

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item F-5
May 22, 2018
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Raul Valdes-Fauli
Vice Mayor Frank Quesada
Commissioner Pat Keon
Commissioner Vince Lago
Commissioner Michael Mena

City Staff

City Manager, Cathy Swanson-Rivenbark
Assistant City Manager, Peter Iglesias
City Attorney, Miriam Ramos
City Clerk, Walter J. Foeman
Deputy City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Public Speaker(s)

Sally Jude
Jorge Navarro

Agenda Item F-5 [12:16 p.m.]

A Resolution of the City Commission of Coral Gables, Florida requesting an encroachment agreement and mixed use site plan review pursuant to Zoning Code Article 4, "Zoning Districts," Division 2, "Overlay and Special Purpose Districts," Section 4-201, "Mixed Use District (MXD)," for the mixed use project referred to as "Gables Living" on the property legally described as Lots 1 thru 8 and Lots 39 thru 42, Block 1, Industrial Section (390 Bird Road and 4012 Laguna Street), Coral Gables, Florida; including required conditions; providing for an effective date. (03 14 18 PZB recommended approval, Vote 5-0)

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: We'll take Item F-5. I think the applicant's attorney has to leave.

City Attorney Ramos: Item F-5 is a resolution of the City Commission of Coral Gables, Florida requesting an encroachment agreement and mixed use site plan review pursuant to Zoning Code Article 4, "Zoning Districts," Division 2, "Overlay and Special Purpose Districts," Section 4-201, "Mixed Use District," for the mixed use project referred to as "Gables Living" on the property legally described as Lots 1 thru 8 and Lots 39 thru 42, Block 1, Industrial Section (390 Bird Road and 4012 Laguna Street), Coral Gables, Florida; including required conditions; providing for an effective date.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: May I have the PowerPoint, please. The project that we have here today is not asking for a change of zoning or land use. It's simply asking for mixed-use site plan, which is one hearing. So, this is the only time that this is going to be reviewed. In addition, it's asking for an encroachment agreement. The project is located along Bird Road, very close to the high school. As you can see, it's a very nice urban area and it's within the industrial district, the industrial district that, as you know, the Zoning Code encourages mixed-use development. This is one of those projects. The land use, as I said, and the zoning remains the same. It remains the same and allows the type of mixed-use project that we have here before us. In addition, the project is in the grid. We've had a lot of discussion about traffic in the past projects and so on. Keep in mind that projects that are in the grid, they're not reviewed for concurrency in terms of traffic. So, that's the conceptual rendering of the project from Bird Road. As you can see, it's lower along Bird Road because there's a requirement that projects that are adjacent to single family, they can only go 45 feet, 100 feet within the site, so that is why the massing is the way it is. Later on, as it goes through Laguna, the project is taller, as allowed by the zoning and land use. Again, the request, mixed-use site plan and encroachment. Why is the encroachment significant? Well, in the blue, as you can see here in the blue, there is an area that is used for parking that is owned by the City. It is not an alley. It's a parking lot and it will remain owned by the City. They're encroaching above, above the project. It's 121 units, as you

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can see, and the number of parking spaces and the parking podium wraps around the ground level of the project. The height is a little bit higher than the 100 -- it's 105. And that's allowed. You can approve that specifically through the site plan review in this area. And as you can see, the area around the -- the area of the project along Bird Road is 45 feet to the tie beam.

Commissioner Mena: How tall are Merrick Manor and the Henry, just for comparison?

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Merrick Manor, Commissioner Lago was sharing with me that was a negotiated settlement, so the comparison...

Commissioner Lago: Yeah, you can't...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yeah.

Commissioner Lago: You can't really use Merrick Manor...

Commissioner Mena: Gotcha.

Commissioner Lago: As an example, because we had multiple issues that we had to deal with in regards to the trolley depot. That was, again, not the doing of anyone on this Commission. But at the end of the day, it fell on the lap of this Commission because I was involved, as appointed by, I think -- the Vice Mayor did me the favor of putting me as the appointee to negotiate that deal, so we had to provide an additional floor on that project.

Commissioner Mena: No, but so...

Commissioner Lago: Which, again, I have never received one email in regards to why there's an additional floor on that project, because it falls perfectly well, as Ramon mentioned. This is the industrial area.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: In my...

Commissioner Mena: But from the perspective of looking at this, then this would be less than that.

Commissioner Lago: Yes, it would be less.

Commissioner Mena: So...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yeah. You're correct, Commissioner. In my recollection this was a (INAUDIBLE) but again, it was a specific negotiated settlement that the Commission approved.

Commissioner Lago: And more importantly, not only that, this is on two main thoroughfares. You're talking about Bird Road...

Commissioner Mena: Yeah.

Commissioner Lago: And -- yeah, so...

Commissioner Mena: Yeah. I just wanted to have an idea how it fit into...

Commissioner Lago: Yeah, I know. And, I want to give you that background, because I don't know if you know...

Commissioner Mena: No, no.

Commissioner Lago: One day...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: It's right next to...

Commissioner Lago: One day we'll go over that. It was a long discussion.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: And the main distinction is that it's much lower along Bird Road...

Commissioner Mena: No doubt.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: No doubt, clearly, so the massing actually fits within the block fairly well. The FAR is 3.5. I want to make it clear that they're not getting any FAR from the area that is being encroached. That's the FAR from their property, so there's no additional -- there's no FAR being reviewed. The units are fairly small, and that has been one of the issues that has been raised at the review. And, the reason for that is that there is no maximum density in the industrial district or downtown when you do a mixed-use project. So, basically, there's no dimensions as far as units. The only time where the Code says that units have to be a minimum size is in MF2. MF2 is not the case here, so that is the context of that discussion in case there are some questions later on. The setbacks will be zero, as allowed. And the open space, as counted in the Code right now, would be 6,000 square feet, which is significantly more than is required. Staff has reviewed the project extensively. All of the departments have provided comments. We've had a review timeline that started with the Development Review Committee in July 2017, and Board of Architects in November. The neighborhood meeting was in February, and Planning and Zoning was in March. Now, something that we're making a really, really big effort on is that we are sending courtesy notices, and courtesy notices were sent 1,500 feet, and I wanted to show it to you, so you can see that that is going out and it's going out all the time. Even when the Code doesn't require it, we're going beyond what the Code requires to make sure that the citizens are aware of what's going on. So, there are multiple public notifications; three letters, three times the property was posted, four times there was a website posting, and two

times there was the newspaper advertisement. Of all of this, the legally required notice is the newspaper advertisement. So, as you can see, there's much more going on. Now, the staff recommends approval with conditions, and the conditions are fairly extensive, and there are three minor little changes that deal with design that I would recommend that you accept. They deal with the dimension of the arcade. It says 18 and 15 is the proper number. And also the width, it says 12, but because of the corner, I think it's acceptable to have 10 as the minimum size. And also, the other change that I will like to do -- and as it became clear in the last project is to have - - or every project, that every project that is of this size have monitoring of the traffic for three years as a standard condition. So, those are the three minor changes. I think that the attorney has reviewed and I don't believe there's any other issues as far as the opinion of the applicant. Staff has reviewed the project and it's consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. The conditions of approval, as I discussed, have a unique set of conditions that relate to the fact that they are using the encroachment. The applicant has proffered to contribute \$125,000 towards mobility improvements and \$125,000 towards open space. In addition, they will provide ten public parking spaces underground in the parking garage to be managed by the Parking Department and maintain the four spaces above ground. The actual right-of-way -- or not right-of-way, but the property owned by the City will be managed by the Parking Department and there will be additional parking -- public parking in the parking garage. Those are...

Commissioner Lago: Can I ask you a quick question...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yes.

Commissioner Lago: In regards to that? To those open -- to those ten parking spaces. I mean, I think the project is beautiful. I think it's a great addition to the neighborhood. I've had the privilege to be going -- spending a lot of time in this area. My barbershop just opened up about a block away there, and I actually went to the ribbon cutting last week.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Is it a beauty salon or is it a...

Commissioner Lago: No, because a lot of people comment me...

Commissioner Mena: Clearly.

Commissioner Lago: A lot of people comment on how nice my hair is, so I want to make sure that I plug The Spot Barbershop. They're really...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: I envy you.

Commissioner Lago: There's always an opportunity for a transplant.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yeah.

Commissioner Lago: You can get some of Mena's beard. I can't grow a beard. So, the point is that -- and I think this is going to be a great addition to the neighborhood, especially a piece of property that's been blighted for such a long time. And let's be honest -- and it's not the fault of the developer. It's been...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: It has been...

Commissioner Lago: The property has...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Blighted, yeah.

Commissioner Lago: It's been blighted for a long, long, long time. Now, if we only do something to really force 7-Eleven to fix up that parking lot, along with all the garbage that's there every single day, but that's a different story that you're not responsible for. What I'd love to see if we could add to this amenity, those ten parking spaces -- and I'm just being selfish here.

I just got an electric car, and I think it's a great amenity that you can park your car and charge your electric car, and I just did that on Aragon. And a lot of people are taking advantage of that. So, I think we need to really look at if we're going to take ten public parking spaces, you're going to see that if you want people to come and shop in certain areas and you have electric vehicles, this is kind of an amenity that we need to have.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: (INAUDIBLE).

Commissioner Lago: I don't know if the -- I know that the building, which is going to be LEED, is required to have that amenity, but I'm talking about the public parking spaces.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Commissioner, that's a great idea. I'm sure that the applicant...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yeah.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Will be happy...

Commissioner Lago: I don't...

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: No, the public parking -- I would suggest, sir -- I understand what you want. I know that the private building is obligated to...

Commissioner Lago: Yes.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Provide based on a formula of number of spaces.

Commissioner Lago: But that's for their need. That's for their...

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: But, I would say why don't you refer this challenge over to our Parking Advisory Board, so that they can see what are the -- what's the availability of charging stations throughout the city, because it's not only in this area. We can also lean on our friends at the Village of Merrick Park, but also, in the south Gables, where there's also needs as well. So, if you wouldn't mind, we can refer that to the...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yeah.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Parking Advisory Board for a...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Let me...

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Recommendation on how to better include it.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Let me...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: That's the end of my presentation. Thank you very much.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay. I would like to call -- there are two people that wish to speak. Sally Jude is the first one. Welcome, Sally. Welcome.

City Attorney Ramos: Mr. Clerk, if we could have everyone sworn in, please, who wishes to speak on this item?

Deputy City Clerk Urquia: Ms. Jude...

Sally Jude: I'm Sally Jude.

Deputy City Clerk Urquia: Ma'am.

Ms. Jude: I've lived here 55 years.

Commissioner Keon: Mrs. Jude...

Deputy City Clerk Urquia: Ma'am.

Commissioner Keon: You have to be...

Ms. Jude: I was with George Corrigan...

Commissioner Keon: You have to be sworn in.

Ms. Jude: Pardon me?

Commissioner Keon: You have to be sworn in by the Clerk to speak on the item.

Deputy City Clerk Urquia: Please raise your right hand. Do you swear or affirm that the testimony you will give today will be the truth and nothing but the truth?

Ms. Jude: I do.

Deputy City Clerk Urquia: Thank you.

Ms. Jude: I was with George Corrigan when we stopped the high-rises in Cocoplum. And, I see this development being too much with the high school across the street. We've been unwise further down the street in not having adequate walk space. Those children all come out of school at the same time. They need decent space to walk or they'll be out in the street being killed, and that is something that if we think of a sustainable city, walkability is a major factor. And, I don't

think that we're addressing that and I think it should be a greater consideration. But, I would like to add one thing and maybe it's in my aged wisdom. I suggest that you need a moratorium. Get the best experts in -- available on global warming. Have them decide what our city can sustain in the future. I won't be here, but it's an opportunity to do it now and create an overlay of our districts, our areas that we've already planned that may not be wise. We may need some of that space to contain water and other things. I'm not an expert in it, but I know it's a necessary thing, so consider it, please.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you very much, Ms. Jude. Thank you. And the next is Phyllis Schwartz, 345 Bird Road. Ms. Schwartz.

Commissioner Mena: She may have left.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay, Ms. Schwartz left. The public hearing is closed. Ms. Jude, I wanted to point something out and I was here, and I don't think any of the sitting Commissioners were when Merrick Park was built. And, precisely that point on Coral Gables High -- a statement was made that it would kill the students and they needed room to walk, and I think that they welcome Merrick Park, because it is another amenity. And insofar as development, development, unfortunately or fortunately, is going to take place in Miami-Dade County, and it's going to be either north of us or south of us, which will just increase the traffic in Coral Gables. Thank you. Yes, sir.

Jorge Navarro: Good morning or good afternoon, Mr. Mayor, Commissioners. My name is Jorge Navarro, with offices at 333 Southeast 2nd Avenue, on behalf of the owner. With me is Sergio Pino, and our architect, Alberto Cordoves. We're here to answer any questions that you may have. Obviously, this is a project that we've been working on a long time for. We're very excited to bring this project. As some of you may know, this is the old Chevron site, and it's been vacant for many years as a result of issues outside our control and market factors. But, we're coming in with a project that we think -- you know, this is a very important piece of

property. It's the entrance to Merrick Park, and Merrick Park has been very successful because of the MXD, and it's been tastefully done, and it's been pedestrian oriented. And all those things, this project embodies. And we're very excited to bring this project into this corner, as opposed to what was approved here before. One of the things that we've done is worked with your police department and your Planning Director to make sure that we have a ten-foot-wide colonnade that extends from the eastern portion of our property all the way to the western portion, and that was done as part of the DRC. We received a comment saying that after school, a lot of children from -- and students from Coral Gables High walk from their site over to the 7-Eleven. We wanted to make sure we had a covered walkway that directed pedestrians underneath the colonnade and away from the high-traffic velocity on Bird Road. And, we've accomplished that by planting street trees within the existing right-of-way and creating this ten-foot-wide colonnade on the private property. And, I think that that is something that will definitely improve student safety in the area and we're very proud of. Also, this project will be LEED, so we will be making sure that we're reducing our environmental footprint in this area. We are current -- in concurrence with all your staff recommendations. We have actually -- we've worked with our abutting property owner from Café Violetto, who's also here in support. And, we're here to answer any questions that you may have.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you, Jorge. Any questions of Jorge? Comments?

Commissioner Keon: I have a number of...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yeah, please.

Commissioner Keon: Questions about the project. When you have a colonnade that you create that is anticipated to be used by the public, does that -- does it have to be in the development agreement that it will, in perpetuity, remain open and available to the public as an amenity to the public and you can't close off that colonnade at any time?

City Attorney Ramos: I must assume that it is. I haven't been involved in the permitting or the plans for this project. I don't know if Ed is still here.

Commissioner Keon: No.

City Attorney Ramos: Maybe Peter can...

Commissioner Keon: Because it's not on -- it is on private property, so it is...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: But they can't close it.

Commissioner Keon: Within the development project.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: It's part of the project.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Some -- in some cases, the Commission has made that a specific recommendation -- a condition of approval.

Commissioner Keon: I'd like to make it a condition of approval. And it's not that -- at some time, it may not belong to the same person that is, you know, proffering that agreement now and because the right-of-way is pretty narrow there, I think there are -- are there any FDOT lights...

Mr. Navarro: So...

Commissioner Keon: In the sidewalk there that additionally narrow the sidewalk?

Mr. Navarro: I don't believe that there's any lights on that road, but it is a narrow strip and it is owned by FDOT, so they have a minimum right-of-way, and they did do some street improvements there...

Commissioner Keon: Right.

Mr. Navarro: So, it's not much room. I think, you know, they're -- since we're basically landscaping that right-of-way, when we go to FDOT, what FDOT will do is when you put the sidewalk on the private side, they will require you to put an easement for -- to make sure that you have public access to that sidewalk that's sitting on your side.

Commissioner Keon: Okay, so I would like, as a condition of approval, that there -- that that public -- that that is -- will remain open to the public in perpetuity.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: The condition right now reads as a publicly accessible open space easement.

City Attorney Ramos: Okay.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Okay and that has to be...

Commissioner Keon: But...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Executed by -- and it could be in more detail if you -- as you choose, yeah.

Commissioner Keon: I would like that it's...

City Attorney Ramos: (INAUDIBLE) in perpetuity.

Commissioner Keon: You know, can be -- I would -- I'd like it in perpetuity.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Sure. I mean, it has to be executed and recorded. I mean, that's what the condition states.

Commissioner Keon: I'd like it in perpetuity.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Okay.

Commissioner Keon: And then, even though it may be open at times to the public, I want it always open to the public.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yeah.

Commissioner Keon: It will always remain open...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: In perpetuity.

Commissioner Keon: To the public because it's a very narrow right-of-way along there now to have people walking along there. The other -- when I saw the density for his unit that we keep having so many discussions about, it's not that big a project and the unit count is 195 units per acre. And so, when I asked for the breakdown and the size of the units, I was provided the information yesterday on these units. And you have -- you know, we looked at increasing the density in the North Gables to allow for development. We put a minimum size requirement on units of 650 square feet, was it? What was the minimum size of the units that we went to?

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: It's 575 right now in the Code, MF2.

Commissioner Keon: Okay, so it's 575 is the minimum size of units, because we were not interested in creating microunits in the City of Coral Gables. I think you have to look very carefully at the Village of Merrick Park and that whole area as to, you know, how you want to

see that and how you want to develop it. Now, I know that there is one project that is a luxury project that is having difficulty selling their product as a luxury product and is looking to maybe increase the number of units so -- to bring down the price point. I -- I'm -- I don't like these microunits, I don't. And I...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: You don't like what?

Commissioner Keon: I don't like the microunits. I don't...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: They're not going to...

Commissioner Keon: I don't think...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Have microunits.

Commissioner Keon: You have -- the majority of your -- you have units here at 417 square feet. You have units at 422 square feet. Those are microunits. You could put five of them in this room. Those are very, very tiny units. I really -- I mean, I know it is often to the developer's advantage to have those tiny units, because it's more units to rent and it's more income, but I really think that we need to look also at, you know, what we believe to be the minimum size -- minimal habitable size of a unit that will maintain the quality of that unit and that experience over a long period of time. We have seen that that not be necessarily the case. I would like to impose -- or I would like to have a discussion about what the minimum size unit should be. And, if we believe the minimum size unit in the northern part of the Gables is 575, then we need to look at what the minimum size unit is. I'm not as concerned actually the density numbers as I am with the minimum size of a unit.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Jorge.

Mr. Navarro: So, that's something that we looked at from a market perspective. As some of you may know on some of the projects I've worked on, we have some very large units in Merrick Park. And from a transportation and pedestrian oriented perspective, I think we're doing ourselves a disservice, because this is an area that is slated -- in terms of public transportation, we have a bus stop directly in front of our project. We have the trolley just down the street, and we have the Metrorail station right next to Merrick Park. And, I think this is an area -- and this has been something that the Commission's been pushing for is to reduce the impact to traffic by bringing the density towards these mass transit areas. And this is an area that has access to all those things, and I think there is a need for that. And this will be an area, especially with Baptist Hospital or the Baptist facility opening up just to the south. This is something that nursing assistants, employees of that facility, employees at Merrick Park, you know, patrons of the restaurant or people that work at the restaurant facility, these are people that probably commute from very far away and now they'll have a unit that they could actually afford. Now, obviously, if the market's not there, we will come back and revise it. But, we've actually studied this and we believe -- you know, it's a mixture of uses -- a mixture of unit sizes. This is not all very small units. But this is tailored toward -- it's a high-end unit, but trying to service the people that work in this area and that commute in this area. And, we think it's going to be a great project with the current unit breakdown that we have.

Commissioner Keon: I fully understand that it is a market -- it is market driven for you, as the developer, and what you're looking at is, you know, your return on your investment. On this side of the dais is the policymakers that look at the sustainability and the quality of development within a given area. You -- yes, you may, you know, provide housing for people whatever -- but we have -- Merrick Park is a high-end shopping retail establishment. We -- you know, we have looked at the other types of product that are -- that is in that area and all of them, from The Collection to Studio Becker to the other retail components that are in there, are all high-end. I would -- I really would, from a policy perspective, I don't think -- I would not like to see microunits anywhere in our city. I really don't. I think that a, you know, a 400-square-foot, you know, even studio apartment -- it's a 20 by 20 room. That...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: I think we...

Commissioner Keon: Is a very, very tiny room. All I'm asking is, you know -- it's your studios that are very tiny -- that you increase the size of your studios.

Commissioner Mena: What's the -- Commissioner Keon, just so I understand...

Commissioner Keon: Yeah.

Commissioner Mena: Your concern because you sort of drew a distinction earlier between what you're saying with respect to the size of the units and density.

Commissioner Keon: Right.

Commissioner Mena: And so, what's the distinction you're trying to make there, so that I understand?

Commissioner Keon: Well, the -- I mean, well, you're going to decrease the density if you increase the size of the units. But, I'm not really talking about it from a density...

Commissioner Mena: Right.

Commissioner Keon: Standpoint is what I'm trying to make clear. What I'm talking about is the livability and the sustainability of a quality product at a certain -- of a certain size, you know, that you want a certain size. A 20 by 20 room as a permanent residence is...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yeah, but we have to make it...

Commissioner Keon: I mean, at some point, you make...

Commissioner Mena: But let me...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: You have to make it...

Commissioner Keon: You know, whether it's livable.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: It affordable to some of the people who work at Merrick Park and the teachers at the Coral Gables High School. And they take...

Commissioner Keon: Most of these people are not going to live...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Public transportation...

Commissioner Keon: In a 20 by 20 room.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Why not? If they buy it, that's...

Commissioner Keon: You ever lived in a 20...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Where they want to live.

Commissioner Keon: By 20 room?

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: And that's where they want to -- well, I don't have to live in that.

Commissioner Keon: You lived in a -- when I graduated from college and went to New York to work and worked at NYU Medical Center, I lived in a studio apartment. I mean, that studio

apartment was tiny and it was just over 500 square feet. I mean, they're finding that, you know, these microunits -- yes, you are finding them in downtown Miami and they're making it -- they are building them in places where they're requested. I think that we, as a city, have been diligent in looking not only at affordability, but also the quality of permissible uses and things that we allow to be built and the size that we need to be built in the city, so that they retain their value and they remain as higher quality living units than some other city may make.

Mr. Navarro: And just to clarify...

Commissioner Keon: I'm asking you to look at...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: The trend today...

Commissioner Keon: Look at that.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Is to have those microunits for people to -- for young people, for graduates, for secretaries, for teachers to afford to live close to where they work. And then, you know, when they make more money or when they whatever, they move on to bigger units. But, I think we're doing the city and the residents a disservice because of our wish, our tastes to deny them, you know, the ability to live close to where they work.

Commissioner Keon: I also think that we have an obligation or we should feel like we have an obligation to provide what is better habitable space than other people may be willing to provide.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: (INAUDIBLE).

Commissioner Keon: And I think to move these...

Commissioner Lago: I...

Commissioner Keon: You have all of your studios -- I mean, there's -- you have six studios at 600 square feet, which is a generous studio.

Mr. Navarro: Yeah.

Commissioner Keon: You know, to be able to move the, you know, remainder of, you know, these studios to a little bit larger studio may require that you lose a few spaces, not that many.

Mr. Navarro: So, in terms of -- I mean, one of the issues that most people have is they're limited by density. So, here, we're not limited by density. We could have as many units as we'd like, but we have provided the smaller unit -- I think the Mayor said it very well -- because we want to try to service a population of the Gables which has, historically, I think, been neglected, which is, as you said, the secretaries and people that can't afford to live in that area have to travel 45 minutes to get to work. But this is only a small percentage. So, we have 13 units out of 121, only 13 that fall within 400 to 500...

Commissioner Lago: So, how many units are...

Commissioner Keon: No.

Commissioner Lago: You building?

Mr. Navarro: There are 121.

Commissioner Keon: Right. You have...

Commissioner Lago: But if you do...

Commissioner Keon: All of your -- every one of your studios is -- you have six studios that are at 607 square feet. The remainder of your studios are all below the 575...

Commissioner Mena: But how many are there?

Commissioner Keon: Square feet that we -- okay, 18 and 9, 29...

Commissioner Lago: Ramon, would this be the smallest units in the City of Coral Gables? Can you give me an example of where this has been...?

Commissioner Keon: Forty-three...

Commissioner Lago: Can you give me an example of where this was done before?

Commissioner Keon: About 60.

Commissioner Mena: Sixty?

Commissioner Keon: Sixty.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: No.

Commissioner Keon: Here, do you want this?

Commissioner Mena: I'm trying to pull it up here.

Commissioner Keon: I don't -- they gave it to me. I don't know, yeah, where it came from.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Ramon, when Commissioner Keon asked you...

Commissioner Keon: There's about 60. Look at the studio. It's the...

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: About...

Commissioner Keon: Units. And I'm asking...

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Size...

Commissioner Keon: You to make...

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Sorry.

Commissioner Keon: A little bit more generous to make them a little bit more livable.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Understand. I just want to understand when Commissioner Keon talked before about what does the Code require as a minimum size...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yes.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: What is the City's requirement for minimum size?

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: The MF2, the smallest one is 575 in MF2. And that is the only time that is very clearly stated.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: And that was for the North Ponce, right?

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Generally, but there's MF2 in other places also.

Commissioner Keon: But other places also. The reason that they are freed of that is because it's a mixed use. But we say -- you know, because something is mixed use, do you expect that the livability of a unit or the quality of a unit really should be less, because it's mixed use any more than if we've determined that 575 is the livability of space for people, you know, within the City. Should it be -- and it's the same issue that we -- you brought up before and I think we'll talk about later and why we asked DPZ to come in and help us with our Code is that, you know, as we, you know, go through to mixed-use projects and that it removes a lot of the items that would otherwise be included or required of a project. So, it does exactly the things that we sit up here and labor over. So, I...

Commissioner Mena: My -- yeah, my...

Commissioner Keon: Would like the ability to, you know, to go back to that and require that you, you know, you have...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yeah.

Commissioner Keon: A certain -- that we determine, you know, through consultants, through planners, through however you want to do it. I mean, I -- it's not that -- I could sit here and tell you that I have the credentials or the background to tell you that, you know, this is a livable space. I'll tell you based on the literature and based on our prior experience and based on our policy that has existed in this city, we have identified 575 as the livable space. Now...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: (INAUDIBLE)

Commissioner Keon: Whether it's 550, I don't really know. But, I would like them to move the minimum size of these studios to, you know, either 550 or 575 and not 400 -- 418.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: The mixed-use...

Commissioner Keon: I don't even care if it's six.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Regulations...

Commissioner Keon: No.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Don't speak of the minimum units, so that's the issue. They speak of density.

Commissioner Keon: Right.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: And in this case, they say the density -- there's no limit...

Commissioner Keon: Right.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: In the industrial area.

Commissioner Keon: That's right.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: However, it is a conditional use and the Commission has the authority to place conditions as you see fit.

Commissioner Keon: Right. And so, I'm asking you to please, you know...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Make a motion.

Commissioner Keon: That we have an obligation to -- I'd like to see us -- but I mean, I'd like the applicant...

Mr. Navarro: Yeah. I mean, we would...

Commissioner Keon: To have an opportunity to respond. I mean, it's not...

Mr. Navarro: So, the MF2 district...

Commissioner Keon: Dictated to you, but it's to tell you.

Commissioner Mena: Right.

Mr. Navarro: Is very different than the MXD. So, the MXD is, essentially, your downtown area, and you have two of them. You have Miracle Mile area and this area, which is historically an industrial area that has been transformed. And, MF2 areas are usually abutting single-family homes, so that's why you want to have a bigger unit type there. But in this area, I really think that we're going to be passing an opportunity -- and that's why the Code did not include a unit size for this. And I think, really, you know, we would ask that it be approved like this. If the market -- if no one wants to live in a 500-square-foot studio, then we will revise our plans. But, I could tell you that based on what we've seen; there is a population of Coral Gables that, you know, cannot afford the 700, 3,000 square foot units. And, I looked at it again and we do have 13 units that are substandard -- below 500 square feet, and I could walk you through...

Commissioner Keon: Okay, but, you know...

Commissioner Mena: Below 500.

Commissioner Keon: Even the ones that you have that...

Commissioner Mena: It's easier than 575.

Commissioner Keon: Yeah, but 514 is not -- whatever. I mean, I think that there is...

Mr. Navarro: Yeah, but still, I mean...

Commissioner Keon: A...

Mr. Navarro: You know...

Commissioner Keon: There is a unit size that we should decide. And now, whether you need time to -- you know, I don't know how the rest of you feel about it. I feel strongly...

Vice Mayor Quesada: I agree with you.

Commissioner Lago: And I agree with you.

Commissioner Keon: Okay, so...

Vice Mayor Quesada: Yeah.

Commissioner Keon: I feel strongly...

Commissioner Mena: So...

Commissioner Keon: About it.

Commissioner Mena: So, let me -- can I just chime in on that? I guess my concern is if it's not a density concern, which is -- you -- I think what you said, then I'm having a hard time sort of

disagreeing with what Mr. Navarro just said about, you know, as far as livability. I mean, won't the market dictate that?

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yeah.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Yeah, but it's always -- but...

Commissioner Lago: Yeah, but...

Vice Mayor Quesada: Commissioner Mena...

Commissioner Lago: I just want to be careful...

Vice Mayor Quesada: I just want to...

Commissioner Keon: I think we need to be careful.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Historically -- and I'm sure the Mayor can give more than I can, but I guess, in my seven years up here, you know, we've always tried to make it a point -- because you always read -- you read in the paper every now and again City of Miami gets the smaller units and then, Miami Beach, I think, has some of the smallest units you have out there. And we've never wanted to play that game of having tiny, little units next to each other.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: But that...

Vice Mayor Quesada: So, just historically -- at least in my time here -- we've tried to stay away from the smaller units from a -- you know, not promoting the tiny units in the city. And, there have been a lot of fights about that over the years. And, I think the majority of the Commission

has always sided on having larger units. And, even going under the 600 square foot was a big deal four or five years ago when we did that.

Commissioner Mena: Yeah, but that was a part of the overlay -- the North Ponce overlay, which was a...

Vice Mayor Quesada: No.

Commissioner Mena: Wasn't it?

Commissioner Keon: Well...

Vice Mayor Quesada: No.

Commissioner Keon: No, it was...

Vice Mayor Quesada: It was not.

Commissioner Keon: Prior to that...

Vice Mayor Quesada: It was not.

Commissioner Keon: But then, also, it came up again in the North Ponce overlay.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay. Will you make a motion...?

Commissioner Keon: Yes, it did.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: That we defer this to the next meeting?

Commissioner Keon: Well, I mean, I'd like to have the opportunity for them to go back and look at it. I feel strongly that you need to increase the size of your units to what, you know, is regarding as -- or what we have traditionally regarded as a -- as -- I -- it's not sustainable space. But I mean, you -- Mayor, you talked about the Happiness World Conference that was here and kicked off.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yeah. And the Happiness...

Commissioner Keon: These all are elements. But you know, the quality of the space you live in adds to those things. It makes it...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Which also has to do with...

Commissioner Keon: More livable.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: The amount of money you have and...

Commissioner Keon: The amount of money is...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: If you're a secretary...

Commissioner Keon: Is a...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: The ability to live across the street from where you work.

Commissioner Keon: You know what, we can dictate -- we have the ability to affect quality as policymakers. We have that ability. Now, yes, they'll price their apartments and, you know, if

they don't make quite as much, because they had to build a 500-unit instead of a 400-unit space, you know, that's a decision that they're going to make. Don't build...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay, will...

Commissioner Keon: But you know...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: You make a motion...

Commissioner Keon: I think that there is...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: That we defer this?

Commissioner Keon: Or continue it.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Come on. Let's get off that (INAUDIBLE).

Commissioner Keon: I would...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: I mean, we...

Commissioner Keon: I don't know. Do you want to continue it or do you want to defer?

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Let's continue it.

Commissioner Keon: What do you want to do?

Commissioner Mena: I think we should give them a chance to maybe reply to...

Commissioner Keon: Yeah. I don't...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yeah.

Commissioner Keon: Want to make that decision like, you know...

Commissioner Mena: Right.

Commissioner Keon: Here without them being willing to weigh in.

Mr. Navarro: I mean, so...

Commissioner Keon: I don't want to dictate to you.

Mr. Navarro: We've been through a very long process. This is not...

Commissioner Keon: Yes.

Mr. Navarro: Something that we started yesterday.

Commissioner Keon: Yes, I know.

Mr. Navarro: We were actually working with this with Craig Leen when he was here...

Commissioner Keon: Okay.

Mr. Navarro: About two years ago. You know, we think it's a great project. You see this is a beautiful project. I mean, I really don't see an issue with having these smaller units.

Commissioner Keon: I do.

Mr. Navarro: In this day and age, right, people are downsizing. They move their stuff off-site. But, if there's a concern from the Commission and the Commission wants us to study this, I mean, we could go outside and talk about it for a few minutes, but honestly, I mean, we've done a market study and this project's going to be fantastic. One of the things that you want -- and from a planning perspective, I think your planner could tell you -- is you want variety of housing types in a community. You want lots of different people in a community. And, what we have in Merrick Park are large units that only rich people could afford, and that is not fair. And, that's why we proposed this project and we think that it is perfect for this area, because you don't have this here. You don't have this here. It's been very successful in the City of Miami. It's been very successful in other areas. And, where you want these units is not everywhere and you can't have them side by side. You need to have them near pedestrian-oriented developments, and this is a pedestrian-oriented development. You have the trolley. You have public transportation, and you have a Metrorail station, which is being upgraded by your county. So, I mean, we don't -- we would ask that you approve this project as is.

Commissioner Keon: No.

Mr. Navarro: If there is an issue, we will go back and study it and modify the unit size, but I could tell you that there's a lot of people that are going to move in here and be very happy that they're living in these units.

Commissioner Lago: Ramon...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yes.

Commissioner Lago: Very quickly. I need -- if we're going to defer this or if we're going to make a...

Commissioner Keon: Continue it...

Commissioner Lago: Decision today...

Commissioner Keon: To the next meeting.

Commissioner Lago: Or continue it to the next meeting, I don't have a problem with it. I need you to give me information in regards to where similar units have been approved in the City of Coral Gables.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Okay.

Commissioner Lago: Okay.

Commissioner Keon: Okay. I would...

Commissioner Lago: And...

Commissioner Keon: Like to make the motion to continue this...

Commissioner Lago: And I -- by the way...

Commissioner Keon: To the next meeting.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Make a motion that we continue it.

Commissioner Keon: We'll continue it to the next meeting...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay.

Commissioner Keon: To give them the opportunity...

Commissioner Mena: But let's let...

Commissioner Keon: To look at this issue.

Commissioner Mena: Commissioner Lago finish his thoughts so he can...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yeah.

Commissioner Keon: Yeah, I'm sorry. Yes.

Commissioner Lago: It's okay. No problem. I'm used to it. It usually happens at my house, not here.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay. All those in favor of our continuing it, say yes.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Yes.

Commissioner Lago: No, no, no.

Commissioner Keon: Commissioner Lago had the opportunity to speak...

Commissioner Lago: Let's go.

Commissioner Keon: To the issue.

Commissioner Lago: No, all I ask you is very simple. Please find out the information for me.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yes.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yeah.

Commissioner Lago: I want you to do an analysis in regards to the unit count per acre. I want to -- basically, I understand that we have unlimited availability here, but I need to really make sure that we're being very careful with the Code and that -- I understand that this is an industrial area. Like I mentioned before, I think the project is beautiful. I think it's going to meet a need. But, I want to be careful in regards to the size of the units.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Would you like a recommendation or do you have some idea of what you would like to suggest in terms of minimum size?

Commissioner Keon: I'm looking at...

Commissioner Lago: Listen, let me...

Commissioner Keon: What we have in the city now...

Commissioner Lago: Let me explain to...

Commissioner Keon: Is 575.

Commissioner Lago: Let me explain to you. I voted against North Gables going to 100 units per acre. I was in favor of 75; Commission voted in favor of it. Again, I'm not -- I don't have an

issue in regards to the unit count here, because we're in an industrial area. There's no -- there isn't a single-family home abutting to this property.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: No.

Commissioner Lago: This is in an area where we should have a larger unit count. We should have walkability. We should promote that. Like -- I think -- and I agree with the Mayor on another point also. The unit -- you know, the unit size here, you know, again, I'm leaning in a certain area, because you could have teachers living in this. But I think 400 is a little bit small, in my opinion.

Commissioner Keon: No teacher's going to...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: I think the...

Commissioner Keon: Live in a 400 square foot...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Significant numbers is the...

Commissioner Mena: Then they won't live there.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: 60 studios...

Commissioner Mena: That's what I'm not following.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: And 45...

Commissioner Keon: Who's going to live there?

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: One-bedrooms.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: It won't work.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: And then there's only...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: It's the market.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Nine two-bedrooms, so it's clearly...

Commissioner Lago: I don't know.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Very small units.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Alright. It'll be continued...

Commissioner Keon: But, if you want to -- if you want to give it for teachers, I will tell you, you have to give a size that somebody can live comfortably in.

Commissioner Mena: It's not just teachers.

Commissioner Keon: But how they...

Commissioner Mena: Not just teachers.

Commissioner Keon: Teachers and...

Commissioner Mena: It could be a young professional that...

Commissioner Keon: It's a young professional?

Commissioner Mena: Could be a young professional that works at Nordstrom's...

Commissioner Keon: Right.

Commissioner Mena: Or that's a waiter at the restaurant nearby.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: No politicians.

Commissioner Keon: You lived in New York.

Commissioner Mena: Or that...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Alright.

Commissioner Mena: Yeah.

Commissioner Keon: You lived in New York.

Commissioner Mena: But the market will dictate that. I don't know -- I'm not understanding why...

Commissioner Keon: I'd like to continue it to the next meeting...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay, it'll be continued.

Commissioner Keon: To give them an opportunity to...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you very much.

Commissioner Keon: Discuss unit size.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you. Continue.

City Attorney Ramos: Was there a second...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: And now we have...

City Attorney Ramos: And a mo -- was there a second and a vote?

Commissioner Lago: I'll second it.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay. All those in favor, say "aye."

The Commission (Collectively): Aye.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay.

[End: 12:55:19 p.m.]