

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item E-1
March 11, 2025
Police and Fire Headquarters
2151 Salzedo Street, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Vince Lago
Vice Mayor Rhonda Anderson
Commissioner Melissa Castro
Commissioner Ariel Fernandez
Commissioner Kirk Menendez

City Staff

City Attorney, Cristina Suárez
City Manager, Alberto Parjus
City Clerk, Billy Urquia
Planning and Zoning Director, Jennifer Garcia

Public Speaker(s)

Nelson de Leon

Agenda Item E-1[4:04 p.m.]

An Ordinance of the City Commission granting approval of a Site Plan Amendment pursuant to Zoning Code Article 14, “Process” Section 14-203, “Conditional Uses,” for a Country Club originally approved by Ordinance No. 2016-34, as amended by Ordinance 2022-10, located within a Special Use (S) District, for the property commonly referred to as the “Riviera Country Club” and legally described as portions of Tracts 1 and 5, Riviera Country Club, a portion of Miami-Biltmore Golf Course of Riviera Section Part 4 and Lots 10-14, Block 112, Country Club Section Part 5 (1155 Blue Road), Coral Gables, Florida; all other conditions of approval contained in Ordinance 2016-34 shall remain in effect; providing for an effective date. (Legal description on file at the City). Lobbyist: Nelson de Leon Lobbyist: David Schoop

Mayor Lago: Item E-1 time certain.

City Commission Meeting

[Date]

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March 11, 2025

Agenda Item E-1 – Ordinance granting approval of a site plan amendment pursuant to Zoning code Article 14, “Process”

City Attorney Suarez: E-1 is an Ordinance of the City Commission granting approval of a Site Plan Amendment pursuant to Zoning Code Article 14, “Process” Section 14-203, “Conditional Uses,” for a Country Club originally approved by Ordinance No. 2016-34, as amended by Ordinance 2022-10, located within a Special Use (S) District, for the property commonly referred to as the “Riviera Country Club” and legally described as portions of Tracts 1 and 5, Riviera Country Club, a portion of Miami-Biltmore Golf Course of Riviera Section Part 4 and Lots 10-14, Block 112, Country Club Section Part 5 (1155 Blue Road), Coral Gables, Florida; all other conditions of approval contained in Ordinance 2016-34 shall remain in effect; providing for an effective date. This is a quasi-judicial item, so I’m going to ask the Clerk to please swear in any individual who will be testifying today.

City Clerk Urquia: Those who will be appearing on this item, please stand and raise your right hand. Do you swear or affirm that the testimony you’ll provide today will be the truth and nothing but the truth. Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Good afternoon, sir. Thank you for being here with us.

Mr. de Leon: Afternoon Mr. Mayor, Vice Mayor, Commissioners, staff, Nelson de Leon with Locus Architecture at 500 South Dixie Highway, Suite 307, Coral Gables, 33146. I’ll present today on behalf of the country club. The project in essence is a replacement of like for like. There is currently a tennis building, we are replacing that one with a new one; eight tennis courts replaced with eight new regulation-size courts and the existing parking lot which is to remain. The site, as many of you know, is on Blue Road, on the upper center image is the entrance to the main club, the bottom left image is an aerial of the current tennis site. A few images of the current building and the courts. Many of you are familiar with this, I’ll try and move at a quicker pace through the site and then you can stop me if there are any questions you have. An overall site plan of the survey; our enlarged survey site plan with our site at the bottom left. The site is zoned S – special use district. Current image on the bottom left and our proposed. I have larger images of these, so I’ll move along to those images. The current court configuration fronting on the north edge of Blue Road, on the left, the start of the residential neighborhood, on the east and south golf course. This is an image that superimposes what we are proposing over the existing. The current courts are undersized, the new courts will be eight regulation size courts, so they’ll start at the same point that they do now in the north and the west and grow towards the east. You can see in the central portion the existing tennis building, which will be replaced and moved down and into the courts. Part of the reason for this is the second floor of the tennis building will be used as an observation platform for the courts below. The project which went through DRC and PNZ, we do have elements that are common to public use, although this is completely private use, but we do have requirements for bench seating, for bicycle seating. Again, the club is private, so this is not the areas that are used by the public. Accessibility drawing, fire safety drawing. The current parking

lot will be reconfigured, added additional landscaped areas, additional trees, additional greens and general beautifying the current lot. This drawing at the bottom is a good representation of the scale of the proposed tennis facility in relation to the neighborhood. On the bottom right is the first home at the start of the residential neighborhood which is on our western edge. You can see by the scale of the tennis building that it's been designed more along the lines of the house and both the massive and roof shapes and the heights of the roofs do not exceed most of the homes in the neighborhood. The tennis building itself is 180 feet to the west of its nearest neighborhood. The tennis fence along the front which is now one continuous line. What we done is we've broken it into three sections, so there are 34-foot sections and then those are bifurcated by 24-foot-wide landscape screens. An aerial view of the proposed. So, you see the new proposed tennis facility is pushed back from Blue Road and it nestles within the courts. Everything we are doing is as-of-right. There are no variances being requested. The tennis building itself is using all of the materials of the main club, the roof tiles, the stonework, the windows, the shutters, they are all complimentary to the existing British Island Colonial style of the main club. It's a view from the rear showing the observation verandah overlooking the courts. An aerial view from the rear. The east and south property edges or site edges rather are controlled by the existing car path. The landscape architect we are working with is the same landscape architect who has done all the landscaping for the club itself. So, they performed a site condition study, they photographed all the trees, all the palms that are going to be reused or relocated within the site and come up with a new landscape site plan. Again, additional landscape to the parking lot area and bringing some of that landscape actually within the tennis facility itself, creating a courtyard between the tennis building's west edge and the courts to the west of that. An image showing some of the landscape material that's being proposed. And an aerial view from the golf course side.

Mayor Lago: Thank you, sir.

Mr. de Leon: I try to be brief. I know you have a long day, so I wanted to...

Mayor Lago: We have a long day ahead of us.

Mr. de Leon: Since you've all seen this property over the years.

Mayor Lago: Madam Director.

Planning and Zoning Director: Jennifer Garcia, Planning and Zoning Director. If I could have PowerPoint, please. I will also be brief once I have that up. So, you know where the site is located; the center of the golf course is located off of Blue Road and the site that we're looking at right now, part of that golf course is the tennis courts on the south side of Blue Road. So, land use is parks and recreation, and the zoning is special use. This is an aerial of what's there today, the courts that are there today and the two-story tennis facility that's there today. Now, we're here

today because the Commission did approve a site plan back in 2016 and part of that condition of the ordinance 2016-34, was that any change require review by Planning and Zoning Board and to the Commission, and that was amended back in 2023, when they did improvements to Blue Road. The site plan, I think Nelson went through with you guys. This is the rendering of what that would look like. And DRC reviewed this back in November of last year; the Board of Architects approved the project back in January of this year, and a neighborhood meeting at the end of January; Planning and Zoning recommended approval in February. We are here today on first reading and the School Community Relations Committee will review this in a couple of weeks. Letters were mailed to property owners within 1,000 feet of the property, it happened three times; the property was posted three times, on the website it was posted four times and the advertisement...is once. Staff recommends approval based on the consistency with the comp plan and there are no conditions except for the conditions that are already contained within ordinance 2016-34, as well as 2022-10 remain in effect. That's it. Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Thank you. Do we have any public comment?

City Clerk Urquia: No, Mr. Mayor.

Commissioner Menendez: I want on the record to state that some time ago, I met with Ed Williamson and members of the Riviera Country Club team about this project. So, I just want to put on the record that I've met with them in the past.

Mayor Lago: I think we've all met with them. It hasn't just been in the past, it's been in the last three years, four years, that we've been talking about this.

Commissioner Menendez: I asked the City Attorney in case we needed to put it on the record, and she said yes.

City Attorney Suarez: Yes, as is typical with quasi-judicial hearings, you should always disclose any ex-parte communications.

Mayor Lago: I think the design looks phenomenal. I think it looks great. I think it's something that – the only disappointment that I have in the project is you had so much more parking before, and I know it's a double-decker project and I know that you need the parking. So, it's a shame, but I know the cost of construction, it's so costly that I imagine you scraped it for that reason, but I think the project looks beautiful and your architect's amazing. I have a lot of respect for him, and I think that it's going to be well-received. I haven't gotten one complaint from any of the neighbors. I live maybe four blocks away on San Amaro, so again, I think it's an opportunity just to refresh all the amenities and so something that is worldclass that resembles what Riviera did already in their first phase of the project, if I can say this is the second phase, but I think it's something well done, it's

classy, and it fits in well with the neighborhood. I haven't heard from any of the neighbors if there are any complaints. I imagine you probably met with...

Mr. de Leon: It was well received.

Mayor Lago: Well received. Again, if there would have been an issue, I know exactly who your neighbors are, and they would have contacted – yes. So, the design is impeccable, the only thing that I tell you is that it's a shame that the parking issue what you wanted to do, the aspirational design that your architect did was amazing, was amazing. So, I'm fine with the project.

Vice Mayor Anderson: I'll just add, you know, the early, early conversations, I just knew something was going on. I haven't heard any comment or any complaint from anybody since the design was changed, so that's a good sign. Thank you.

Commissioner Castro: I'll move it.

Commissioner Menendez: I'll second.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Clerk.

Commissioner Castro: Yes

Commissioner Fernandez: Yes

Commissioner Menendez: Yes

Vice Mayor Anderson: Yes

Mayor Lago: Yes

(Vote: 5-0)