understand.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you.

Commissioner Fors: I'd like to add...

Mr. Sokoloff: So, you're saying those eight pages were enough?

Commissioner Fors: I'd like to add that...

Mr. Sokoloff: You're saying that those eight pages explain everything fully.

Commissioner Fors: I'd like to add...

Commissioner Mena: I think...

Mr. Sokoloff: I beg to differ.

Commissioner Mena: I think...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yes, they do, sir.

Commissioner Mena: I think you're asking for -- it's hard to say that eight pages fully explain a thousand pages. To your point, it's an abbreviated highlights version of what the items are in there to try to explain it in simple terms to people who are not experts in dealing with Zoning Code language, et cetera, so that's an attempt at doing that. If you feel that it's inadequate in any specific area, please contact Mr. Trias and he can answer it for you. But that's the document. And again, just going on number one, it's pretty clear that it's increasing the required open space in multifamily 2 and multifamily 3 from 25 percent to 30 percent, and it explains how. So, that's just one example I'm picking, the first one. You can go through all of them, and if as you go through them, you still have a question, then I would encourage you to ask a specific question. But the last several times I've heard from you, respectfully, has been spent, you know, being critical of the

process. And I'm not begrudging you that; you're entitled to that opinion. But you know, taglines like, you know, "government for the developers" and all that stuff, instead of using the time asking specific questions about specific topics that you may have a question about. So, I would encourage you, if you have a question about a specific topic, to please use the time to ask it, because if we don't use the time to ask it, and then we complain that the public meetings, there's no actual feedback, then we're kind of just having a circular process that's not getting to the bottom of any answers to questions you may have. So...

Mr. Sokoloff: Well, let -- if I may just finish, I'd like to say one thing. And that is that, number one, I did try to understand it. I'm a pretty resourceful guy. And I think most of the people do not understand that. And there are 80 different points in there. And in fact, last time I was on, I did address a few of those points to Mr. Trias, and he said, yes, it's confusing. I can't tell you how many times I've heard that. The most cogent thing I've heard tonight, Commissioner Mena, was out of your mouth when you said, I don't see any rush, when you were talking about the parking situation.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you, Mr. Sokoloff.

Mr. Sokoloff: And that's what I think about all of this. I don't see any rush for you guys to push this through so fast during a pandemic when...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you, Mr. Sokoloff.

Mr. Sokoloff: The public can't...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: We've been at it for three years. We've had 25 public meetings. In the last five, a hundred people have participated, including your five participations. Thank you very much, sir. Next.

City Clerk Urquia: Next speaker is Mr. Enrique Bernal.

Commissioner Fors: Before we go on to the next speaker, I'd like to quickly point out too that...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yes, please. I'm sorry. I didn't...

Commissioner Fors: No, it's alright.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yeah.

Commissioner Fors: The -- that I know it's difficult to understand. I just want to go and mention as well that Mr. Trias, throughout the process, also reduced almost all of those points, if not all of them -- at least the majority of the ones that we discussed openly -- into PowerPoint slides, in many cases, with...

Commissioner Mena: That's right.

Commissioner Fors: Visual depictions of what it actually looks like. I remember specifically one regarding what the open space increase looks like actually visualized. It was also difficult for me to understand. God bless them. Although they tried, Mr. Trias and the consultant were not the ones that helped me understand it. They helped me a bit, I guess, with the PowerPoints, which were presented at the public meetings, but the fact is, at the end of the day, it is a confusing topic. You can't make the first non-confusing Zoning Code ever in the history of man here in Coral Gables in 2021. It's going to remain confusing. There's only one way to understand it, and that's by spending a lot of time with it and eventually figuring out how it all works together. The PowerPoints certainly helped, but it was not just the memorandum of minor/major amendments

that can assist you in understanding what's being done. It's also those PowerPoints, and many of which include visual depictions of exactly what it means.

Commissioner Mena: That's a great point. Thank you.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you.

Commissioner Mena: I agree.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Alright, next.

City Clerk Urquia: Mr. Mayor, the next speaker is Mr. Enrique Bernal. We're asking him to unmute.

Enrique Bernal: Hello. Can you hear me?

City Clerk Urquia: Yes, sir.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yes, we can.

Mr. Bernal: Yes. Thank you for the opportunity to speak. My question has to do with the minimum setbacks on the F-1. I started with the premise that the only powers that the Commission or the Mayor have are those the voters delegate to them. And the Mayor corrected me, rightly, saying that we cannot delegate those things that are not already dictated by the Legislature. So, I have two questions. My first question is, is there anything in the state or any other applicable laws that empowers the Commissioners to grant less than ten feet or less of setback that we're not aware of? And secondly, if that's not the case, does the Commission understand that the voters don't want any more repeats of the A Hotel, where, you know, the handicapped people are at risk that

the traffic will run them over. We don't want 10-foot setbacks; we want 20 feet setbacks. And I would like to understand what F-1 has to say about that, or any other part of the Zoning Code that would enable the Commission to allow that ever again.

Commissioner Mena: I'll defer to our City Attorney on your first question about the interplay with Florida State law. There's a bit of an echo, so I don't know if you can mute your computer. On the second question, I would agree with you on the point that the Aloft Hotel is not a project that I or, I think, most of us take a lot of pride in.

Mr. Bernal: I can't hear you.

Commissioner Mena: We recognize that the setback for the Aloft Hotel is unacceptable. And I would point you to the item in F-1 that mandates setbacks at the ground level of 10 feet on Douglas and Le Jeune, where the Aloft is located, and 20 feet on US-1. So, there is something in here that attempts to address that, that I just described. As far as your question about state law, I'm not really sure I was clear on what it was, but I'll defer to our City Attorney on that.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: And before you -- the problem with Le Jeune and the setbacks is that when Le Jeune was made four lanes -- it used to be two -- they didn't take into account the resulting sidewalk and the five-foot setback. And that was a mistake, and the Aloft is a result of it. And it is a mistake, and we should have required a setback. But Madam City Attorney.

City Manager Iglesias: And let me say that the setback is in addition to the sidewalk width.

Commissioner Keon: Right.

City Manager Iglesias: So, it would be five feet plus ten. It would be a 15-foot width...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Fifteen feet.

City Manager Iglesias: On Le Jeune Road.

Commissioner Mena: Correct.

City Manager Iglesias: Which is substantially -- which is a walkable -- certainly, walkable sidewalk, versus the current five-foot width on Aloft, which is not acceptable, and we all agree to that.

City Attorney Ramos: The only thing I would add is that sidewalks are governed by what sidewalks are governed by, and obviously, that should be followed. My understanding is what happened with the Aloft sidewalk is that Le Jeune was expanded, and that's what caused this very reduced sidewalk, which is problematic, but it was not a result of the City's setbacks or a lack of setbacks.

City Manager Iglesias: And this is what the Zoning Code is trying -- the Zoning Code update is trying to resolve.

Commissioner Mena: I would just -- yeah, Peter -- Mr. Manager, I was going to make that point, which is, it's kind of a great example of why after this lengthy process and after all the discussion we've had and all the feedback we've had, sure there's no gun to our head; said that a thousand times. I don't feel like there's a gun to my head voting today, but I do feel like many of these issues -- that one being a great example -- are issues that I want to address, and that I want to address sooner than later. Because what I don't want is for another building to come along and build another building that is not subject to that sort of setback on Le Jeune or Douglas. So, we have an opportunity to improve some of these things, and I, for one, am comfortable proceeding and doing so. I identified the two items -- the FAR and the minimum parking requirements --

where I would like to have additional discussion, but on the others, after all this time and all the input and all the questions, and all the analysis I've done, I feel comfortable moving forward. And I think there's no -- it's not that there's a rush; there's not. It's been years, but there is a desire to improve some of these things so that we see better projects and better development in our City.

City Attorney Ramos: Commissioner Mena, I'm being told that previously before the Mayor spoke, when you were speaking, somehow chambers were muted, and the public wasn't able to hear it. I don't know if you remember what you said, but if you do, if you could repeat it, that would be great. If not, obviously, we'll have the recording.

Commissioner Mena: It was -- I think it was just answering the gentleman's question about setbacks on Le Jeune, was it not?

City Attorney Ramos: Yes.

Commissioner Mena: So, the gentleman had a question about avoiding projects like the Aloft on Le Jeune, which as everybody knows, is a very minimal setback; nobody's satisfied with that. We think that's a bad example of the type of development we'd like to see on Le Jeune. And I think that it's a good example of what this Zoning Code rewrite aims to improve, because this Zoning Code rewrite mandates setbacks at the ground level of 10 feet on Douglas and Le Jeune, and 20 feet on US-1. And to the Manager's point, in the example of the Aloft, it would be five feet of sidewalk and then 10 feet of setback, so you're really talking about 15 feet.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you very much.

Mr. Bernal: So...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Shall we go on?

Mr. Bernal: So, I -- you know -- no. I mean, I have -- still my question is, you know, essentially, the Commission seems to always be willing to try to atone for their sins, but if we look at the construction on US-1, you know, those people are almost at the mercy of the traffic. They will be killed in the next two years.

Commissioner Mena: I'm sorry, who's going to be killed?

Commissioner Fors: The folks on US-1.

Mr. Bernal: The setbacks are so minimal that, you know, it's kind of like throwing us at the mercy of the drivers.

Commissioner Mena: I agree with you, and the Zoning Code rewrite agrees with you. That's why, as I just described, it includes a provision which makes a mandatory 20-foot setback on US-1.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: The new provision deals with that, and the old one doesn't.

Commissioner Keon: I think that -- Ramon, on US-1, on those buildings that have been built. it's my understanding that there is an arcade that is...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yes, yes.

Commissioner Keon: Dedicated to public use, so you will have a much wider place to park, and a lot of it will be covered, so you are not walking in the rain, or you're not walking in the sun.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: And...

Commissioner Keon: So, those buildings, once they're completed, and I think all the scaffolding and everything is down, you'll see that there are much wider and better spaces for people along US-1.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: And those buildings are actually set back slightly. All we're saying is that they should be 20 feet...

Commissioner Keon: Yes, yes.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: As opposed to five feet...

Commissioner Keon: Right.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Or whatever it is now, right.

Commissioner Mena: Right, which is an improvement.

Commissioner Keon: Yes.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Absolutely.

Commissioner Mena: That I think most people would agree with.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yes, sir.

Commissioner Mena: It's clear. It's not very controversial. We should move forward with it. That's one example. And like that, there are many things in here, and then there are other things that we may want to analyze farther, but that's where we are with the process. I don't -- you know,

that's a perfect example of something that's not confusing; it's not unclear. It's something that I imagine most people would be supportive of. Let's move forward with it.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay. Thank you very much...

Commissioner Fors: And by the way...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Mr. Bernal.

Commissioner Fors: It's 20 feet, not including the sidewalk; so, it's the sidewalk plus the 20-foot setback.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yeah, and it is explicitly designed to enhance the sidewalk, so it's not just going to be some area that is not useful. It's to enhance the pedestrian environment.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Mr. Urquia, (INAUDIBLE)...

City Manager Iglesias: When it calls for -- when the Code -- when the Zoning Code calls for a setback, it's from the property line, which is the edge of the right-of-way line, so it does not incorporate the existing sidewalk.

Commissioner Keon: Right, it's from the sidewalk.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you very much. Mr. Urquia.

City Clerk Urquia: Next speaker is Carlos Gimenez.

Carlos Gimenez: Good evening, Commissioners, Mayor, Vice Mayor. For the record, Carlos Gimenez, 517 Minorca. I want to make two general comments and one substantive comment regarding the text of F-1. First off, you know, this meeting's been on the books for about two months, and you know, to hear from DPZ, Ms. Plater-Zyberk, that she wasn't able to plan to be here for the entire meeting, frankly, as our paid consultant is disrespectful to our community. I would hope that she would send a substitute to her class and be here to address any questions that are provided by any member of the -- any members of the community. Number two, this goes to the Commission as a whole, as a body. You know, we didn't ask any of you to run; you decided to. Alright, it is your job to listen to the people, and it's your duty to listen to them with respect. Alright, it's very important. Now, as to the substance on the parking requirements, on the minimum, I have to agree with Vice Mayor Lago and Commissioner Mena, one thousand percent. I've seen this play before; it's called Miami 21. One of the rationales for a reduction of parking is that you're going to move less cars into the buildings, which then will encourage folks to use mass transit and to activate the pedestrian realm. Sounds like a great concept; unfortunately, it does not bear any similarity to reality. If you talk to people who live downtown in the Brickell area, downtown proper, you know, a lot of them have to find off-site parking blocks away from their condominiums. It does not work. I would not approve any reductions in the minimums on parking. You know, frankly, you know, to say that, "Well, these buildings are going to be around for 50 years," I hope they're built to be around for longer than that, because if not, we're doing something wrong. But at the end of the day, I would definitely encourage to maintain the existing parking requirements. I would hope that you, you know, at the very least, defer this item, because I think there's a lot of work left to be done. Doing anything piecemeal is never a good way to do it. You should handle this in a holistic fashion. It should be taken step by step. The residents should have been fully engaged and fully involved...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you very much, sir.

Mr. Gimenez: From day one.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you. Thank you very much.

Commissioner Mena: Just to adjust...

Mr. Gimenez: You're welcome.

Commissioner Mena: One important point of that, Mr. Gimenez, this meeting was noticed and scheduled for 9 am, as all our City Commission meetings are. It was recently just a few weeks ago, at the Vice Mayor's request and in an effort to accommodate having more resident engagement and involvement, it was moved to the end of the day, which is not when we typically have our meetings.

Vice Mayor Lago: Yeah.

Commissioner Mena: We're usually done with these meetings by 2 or 3 o'clock. So, Ms. Plater-Zyberk had a scheduled class and commitment based on her contract with the University of Miami, and unfortunately, she had to leave early as a result of our time change on the meeting. She's attended all of the other meetings, answered a lot of questions, and she'll continue to be available to answer any questions that anybody may have.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you very much. Mr. Urquia.

City Clerk Urquia: Next speaker is Ms. Maria Cruz.

Maria Cruz: Hi. Can you hear me?

City Clerk Urquia: Yes.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yes, we can.

Ms. Cruz: Alright. I don't know where to start. This has been a very, very sad meeting for most of us. I think that we're at the point where we never thought we would be. I think we have lost all manners. I think that we talk to people -- to the residents, to the taxpayers as if we were not important anymore. I think we mute people. We do not allow people to finish talking, but yet, we have time to talk about the lemonade. We have time to talk to -- about art. We have time to give out keys. We have time to do a lot of stuff, but yet, when it comes down to what the people are interested in, the points, the issues that are most burning at this time, we do not have time. We cut people off. And even when the Commissioners -- because two Commissioners -- one made a motion, one seconded -- asked to allow a gentleman to speak, the Mayor decided not to. And you know, we talked about recently, just one of the last speakers, was chastised for interrupting the Commissioner, but the example is the Mayor interrupts the Commissioners. So, we're learning from the master. The Mayor interrupts the people, so we learn that's the right way to do it, except that we cannot mute the people. That's the only difference. Now, I am tired of hearing the darn 25 meetings, 26 meetings, 28 meetings. There were not 28 meetings. I have in my hands the sign-in sheets from those meetings. And I'm going to tell you, meetings that there were eight people, zero from the public. Okay, 12 people, nobody from the public. Seventeen...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you, Maria.

Ms. Cruz: One person from the public. Eighteen, nobody from the public. (INAUDIBLE) people, zero.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Maria, this is the third time you participate in these meetings...

Ms. Cruz: Well, I'm sorry.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Since November.

Ms. Cruz: I'm sorry.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: November, December and January.

Ms. Cruz: Listen, I'm sorry, you're interrupting me.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: This is your third time in participating.

Ms. Cruz: I'm sorry, I'm sorry.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Maria, your time is up.

Ms. Cruz: You're interrupting me.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yes, I am. Go ahead, finish up.

City Clerk Urquia: Maria, please unmute.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: What?

Commissioner Mena: You need to unmute, Maria.

Ms. Cruz: I would not...

Commissioner Mena: Oh.

City Commission Meeting

February 9, 2021

Agenda Item F-2 - Ordinance of the City Commission of Coral Gables, Florida providing for text and map amendments to the City of Coral Gables Official Zoning Code by amending Article 1, "General Provisions"; Article 2, "Zoning Districts"; Article 3, "Uses"; Article 4, "Urban Design and Public Improvement Standards"; Article 5, "Architecture"; Article 6, "Landscape"; Article 10, "Parking"; Article 14, "Process"; and Article 16, "Definitions."

Ms. Cruz: I did unmute.

Commissioner Mena: Okay.

Ms. Cruz: I would not have brought it up, except that the Mayor brought it up. We've had I don't know how many number of meetings. Every time you bring it up, my blood boils because it's not true. You had meetings that were not even noticed. People didn't even know that there were meetings. How dare you say that there were so many meetings that people could have gone...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: I dare to say it, Maria, because I have the evidence, and I have the sign-in sheets.

Ms. Cruz: No, I have it, too.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: And you have spoken...

Ms. Cruz: Ask Ramon Trias.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: In many of those.

Ms. Cruz: I have the evidence.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay, Maria. Thank you very, very much.

Ms. Cruz: Ask Ramon Trias.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Shall we go on with the next one?

Ms. Cruz: No, I'm not finished.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Well, yes, you are.

Ms. Cruz: My two minutes are not up.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Go ahead.

Ms. Cruz: No, I'm not, sir. No, I'm not. You interrupted me twice.

City Clerk Urquia: The next speaker is Mr. Thomas Snook.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Mr. Snook.

Thomas Snook: Yes. As the president of the Gables Good Government Committee, I was one of the co-signers of a letter read into the record by the president of the Coral Gables Neighbors Association objecting to the present Code amendments and petitioning for a delay in voting until after the April election. Mayor Valdes-Fauli, you keep on stressing that the public has had ample opportunities to speak. The residents may have had -- may have spoken, but there was little evidence, except for possibly Vice Mayor Lago, that the Commissioners as a whole have been listening. If the Commissioners were listening, there would have been ample feedback to the residents after the public meetings. Nobody -- we heard one suggestion this evening that was adopted. How many other suggestions made by residents at public meetings have been worthy of adoption by the Commission? We are still referring to an October 2020 memorandum from staff. It's April 9th, why hasn't the October 2020 memorandum been updated based on the input from the residents at all these public meetings? We all -- there has been a consensus among the speakers

as to why not give the residents ample opportunity to -- for additional input and contribution to the process. Thank you very much.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you, sir. Next.

City Clerk Urquia: Next speaker is Ms. Maria Blett (phonetic).

Maria Blett: I don't see -- oh, there -- I think I'm there. I'm unable -- oh, there it goes. Hi. I'm Maria Blett, and I'm representing property at 323 Malaga. I've lived in the Gables for 45 years; Sarto, Santander, Valencia, two houses on Candia, and of course, Malaga. I fully support the Zoning Code update and the Crafts Section rezoning. If you would like me to speak more -- give me the opportunity to speak a little bit more detailed as to F-3, when that comes up, I would be happy to. But I thank you all because the City staff has done a great job of showing us, us non-architects, what a plan looks like. And when we saw it in one of the previous sessions, it was very, very informative and helpful. So, thank you, Mayor and Commissioners for listening to us, to me, and obviously, on these important issues.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you, Maria. And if you want to participate in the Crafts Section, you're welcome to do so. Thank you very much. Next.

City Clerk Urquia: Okay, Mr. Mayor. We're going to try one more time with Ms. Sue Kawalerski.

Sue Kawalerski: Hi. Hi, again, and thank you very much. Can you hear me?

City Clerk Urquia: Yes, ma'am.

Vice Mayor Lago: Yes.

Ms. Kawalerski: Alright, thank you. I want to make a -- first of all, I have a question, and then I have a comment, if I may do so. In fact, let me start with one comment. Despite the -- despite how many meetings the Mayor seems to think that we have actually had for the public, there has not been one meeting where there has been a discussion and a two-way dialogue. It has merely been a two-minute comment period on things we don't even know about at all of these meetings; no dialogue, no discussion, only a comment period, most of which is shut down halfway through the comments. So, let me get back to a question I have specifically for any Commissioner or Ramon Trias, and I'm going to be specific about the setbacks in F-1. I had a discussion with Mr. Trias a number of weeks ago about the setbacks on US-1. And he said, "You'll be happy to hear that the new Code mandate a 20-foot setback for developments." And I said, "Oh, I see. That's pretty good, but can that ever be violated?" In other words, can a developer ever petition the Commission to make it less than 20? And his answer was, "Absolutely." So, if that is the case with this so-called corrected Zoning Code, why do we have a new Zoning Code if all it takes is three votes from three Commissioners to change it again? That's my question to the Commissioners.

Commissioner Mena: That's the nature of government. We have a Charter. We have a City Commission duly elected by the residents of Coral Gables, and it has certain inherent authorities and powers that it may exercise, and we can't change that unless we change our entire Charter. So, I hear your point. I can tell you that if somebody comes along and asks for less, that my answer on the setback on US-1, just to dovetail off your example, will be no. But yeah, you know, a future Commissioner may say yes. And if there's a majority of votes that want to make some sort of accommodation, that's just the inherent nature of our Charter. And as I say regularly, if a given Commission doesn't act on and or reflect the will of the voters in Coral Gables over enough time, I suspect they'll be voted out of office and somebody new will be voted in, and that's just the nature of democracy and city government. So, I'm not sure really what your question is there. There's nothing we can do to change that, unless we were to just undo our Charter and strip the Commission of the authority to make such decisions.

Ms. Kawalerski: Commissioner Mena, I really appreciate your honesty, I really do. So, the answer to my question is, it doesn't matter if it's the old Zoning Code or a new Zoning Code; three votes by three Commissioners can blow right past it and give the developer anything they want. That's your answer, and I appreciate your honesty. So, here's my suggestion, don't change the zoning code. You can already change it. You've already blown past the Zoning Code on the Paseo del Riviera, on the Gables Station, on the Plaza, on probably the upcoming park -- the Ponce Park Towers. Why even change the Zoning Code? It's a farce if you could change it with three...

Commissioner Mena: May I answer you?

Ms. Kawalerski: Again, I'll revisit the example that we discussed earlier. The reason we changed the Zoning Code is because currently the Zoning Code allows certain things that we don't think are good. So -- and the developer you're referencing doesn't even have to come ask for permission to develop the property in that fashion. For example, the setbacks we're talking about on Le Jeune and Douglas and on US-1; so, the developers can currently develop a project akin to everybody's favorite example, the Aloft Hotel, which nobody likes, and we understand why, and currently they can do that. We're changing this so that it reflects a 10-foot setback -- again, I'm just picking one example -- on Le Jeune. And now, the developer can no longer do the Aloft because the zoning restrictions say so. Now, to your point, can the developer come ask us to reduce the setback and build another Aloft? Yes, they can. They can come and ask us, but we can say no. If we don't change the Zoning Code, they can just do it. And so, that is the point here. That is the point of the exercise. There's nothing controversial about that. And again, your point that, hey, we can just -- three votes can just let the developer do whatever they want, sure. If you want to go to the extreme example, yes. But we're trying to fix things that the current Zoning Code already allows that we don't think are good. And presumably, the people who are voting for these items, if we're voting -- if I'm voting today that I think there should be a 10-foot setback on Le Jeune, I'm not going to vote tomorrow that it should be five.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: And let me echo what Commissioner Mena's very rightly saying. They don't have to come before us unless we change the Zoning Code. Three votes can change it, but the developer has to come before us and we have to decide that it is a good change versus not having to come before us at all and doing it as of right. That is why this change is good.

Ms. Kawalerski: Mayor...

City Manager Iglesias: If I may say that I've explained to Ms. Kawalerski that this Commission...

Ms. Kawalerski: Excuse me.

City Manager Iglesias: Cannot bind other Commissions into what they do.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: We can't.

City Manager Iglesias: And just like this Commission is not bound by other Commissions.

Commissioner Mena: Yeah, and that's a great point, Peter. And that goes both ways, Ms. Kawalerski. If this Commission votes on something today that you find you disagree with, and in a couple of months, you vote new people into office that you feel better reflect your position on these issues, that future Commission, because it is now the elected representative body of this City, can take action to make things the way you want them to be. And so that's the nature of democracy. I'm really not sure what the pushback is on that. The idea behind that is to reflect the values of a community at a given time, which inherently change over time, and today's residents may not value the same things that residents valued 50 years ago. And this elected body should reflect the will of the voters in this city.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you very much...

Ms. Kawalerski: Alright.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Commissioner Mena, for a very cogent, clear...

Ms. Kawalerski: Excuse me.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Explanation. Thank you very, very much. Shall we go on, Mr. City Clerk?

Ms. Kawalerski: Excuse me, excuse me, please.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yes.

Ms. Kawalerski: I did not get two minutes. I did not get two minutes.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay, go ahead.

Ms. Kawalerski: Please, but thank you for your honesty, Commissioner Mena. The answer is yes, any three people can change whatever is going to happen with the Zoning Code and the current Code. Thank you for your honesty.

Commissioner Mena: We're changing the Zoning Code.

Ms. Kawalerski: One comment that I would like to make, it's very, very curious that the member -- that the residents -- or that I should say, the property owners in the Crafts Section are all for -- they're all into changing everything. You know why? Because the developers are going to pay them big money, and they're going to hightail it out of Coral Gables, okay. So, it just seems to me

odd that they're all for everything, to change everything, as long as they get the money out of the developers to move. That's a very curious thing that's happening here.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you very much, Ms. Kawalerski. Mr. -- how many...

City Clerk Urquia: Next speaker...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: More people do we have, Mr. Urquia?

City Clerk Urquia: Two more, sir.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Go ahead.

City Clerk Urquia: Next speaker is Janera Seralta (phonetic).

Janera Seralta: Yes. Hi, good evening. My comment is the following. My big concern -- I've been a resident here in the Coral Gables area for ten years. And what seems to be very concerning to me is that no matter what codes are implemented, if the sitting city government decides to give exceptions or exemptions to the developers, they can really do whatever they want. And so, the point is not necessarily whether we change the code or not. There should be some accountability from the City government that if there are laws and legislation in place, that needs to be honored. A developer shouldn't just come and ask for favors and the sitting city government indulges them in that. And also, exactly what Susan was saying, it seems like the people are for the code changes are the people that live in the Crafts Section. And again, why is that? They're going to sell; they're going to move. They don't care what happens here. I happen to live a few blocks -- two or three blocks from the Crafts Section. That's going to impact me, whatever they build there. Right now, I have a newborn baby, and I'm terrified of walking outside because I fear that I'm going to get run over. Okay, that's not why I moved to Coral Gables. That's not why I pay astronomical

property taxes; that is not why. And if things continue to develop in this manner with overdevelopment, we will move. And thank you for Susan, thank you for everybody, all the neighborhood associations who are trying to speak out for the neighbors, for the residents in this area. You guys are doing a wonderful job. And again, the people that are for the code changes, watch; they're from Malaga. They're from the Crafts Section. And that's all I have to say. Thank you. Thank you for your time.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you.

Vice Mayor Lago: Thank you.

City Clerk Urquia: And Mr. Mayor, the last speaker for agenda item F-1 is Ms. Debbie Register.

Debbie Register: Thank you for letting me speak. I have...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Ms. Register -- oh, there.

Ms. Register: I have a couple of items. We go back to a request by the residents when we had a US-1 study and it blew up, and what happened was, is the residents asked for these type of Commissions that dealt with the value changes, that we would have a representation at the table. City Hall is not listening. Again, this is happening. So that's one of the reasons why everybody's upset. Two, and I'm told that the hotel project on Ponce and Miracle Mile came about, I really didn't understand the transfer of development rights. I don't think it should be allowed. That's only giving the developers additional height, additional density. They build what they have on their property, not transferring any rights from any other property. So, that I have a problem with. And I simply said, I just became aware when the whole hotel issue came up on 200 -- I guess it's Miracle Mile. Again, I only became aware of the offsite parking -- and in that process, that developer wanted to have far less off-site parking than what would have been required if they had

built a pedestal. It's not to be allowed. One is, by doing that, they're not going to have parking spaces for their employees, so they're going to be taxing our streets because they're going to find the cheapest. They're going to be parking in neighborhoods. So, I don't think that what -- they should have in their building is the number of spaces that they should have to purchase. And the other question on that is that it was not clear case, if they did off-site parking, that the number of years that they would have to guarantee. First, they started talking about a 10-year lease. The ten-year lease is up, what happens?

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Please finish up.

Ms. Register: So, these are my three questions to the Commission is how you're going to resolve these.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you.

Commissioner Mena: I'll try to answer two aspects of your questions. One is TDR -- sorry, guys. I have a lot of energy today. One is the TDR question. I -- at least with respect to Miracle Mile, I will say I agree with you, Ms. Register. I don't think we should have TDRs on Miracle Mile. So, I hope that answers that aspect of your question. With respect to how often -- or how long the commitment is for the remote parking, that's actually a question I asked several times.

Commissioner Keon: Forever.

Commissioner Mena: And my understanding is that each year, or each -- I forget if it's one year or two years now, but upon renewal of their CO, they will have to confirm -- is it the CO? I'm sorry.

City Manager Iglesias: CU.

Commissioner Mena: They have a CU?

City Manager Iglesias: CU.

Commissioner Mena: The CU, excuse me. Upon renewal of their CU, they will have to confirm that they have the number of spaces that are required at the outset at that subsequent interval.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you very much. No more speakers?

City Clerk Urquia: Not for agenda item F-1.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay, the public hearing is closed. And we have heard from the Commissioners. Anybody else wants to say anything before we take a vote?

Vice Mayor Lago: Nope.

Commissioner Keon: No, but I would -- I think, you know, we can add back in...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Ramon.

Commissioner Keon: The FAR, as Ramon -- 2 and 2.5.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yes.

City Manager Iglesias: Commissioner, if I may...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Staff recommendation.

City Manager Iglesias: If I may something about the FAR. We have -- we knew that this was going to be something that the Commission wanted addressed. And Planning and Zoning has looked into the FAR issue and is -- for some time. And I believe that 2 and 2.5 are numbers and those numbers are not drawn out of a hat. Those are numbers that have been checked by Planning and Zoning that have worked before and are consistent with development that's happening now, and I will let...

Commissioner Keon: Okay, so...

City Manager Iglesias: Ramon further...

Commissioner Keon: That's a recommendation from staff, so...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yeah. That is...

Commissioner Keon: I think (INAUDIBLE)...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: The consultant and staff.

City Manager Iglesias: (INAUDIBLE) further...

Commissioner Keon: I would move the item with the recommendation from staff. I also would like to -- if we can go back and look at the parking. It's not significantly different than the parking that exists today, so if we can maintain the parking from the old code and come back and talk about this, because I have a little concern about the reduction in parking for -- in multifamily buildings for like three-bedroom apartments to 1.5 parking spaces. I think it probably should be 2. So, I don't -- some of those reductions, I can see there's some...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Sure.

Commissioner Keon: I don't see. So, if we wait and come back and do the parking at another time and maintain the existing parking ratios for right now, I would move the item.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Ramon.

Commissioner Keon: With those two items.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: It's been moved. Do you have any comments?

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yes. We do have a chart that I presented at one of the PowerPoints that summarizes the parking. So, that's a very easy...

Commissioner Keon: Yeah.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Issue to...

Commissioner Keon: It's a very easy issue to deal with it...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Alright. It's been moved. Is there a second?

Commissioner Keon: On its own separately.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Is there a second?

Commissioner Mena: I'll second.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Alright, will you call the roll, please?

City Clerk Urquia: One second, sir.

Vice Mayor Lago: No.

Commissioner Mena: Yes.

Commissioner Fors: Yes.

Commissioner Keon: Yes.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yes.

(Vote: 4-1)

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: It passes, 4 to 1.