

**City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting**  
**Agenda Items F-12, F-13, F-16, F-17 and F-18 are related**  
**July 25, 2022**  
**City Commission Chambers**  
**405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL**

**City Commission**

**Mayor Vince Lago**

**Vice Mayor Michael Mena**

**Commissioner Rhonda Anderson**

**Commissioner Jorge Fors**

**Commissioner Kirk Menendez**

**City Staff**

**City Attorney, Miriam Ramos**

**City Manager, Peter Iglesias**

**City Clerk, Billy Urquia**

**Development Services Director, Suramy Cabrera**

**City Planner, Jennifer Garcia**

**Public Speaker(s)**

**Anthony De Yurre**

**David Winker**

**Laureando Cancio**

**Marcel Montoya**

**Kansas Goodrum**

**Maria Cruz**

**Jack Lowell**

**Gordon Sokoloff**

**Jennifer Davis**

**Sue Kawalerski**

**Maria Julia Yanez**

**Alberto Calderon**

**David Hays**

**J. Robert Kirk**

---

City Commission Meeting

July 25, 2022

Agenda Items F-12, F-13, F-16, F-17 and F-18 are related - Ordinances of the City Commission amending the Future Land Use Map of the City of Coral Gables Comprehensive Plan from Commercial Low-Rise Intensity to Commercial High-Rise Intensity alleyway for Lots 8 through 21 and approving the vacation of a public alleyway between Lots 12 through 18 and Lots 11 and 19 in Block 29, Crafts Section (3000 Ponce de Leon Boulevard, 216 & 224 Catalonia, 203 University Drive and 225 Malaga).

**Sara Conde**  
**Alan Gummerson**  
**Mark Trowbridge**  
**Patrick O’Connell**  
**Oscar Sosa**  
**Fernando Valdes**  
**Alberto Cardenas**  
**David Fournier**  
**Barbara Perez**  
**Olga Cancio**  
**Enrique Bernal**  
**Aurelio Durana**  
**C. Vidal**  
**Enrique Lopez**  
**Eduardo Gonzalez**  
**Karelia Carbonell**

---

Agenda Items F-12, F-13, F-16, F-17 and F-18 are related [5:00 p.m.]

An Ordinance of the City Commission amending the Future Land Use Map of the City of Coral Gables Comprehensive Plan pursuant to Zoning Code Article 14, “Process,” Section 14-213, “Comprehensive Plan Text and Map Amendments,” and Small Scale amendment procedures (ss. 163.3187, Florida Statutes), from “Commercial Low-Rise Intensity” to “Commercial High-Rise Intensity” for Lots 8 through 21, less the West ½ of lot 8, Block 29, Crafts Section, together with that portion of the 20-foot platted alley lying east of Lots 11 and 19, of said Block 29, (3000 Ponce de Leon Blvd, 216 & 224 Catalonia, 203 University Dr, and 225 Malaga), Coral Gables, Florida; providing for a repealer provision, severability clause, and providing for an effective date. ( LEGAL DESCRIPTION ON FILE) (LPA review/Future Land Use Map Amendment)

Lobbyist: Anthony De Yurre

Lobbyist: Lauran Kahn

Lobbyist: W. Allen Morris

Lobbyist: Walter Allen Spencer Morris

---

City Commission Meeting  
July 25, 2022

Agenda Items F-12, F-13, F-16, F-17 and F-18 are related - Ordinances of the City Commission amending the Future Land Use Map of the City of Coral Gables Comprehensive Plan from Commercial Low-Rise Intensity to Commercial High-Rise Intensity alleyway for Lots 8 through 21 and approving the vacation of a public alleyway between Lots 12 through 18 and Lots 11 and 19 in Block 29, Crafts Section (3000 Ponce de Leon Boulevard, 216 & 224 Catalonia, 203 University Drive and 225 Malaga).

An Ordinance of the City Commission approving the vacation of a public alleyway pursuant to Zoning Code Article 14, "Process," Section 14-211, "Abandonment and Vacations" and City Code Chapter 62, Article 8, "Vacation, Abandonment and Closure of Streets, Easements and Alleys by Private Owners and the City; Application Process," providing for the vacation of the twenty (20) foot wide alley which is approximately one hundred and fifty-five (155) feet in length lying between Lots 12 thru 18 and Lots 11 and 19 in Block 29, Crafts Section (3000 Ponce de Leon Blvd, 216 & 224 Catalonia, 203 University Dr, and 225 Malaga), Coral Gables, Florida; providing for a repealer provision, severability clause, and providing for an effective date. (LEGAL DESCRIPTION ON FILE) (Vacation of public alleyway)

Lobbyist: Anthony De Yurre

Lobbyist: Lauran Kahn

Lobbyist: W. Allen Morris

Lobbyist: Walter Allen Spencer Morris

A Resolution of the City Commission approving receipt of Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs) pursuant to Zoning Code Article 14, "Process," Section 14-204.6, "Review and approval of use of TDRs on receiver sites," for the receipt and use of TDRs for a Mixed-Use project referred to as "Ponce Park Residences" on the property legally described as Lots 8 through 21, less the West ½ of lot 8, Block 29, Crafts Section, together with that portion of the 20-foot platted alley lying east of Lots 11 and 19, of said Block 29; (3000 Ponce de Leon Blvd, 216 & 224 Catalonia, 203 University Dr, and 225 Malaga), Coral Gables, Florida; including required conditions; providing for a repealer provision, severability clause, and providing for an effective date. (LEGAL DESCRIPTION ON FILE) (TDRs)

(This Resolution is not for consideration at this time and will be included with the above Ordinance on Second Reading if approved on First Reading.)

Lobbyist: Anthony De Yurre

Lobbyist: Lauran Kahn

Lobbyist: W. Allen Morris

Lobbyist: Walter Allen Spencer Morris

A Resolution of the City Commission approving the Tentative Plat entitled “Ponce Park Residences” pursuant to Zoning Code Article 14, “Process,” Section 14-210, “Platting/Subdivision,” being a re-plat of 42,543 square feet (0.977 acres) into a single tract of land on the property legally described as Lots 8 through 21, less the West ½ of lot 8, Block 29, Crafts Section, together with that portion of the 20-foot platted alley lying east of Lots 11 and 19, of said Block 29, together with a 1,318 square feet portion of University Drive that runs north of the Malaga Avenue right-of-way and west of the Ponce de Leon Boulevard right-of-way and dedication of 1,725 square feet; (3000 Ponce de Leon Blvd, 216 & 224 Catalonia, 203 University Dr, and 225 Malaga), Coral Gables, Florida; including required conditions; providing for a repealer provision, severability clause, and providing for an effective date. (LEGAL DESCRIPTION ON FILE) (Tentative Plat)

(This Resolution is not for consideration at this time and will be included with the above Ordinance on Second Reading if approved on First Reading.)

Lobbyist: Anthony De Yurre

Lobbyist: Lauran Kahn

Lobbyist: W. Allen Morris

Lobbyist: Walter Allen Spencer Morris

A Resolution of the City Commission approving Mixed-Use Site Plan and Conditional Use review pursuant to Zoning Code Article 14, “Process” Section 14-203, “Conditional Uses,” for a proposed Mixed-Use project referred to as “Ponce Park Residences” on the property legally described as Lots 8 through 21, less the West ½ of lot 8, Block 29, Crafts Section, together with that portion of the 20-foot platted alley lying east of Lots 11 and 19, of said Block 29; (3000 Ponce de Leon Blvd, 216 & 224 Catalonia, 203 University Dr, and 225 Malaga), Coral Gables, Florida; including required conditions; providing for a repealer provision, severability clause, and providing for an effective date. (LEGAL DESCRIPTION ON FILE). (Mixed Use Site Plan and Cond. Use Review)

(This Resolution is not for consideration at this time and will be included with the above Ordinance on Second Reading if approved on First Reading.)

Lobbyist: Anthony De Yurre

Lobbyist: Lauran Kahn

Lobbyist: W. Allen Morris  
Lobbyist: Walter Allen Spencer Morris

City Attorney Ramos: Mayor, if I may, I'll read the ordinances...

Mayor Lago: Yes.

City Attorney Ramos: Into the record. So, only for vote on today are F-12 and F-13, which are the two ordinances. There are three related items: F-16, 17, and 18, which are resolutions and would travel with the two ordinances on second reading. F-12 is an ordinance of the City Commission amending the Future Land Use Map of the City of Coral Gables Comprehensive Plan pursuant to Zoning Code Article 14, "Process," Section 14-213, "Comprehensive Plan Text and Map Amendments," and Small Scale amendment procedures, from "Commercial Low-Rise Intensity" to "Commercial High-Rise Intensity" for Lots 8 through 21, less the West half of Block 8 -- Lot 8, Block 29, Crafts Section, together with that portion of the 20-foot platted alley lying east of Lots 11 and 19, of said Block 29, Coral Gables, Florida; providing for a repealer provision, severability clause, and providing for an effective date. And F-13 is an ordinance of the City Commission approving the vacating of a public alleyway pursuant to Zoning Code Article 14, "Process," Section 14-211, "Abandonment and Vacations" and City Code Chapter 62, Article 8, "Vacation, Abandonment and Closure of Streets, Easements and Alleys by Private Owners and the City; Application Process, " providing for the vacation of the 20-foot wide alley which is approximately 155 feet in length lying between Lots 12 through 18 and Lots 11 through 19 in Block 29, Crafts Section, Coral Gables, Florida; providing for a repealer provision, severability clause, and providing for an effective date. This is a public hearing item, and anyone wishing to testify needs to be sworn in.

Mayor Lago: Thank you, Madam City Attorney. As I mentioned before, prior to the beginning, I want to remind everyone of the rules and conduct of this quasi-judicial hearing. All participants

must abide by Section 2-83(d) of the City Code governing decorum and with the City's Civility Code adopted in Resolution of 2016-279. Failure to do so may be subject the individual to removal from the meeting. By the way, I have yet to remove a person, and I hope I don't have to remove a person. It's not in my nature. I set this item at 5 P.M. to make public participation more convenient, but we need to be cognizant of time, as I mentioned. I want to make this clear that there are only two items, as the City Attorney mentioned, that the Commission will be considering for vote today. They are Items F-12, the Comprehensive Plan amendment, along with F-13, the alley vacation. The three related resolutions are not for consideration today. When and if the ordinances return on second reading together with the resolution, there will be additional opportunity for public comment. Accordingly, as I mentioned before, I'm asking members of the public who wish to speak to please target their remarks and be brief. Those wishing to participate during the public comment, in the interest of time and efficiency, I'm asking several of you making the same comment that you please consider yielding your time to one individual or to multiple individuals who can speak on behalf of the group. Mr. Applicant, Mr. De Yurre, how long do you need for your presentation?

Anthony De Yurre: No more than 15 minutes.

Mayor Lago: Okay. Has the residents chosen the individuals that will be speaking on their behalf?

David Winker: Yes, Mayor. On behalf of the -- remember, I represent the Ponce neighbors group.

Mayor Lago: Okay.

Mr. Winker: I have five speakers.

Mayor Lago: Okay.

Mr. Winker: Bob Kirk, David Fournier, Jenny Davis, Omar So -- I mean, sorry, Oscar Sosa, and Terry Carmona.

Mayor Lago: Perfect.

Mr. Winker: From my group.

Mayor Lago: Okay. Is the group going to be presenting also or...?

Mr. Winker: No. I was going to leave it to my public comment.

Mayor Lago: Okay, perfect. Do you need more than five public speakers? Would you like more than public -- more than five? Okay. Then let's begin.

Laureando Cancio: Excuse me. Can I ask a question? Who selects the people who are going to speak on behalf of the (INAUDIBLE). (INAUDIBLE) resident for over 20 years and this is the first time I have come to a committee meeting or city council meeting. Why should someone (INAUDIBLE).

Mayor Lago: Everyone has the chance to speak, but what I've asked is just in respect of time so that we're not here till the midday...

Mr. Cancio: (INAUDIBLE) maybe I have something to say that nobody else has said.

Mayor Lago: No problem, then you can speak also, sir.

Mr. Cancio: Okay. (INAUDIBLE) to speak.

Mr. Winker: Yeah. I want to be clear. I -- what I'm -- I want to make sure you understand. This I -- I'm only speaking to my group -- right? -- the group that's engaged me, so this does not apply to other residents.

Mr. Cancio: Oh, okay.

Mr. Winker: I just want to be clear.

Mayor Lago: So, what I'm asking for, what I'm asking for -- and maybe I didn't say this -- maybe I didn't say this properly. I would like for both sides to select five, ten people to speak because the idea that everyone just keeps speaking the same thing -- "I'm against the project" or "I'm in favor of the project" -- is just redundant, and I may lose quorum in this meeting. And I...

Mr. Cancio: But that's a presumption on your part. There are a lot of very intelligent people here and they're not going to repeat what other people have said.

Mayor Lago: Okay. What I'm -- what is not a perception, sir, is that I'm going to lose quorum in this meeting. That's not a perception.

Mr. Cancio: They have plenty of time to schedule a meeting where everyone could attend.

Mayor Lago: The...

Mr. Cancio: (INAUDIBLE) the motion that has been put on the table is (INAUDIBLE) one at a time and see.

Mayor Lago: The problem is that we've already started off in the wrong foot.



Mr. Cancio: (INAUDIBLE).

Mayor Lago: No, the problem is that you have started off in the wrong foot because you're already screaming across half the room.

Mr. Cancio: (INAUDIBLE) screaming at anyone. I'm speaking loud enough to be heard. I (INAUDIBLE)...

Mayor Lago: Sir, if you would do me a favor, please. Please sit down. Please. You will have every opportunity to speak.

Mr. Cancio: I will have an opportunity.

Mayor Lago: You will have every opportunity to speak. Okay. Sir, start your presentation.

Mr. De Yurre: Thank you very much. Is there the...?

Commissioner Anderson: Clicker?

Mayor Lago: Okay.

Mr. De Yurre: Thank you very much, Mayor, Vice Mayor, and Commissioners. My name is Anthony De Yurre, 1450 Brickell Avenue. It is my extreme pleasure to be before you today on a project worthy of the name City Beautiful, on a one-of-a-kind project, a project that is the child of collaboration with the very neighbors that are here today, some of which have met with us at least half a dozen times in person. This is a project that received Board of Architects' unanimous approval, not just one time, but a second time when we reduced the height of the building at the request of the neighbors. This is a project -- and you're seeing here the entrance to the project

through the open space park area that will be bringing a Michelin star restaurant to Coral Gables, will be bringing boutiques, bistros, and coffee shops in areas where are -- be for the benefit of not just our 80 residents, but also for the neighborhood at large, and creating pedestrian activity for them to also enjoy, the paseos, and the restaurants, and the park area. This park area is not being created by the City. This park area is being created by us through the monies that we will donate -- excuse me, the monies we will donate, up to a million dollars, in the creation of this park area. This park area is taken from the traditional classic concepts of the City's architecture with significant arcades, loggias, and open spaces as you can see here. This project is not going to spare expense. This project is not going to be stucco. This project on the podium is going to be natural stone, very much like the building we're sitting in here today. Why? Because we took inspiration from this very building in the creation of the project. We took the dimensions and ratios of the Biltmore, of the Colonnade. These arcades were built grandiose, just like George Merrick designed these projects. In ratio, exactly like the Biltmore with our arches and our windows, and as I've mentioned earlier, to City Hall. This rotunda did not happen by accident. This rotunda and the stone façade that we're going to do treatment for, and the podium are reminiscent of what we are inside of right here today, City Hall. We're even going to use the same treatment features for the balconies at City hall. Some of the things require modern solutions. Our garage, we hid the garage. We hid the cars. You can't see in the building. Why? Because of the level of architecture we took the building to. And we even created custom features so that light does not penetrate outside the building at the request of the Board of Architects. This is the level of detail that went into not just once, but a second time when we reduced the building height. One of the items we're going to be discussing today is the alleyway vacation. This alley is not an alley today. This alley is just platted, and it runs between an empty parking lot and actually the frontage of what is a Quickie Mart today. It no longer serves the same back-of-house function it did one time. And we're replacing it with a pedestrian paseo. What better way to create pedestrian activity than to remove an unused back-of-house vehicular passage with one for residents that can traverse the entire block and walk right into the park area. The park area, if you note, the final park will be at the City's direction. We are agnostic. The City decides what it wants to do there. Irrespective of

the decision, we will be in for the million dollar contribution to create this space. That was really born of the conversations with the neighbors, where they did not want us to use the right-of-way floor area, but they still wanted the contribution in terms of dollars and the creation of the park. Ultimately, there is a small change to the southeast property line, which this is very clear because a lot of things have been said about this. We will dedicate to the City over a net of 500 square feet. In other words, this is going to be a small tweak to the property line and the City will gain more space from it. At the end of the day, this open space we're proposing to create -- which will be at the direction of the City -- will be in relative space just as big or actually bigger than Merrick Park across the street where we have the Christmas festival every year. How did we get here? Not just by ourselves, but we will admit readily this project arrived at from the collaboration with the residents, and in particular, the San Sebastian residents who met with many of us over half a dozen times. The number one concern: they did not want us to use the roadway FAR, but they still wanted us to create the park and create a donation of the money. We went in for both of those things. We no longer use the roadway FAR. They say we want -- we don't want traffic in this area. We have the Plaza to deal with already. That's enough, and it hasn't even opened up. We said, "No problem. What can we do?" We reduced the units to half the amount of units we had in our original proposal. And even taking away the right-of-way, we are still significantly below what we can ask for today in terms of units. We can go for 125 units at the site. We're at 80. And the average size of these units are 2,200 square feet. These are really homes, homes for residents from Coral Gables. This is not going to be a transient rental product. And that's an interesting concept because number four -- excuse me, number five, the concept of luxury condos came from the neighbors. They felt that a luxury condo would create property value for them as opposed to a transient rental community. We were a much higher unit count. We looked at it and let me tell you something to the neighbor's credit, that is correct. We run the numbers, and we were able to do it at a much lower unit count at 80 units. With that luxury, I will quote Mr. Codina, who came not too long ago before the board, "You can't do low ceilings, like a cheaper rental product. You have to do a voluminous luxury product to get down to that number of units." And so, ultimately, we did reduce five floors, and we're at a height today at 149 feet, which is half the height of the

tallest building in the Plaza, which is 297 feet. That's half. Why? Why do I mention half? Because that creates a transitional component into the neighborhood from the Plaza. Lastly, there was debate between the neighbors how we got here, the number of spaces would create concern for traffic. So, we reduced the number of parking spaces from 92 -- by 92. What does this mean? We can't just talk about this in a vacuum. We talked about the beauty of the project. We talked about the contributions and the collaboration with the neighbors to create a much better product for you today. That product originally did not receive staff recommendation. We met with the neighbors, and to their credit, the final product did receive staff recommendation within the context and character of this area. So, don't think of it in a vacuum. Think of it in what's going on with this neighborhood? These are all buildings that currently exist in the area, unless I will designate them otherwise. The black square that you see with the building far most to the left is our project. Our building is not a square mass at 149 feet. The only ask that we have in terms of the Comp Plan change is the black square. As you can see, a significant step back. We're only asking for this for a portion of the building that goes to the 149. As you can see in the immediate right, I would like to just briefly call up our architect from Oppenheim Architects, to walk us through this slide. I want to introduce Marcel Montoya. He's an architect with Oppenheim Architects. He -- Oppenheim Architects created this slide and the next one. And as an expert, I want to make sure that we covered this correctly with him. Mr. Montoya, I want to take a second, if you could speak about this sheet, A-36, as I described, it is a massing and height comparison study of taller buildings within the area.

City Clerk Urquia: Mr. De Yurre...

City Attorney Ramos: Excuse me, one second.

City Clerk Urquia: Before he speaks -- yeah, can I have everyone who's going to be speaking today please stand and raise your right hand to be sworn in? Do you swear or affirm that the testimony you'll provide today will be the truth and nothing but the truth?

(COMMENTS MADE OFF THE RECORD)

City Clerk Urquia: Thank you.

Mr. De Yurre: Sorry. Mr. Montoya, can you please give your address for the record?

Marcel Montoya: It's currently 106 San Salvador Lane, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501.

Mr. De Yurre: Thank you very much. Sheets A-36 and Sheets A-37, are these massing and height comparison studies and context height maps of the area of the project?

Mr. Montoya: Yes.

Mr. De Yurre: Are these studies typically used to demonstrate context and character of an area?

Mr. Montoya: Yes.

Mr. De Yurre: And what do you use to do that? Do you use factual information such as scale use and height?

Mr. Montoya: Yes.

Mr. De Yurre: And can you tell us what the line on the bottom is with the dotted line from the Plaza, what seems to be to the west?

Mr. Montoya: That's the sight line that bring the -- it shows the height of projects if they were to scale up from the neighborhood -- the residential neighborhoods to the tallest tower in the Plaza project.

Mr. De Yurre: And if I could walk you briefly through this and you can confirm it for me, the first tower to the right of our project is Tower 3 in the Plaza, at 297 overall feet, then Tower 1, 2, and 4, an overall height of 213. Then we have 2800 Ponce, an overall height of 208. Then we have the Da Vinci Towers at 183. I'll note that's in the City of Miami, but we included it because it's equidistant or closer to the San Sebastian neighbors for purposes of context. Is all that information accurate, Mr. Montoya?

Mr. De Yurre: Yes.

Mr. De Yurre: Two items that are not existing buildings, one is 3100 Ponce de Leon, and that is a future project site to the south of our building that can be built for Code up to 215 feet. And then 2801 Ponce, this is an interesting building. It was demolished in 2008 and replaced by the Plaza. In 2008, it was demolished. It had a height of 154 feet and 13 stories, and it was constructed in 1969. Is all that information correct, Mr. Montoya?

Mr. Montoya: Yes.

Mr. De Yurre: I'm going to go quickly to Sheet A-37. And I'm doing this because I want to present an expert. I don't want to get into questioning, and this is all really for purposes of ensuring the project is discussed in the context and character of the area and not in a vacuum and establishing how we got staff recommendation now as opposed to before. Is A-37 a context map of the neighborhood with the commercial components?

Mr. Montoya: Yes, it is.

Mr. De Yurre: Okay. And ultimately, can you give us your conclusion in regards to the terms of their proximity of commercial projects in this area? Are there a number of projects in the commercial vicinity that are just as close as ours, of greater height? And just give us your synopsis on that, and I'll ask you to conclude your comment.

Mr. Montoya: Yeah. There's quite a number of much taller, much greater size, both in square footage and in volume in the neighborhood, as well as zoned projects that would be -- that are directly adjacent to our project that will, in the future, likely to be quite a bit larger than what we're proposing, not to mention the number of units are much reduced from quite a number of the projects in the direct adjacent area. And we feel at Oppenheim Architecture that this project is at a scale that steps up towards -- from the residential neighborhoods towards the more commercial districts of the City and can provide a good community space and create a better sense of use to create more public engagement and a better sense of urban form.

Mr. De Yurre: Thank you very much, Mr. Montoya. And again, I wanted it for your benefit to hear it directly from the expert in regards to how the context work, the process we went through internally with the design architects and with the neighbors. Again, this is just the components, so you have an idea of where the height is. And again, the black block is the only portion of the building that we make this request for it today, and this is the portion of it. This is so we can do the towers, the upper floors for the luxury units, again, which were born of an idea with the residents. Lastly, if I can have Kansas. Kansas is our -- she works with David Plummer, and she is our expert on traffic. What was interesting is in the discussion about height is what's really impacting the area. What are we doing with a 77-foot building? In theory, we can only do an office building here in this location, but that's not what was born of discussions with architects or with the neighbors. Right now at 80 units, we have -- versus what we could do there with office - - it would be a 233 percent increase in traffic. But I want to let Kansas -- if you can please introduce yourself a moment.

Kansas Goodrum: Hello. I'm Kansas. I'm a senior transportation engineer at David Plummer & Associates.

Mr. De Yurre: And can you give the address for David Plummer for the record, please?

Ms. Goodrum: 1750 Ponce de Leon Boulevard, Coral Gables, so right down the street.

Mr. De Yurre: Thank you very much. So, your office prepared these trips, and is this accurate that they would be -- for purposes of office -- a 233 percent traffic increase?

Ms. Goodrum: Correct.

Mr. De Yurre: And let me ask a question because it's important to also take into consideration weekends. When you take into consideration weekends where the office traffic is less, would there still be approximately 2,000 more trips per week as a result of the office?

Ms. Goodrum: Per week, correct.

Mr. De Yurre: Thank you very much. The last question I'd have for you, there was a traffic study prepared by Kimley-Horn. The City retained Kimley-Horn. We did not retain them. And that was for 171 units. And what was the finding of that traffic study?

Ms. Goodrum: They found that the intersections that they studied still met level of service standards and that it wouldn't create an issue as far as what the standards of the City are.

Mr. De Yurre: So, it was within the service standards. Is that correct?



Ms. Goodrum: Correct.

Mr. De Yurre: And at 80 units that we are proposing today, a new traffic study was not conducted because that level of project is so small it does not trigger a traffic study. Is that correct?

Ms. Goodrum: Correct. You have to meet a certain threshold of net new trips in order to trigger the need for a new traffic study, and we did not.

Mr. De Yurre: Thank you. And then the last question, because this came up in some of the meetings, the Kimley-Horn study, was there a reduction for COVID when there was less traffic, or was it adjusted to take into account regular traffic patterns?

Ms. Goodrum: I looked through the study. It was adjusted, so they actually did a factor to increase the traffic to normalize it.

Mr. De Yurre: Thank you very much, Kansas.

Ms. Goodrum: You're welcome.

Mr. De Yurre: I think it's important that -- and that's why I brought the expert up on the topic -- to understand the difference between what we're trying to accomplish and what in theory could just be there. There could be another office building there which would tremendously impact this neighborhood in terms of traffic. I know traffic is a concern. I know the Plaza's going to be a concern. I know the City has blocked off traffic streets to 37th Avenue. It has been a tremendous benefit for the neighbors in terms of crime and in terms of traffic, and so we're cognizant of that. And again, the luxury condo units were born of those discussions with the neighbors, and I think that this justifies the decision that was made in conjunction with the neighbors to steer away from the office product or the higher unit residential product. Again, I just want to bring it back to what

we're creating here. These are grandiose arcades worthy of the City Beautiful. What is there today is the exact opposite in terms of the City Beautiful, uses that are not synonymous with the City. Historically, this has been a gas station, a Royal Castle, not a White Castle, Royal Castle because that was corrected on the record previously. This is also a Quickie Mart, and we know that Quickie Mart -- I heard earlier today...

Mayor Lago: Gatorade. They sell Gatorade.

Mr. De Yurre: The Mayor goes there to get his Gatorade, but it's also a place in regards to what you see here as well, which is, it's historically been for decades an area that's required maintenance. It's the entrance to the City, and it merits something that's one of a kind and something that we are going to deliver with this project and that we are going to make sure is not diluted from what you see here today with the natural stone façades and create an incredible environment, not at the scale of the Plaza, but a much smaller scale, much more commensurate with the neighborhood. And we thank you very much for your time.

Mayor Lago: Thank you, Mr. De Yurre.

Mr. De Yurre: Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Manager, anyone from staff?

City Manager Iglesias: Yes, Mayor. We have our City Planner presenting and our Development Services Director.

City Attorney Ramos: You've both been sworn in?

Development Services Director Cabrera: Good evening. I'm actually going to have our City Planner present the staff report, but I've also asked our City Architect to be here. So, if you have any questions, I think I have all the staff that you need here to hopefully give you the answers that you need.

Mayor Lago: How much time do you think you need?

Development Services Director Cabrera: Ten minutes.

City Attorney Ramos: Were the three of you sworn in?

City Planner Garcia: Yes.

Development Services Director Cabrera: Yes.

City Attorney Ramos: Okay.

Mayor Lago: Thank you.

City Planner Garcia: Alright. So, as you know that this site is located on Ponce on University. This is the existing conditions right now. It's basically two parcels with an alley bisecting it. There's five requests right now: vacation of the alley, the change of land use from low rise to high rise, the receipt of TDRs, the mixed-use site plan approval, and a tentative plat. So, the first request is the vacation of the alley. So, the vacation of the alley consists of 3,002 square feet, and it's bisecting -- to connect between Catalonia and University Drive. It's there depicted in the red. The change of land use, like I said, is from low rise, which is on the left side, that light pink color, to high rise, which is on the right side, and that's the change that's going to make the height go from 50 feet to 150. Now, there are TDRs -- special TDRs. This is from a settlement agreement from

avocado land to preserve some environmental lands, and they're requesting 37,550 -- sorry, 37,581 square feet per that dispute resolution. And the mixed-use site plan consists of ground floor retail, a paseo that is more or less in line with where the existing alley is. The vehicular entrance is on the north side. And the south side has the loading deck -- sorry, the loading area. And then there's the plaza arcade area. Right now, the applicant -- I'm not sure if you spoke about that -- is leaving it in the hands of the Commission to decide if that space will be vehicular or not. So, we'll discuss that later. And the fifth request is the tentative plat. So, if you can see on the left side, that's existing conditions. It's a very kind of flat curve that's ending on the northeast end of University. And on the right side, you can see where the curve will more or less change, okay. So, there is -- the review timeline has been pretty extensive. They went to DRC back in 2020. They've gone to the Board of Architects a few times, had a neighborhood meeting back in November 2020 as well. They went to Planning and Zoning now four times and Historic Preservation Board in between, and we're here for first reading. And the property owners have received letters within 1,500 feet, which is what the Code requires for a change of land use. And that's a total of seven times that they've received letters. Eight times for posting of the site, seven times for website posting it, four times for newspaper advertisements. So, staff's determined that it is consistent with the Comp Plan as far as the goals, objectives, and policies. And staff recommends approval with conditions. So, these are some of the conditions. Most of them are very standard, but these are the ones that are unique. Like I said, condition number one is involving \$1 million in-kind improvements to that park area, and the final design will be up to the Commission to decide. The second of this is the undergrounding of the overhead utility lines. The third is the off-site improvements that will be, you know -- I think they have a little green space in the intersection of Catalonia and University. And then traffic monitoring for three years. Now, this slide is kind of a post-Planning and Zoning Board discussion. Some board members had recommended that there be maybe more contributions or more improvements in the area, and they did mention University Drive. So, this is an image from the Crafts Section, from Agave -- the master plan, I should say, of improvements on University Drive. I'm including this as a discussion point. I don't know if the Commission

wants to discuss this as far as having an additional conditions of approval for the applicant. And that's all I have.

City Attorney Ramos: Ms. Garcia, to clarify, those conditions of approval are a part of the site -- the conditional use site plan approval?

City Planner Garcia: Yes.

City Attorney Ramos: Okay.

Mayor Lago: Thank you very much. Mr. Clerk.

City Clerk Urquia: Yes, sir.

Mayor Lago: Alright, let's get started with the public comment. I had requested that we would have five individuals on one side and five individuals on the other side. Obviously, that did not work out. We cannot stop you from public comment. We've always welcomed public comment. We look forward to public comment. But I'm requesting two minutes per person. And when the ring goes off, I will ask you to please kindly finish your train of thought so that we can move on to the next individual and make sure that everybody that wants to speak has a moment to speak. Thank you.

City Clerk Urquia: Okay.

Mayor Lago: Who is our first person?

City Clerk Urquia: The first speaker is Mrs. Maria Cruz.

Mayor Lago: Ms. Cruz.

Maria Cruz: You need to be patient. Remember I just came out of the hospital.

Mayor Lago: Good afternoon. We're happy to see that you're here and that you're well.

Ms. Cruz: I'm happy to be here. Since I have -- but I think it's longer than two minutes. Could I request somebody to give me their time?

(COMMENTS MADE OFF THE RECORD)

Ms. Cruz: Okay.

(COMMENTS MADE OFF THE RECORD)

Mayor Lago: Alright, so we have...

Ms. Cruz: Can you hear me?

(COMMENTS MADE OFF THE RECORD)

Vice Mayor Mena: Alright.

Ms. Cruz: No, it's okay. I've been here before.

Mayor Lago: So, will you do me a favor? Will you...?

Ms. Cruz: Okay.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Baños relinquished his time, along with the nice lady behind Mr. Mark Trowbridge.

Ms. Cruz: Okay. Maria Cruz, 1447 Miller Road. Like I've said many times, I am someone who lives in the City of Coral Gables since 1976, same house, same place, same concerns. I am here as a concerned citizen. I am not here as a neighbor in that area. But like I've said many times, and you have heard me say, anything that concerns anything in Coral Gables is my concern. I learned that from Roxy Bolton. Okay, so she taught me well, I think. There's several things that I need to discuss. First of all, when these properties were bought, the zoning was low rise. They know it was low rise. They paid the price for low rise. It was not high rise; it was low rise. So, we buy it low rise, and then, lo and behold, we expect everything to work out so I can make it now high rises. And when we start talking about we reduced five floors -- if they reduced five floors, they wouldn't have any building because that was zoned for 50 feet, which is five floors. So, if they reduced five floors, they better remove their application because they did not have five floors to reduce. Okay, this is the usual pattern. And like I said, I've been here a long time, so I know how it works. We come here to talk to all of you to go to all the boards and we propose 550 feet because we know that's not going to work. But then I will say, "Oh, no, I'll cut it in half. It's 250." No, no, no, no. This area was 50 feet. So, anything that is going to happen should be based on what they had when they bought it. As of right, they have 50 feet, not 150, not 200, 50 feet. Okay, how do we get to the 149, 150, or whatever? Well, we ask for the vacation of the alley. That's 3,000 square feet right there that we accomplished. Now, if we're so philanthropic and we want to give a park to the City, fine. Get the alley, give us a park, but don't count it towards the size. No, the issue is we get the alley so we can build higher, okay. It's not because we want to help the neighbors. It's because we need the space so we can build higher, okay. Now, I loved the chart 386 -- A-36 and A-37. I loved those buildings. Can somebody show me where the Zubi building is there? Because I didn't see it. The Zubi building is 77 feet, and it's right smack there. How come it's not on the chart? Can you bring up that chart again, please? A-36 and A-37. They

just put it up. Okay, they only show the big buildings, not the ones that are like this, but the big ones. And of course, we talk about the Plaza. We all know the Plaza was a mistake. We all know the Plaza was an error because that was not what it was meant to be. So, saying that this is smaller than the Plaza is an insult, okay. Now, the traffic study, wow. Traffic study. You know when it was conducted? During the pandemic, during COVID, okay. Before the Plaza was built -- since they brought up the Plaza -- how come -- Plaza was not even built, so how did they know how many cars -- how many trips would be there? Well, because we're very creative, okay. Now, here we are, they want us to give the alley that belongs to the City, belongs to -- when I say it belongs to the City, remember the City doesn't own anything. We own that alley. The residents own that alley. The City is just a legal whatever. I'm not an attorney. The City doesn't own anything. We, the residents, own that land, okay. So, when they say the City -- for the City to give us the alley, they're saying that the residents are going to give them the alley. You know what? I've lived in my house since 1976. The City has never given me one inch of land. If I wanted to build something else on my land, I couldn't ask the City. Guess what? It's not mine. It belongs to whoever owns the land, okay. I sat through several Planning and Zoning meetings, and it's been very interesting, very educational. Did you see anything -- anybody say anything about Planning and Zoning? No. You know why? Because Planning and Zoning did not go along with it. Because at the last meeting, it was five to two against the Comprehensive Plan change. And you know what, what I found very interesting and very sad at the same time is that the staff says this complies. The staff sees everything right. Well, you have several architects on that board, and you know what they said? They couldn't understand how the staff went from here to there because -- and they said it, and you can look at the minutes of that, and they said it very clearly. They could not understand how the staff went from one to the other. Okay, I have a few things. When you say one of the conditions to monitor the traffic annually, how good is it after the building is built? What are we going to do, tell people you can't drive there? It's over. To monitor the traffic will not serve anything. Now, I am here basically to tell you that this developer should be granted the right to build as of right, 50 feet per site, okay. I am here to tell you also that this -- the people that live in this area, in this neighborhood have suffered enough already. All you have to do is drive there and



see what they put up with every day because of the humongous building that they keep mentioning, okay. If I were their attorney, I wouldn't bring up the Plaza because that's like bringing up a very sore point, okay. So, for the attorney to bring up the Plaza, that monstrosity that they have no way to get rid of and suggest that because that was built, they should be allowed to build this one is adding insult to injury. I please beg you, ask you very politely -- because remember, I had a head injury, so I have to be very calm -- I ask you very politely to please...

Mayor Lago: Thank you.

Ms. Cruz: Deny this. If they want to build -- if they can shrink it to 50 feet, we're all in agreement. If they want to...

Mayor Lago: Thank you.

Ms. Cruz: Do it the size of the Zubi building, they may have a deal, but nothing higher than that.

Mayor Lago: Thank you...

Ms. Cruz: Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Ms. Cruz. Good to see that you're in good health. Thank you.

(APPLAUSE)

Mayor Lago: Could you --? May I ask for a favor if we could? In an effort to, you know, uphold our decorum, let's limit the clapping to the end of the hearing. Is that okay? Thank you very much.

City Clerk Urquia: So, Jack Lowell, and next will be Mr. Gordon Sokoloff.

Jack Lowell: Mr. Mayor, fellow Commissioners, and City Manager...

Mayor Lago: Good morning, sir.

Mr. Lowell: Good to see you. I'm Jack Lowell. I live at 185 West Sunrise Avenue in Coral Gables. I've been there 38 years. I'm in the real estate business, so I understand the technicalities of what's being discussed. I'm here in support of the two items you're going to vote on tonight, F-12 and F-13, and the items that are going to come before you later when second reading occurs. Sometimes the process works very well before you guys, and that is when the neighborhood discussions change the project for the better. And this is one of those cases. You've had a reduction in height, reduction in density, a change in use to condos, all of those things I think are positive. This is a great project for the Gables, so I support it wholeheartedly. I would recommend that you approve it. Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Thank you, sir. Mr. Clerk.

City Clerk Urquia: Gordon Sokoloff.

Mayor Lago: Dr. Sokoloff, great to see you.

City Clerk Urquia: Next is Jennifer Davis.

Gordon Sokoloff: Hi.

Mayor Lago: How's retirement?

Mr. Sokoloff: Nice to see you all.

Mayor Lago: How's retirement, first off?

Mr. Sokoloff: Yeah, thank you.

Mayor Lago: Are you enjoying retirement?

Mr. Sokoloff: I am.

Mayor Lago: Good.

Mr. Sokoloff: I am, thank you, a good feeling. I recommend it. I would like to say a few words. I live at 225 Alesio Avenue, so I'm not at ground zero, but I'm down the street from this project. The strength of Coral Gables is the residential areas. Merrick, I think, understood that and that's why people move here. It's these transition zones though that are very tricky, and they're tricky between the developer and the neighborhoods. This neighborhood is a precious neighborhood. And as you know -- and some of you have been on the Commission for a while -- I've been before -- here before to try to protect this neighborhood from encroachment from other changes of zoning along those lines. I'd like to say that the Dade County Courthouse area should not be considered in this because I believe I presented, as the Vice Chair of the Parking Advisory Board, a resolution to try to combat any future development there that's going to go any higher than, hopefully, you know, five stories or six stories. And hopefully, the Commission will be vigilant on that and not allow that to happen. Similarly, this project should not be contrasted or compared to the Plaza because the Plaza is an aberration. Somehow -- not denying that it's a beautiful project, but somehow that got approved. It got approved by a Commission and a Planning and Zoning Board, and people turn their heads, and they all wonder, "How did that get here?" Well, this is another project that's up against, you know, the same dilemma, and now it's in -- you know, it's in your

court. And this neighborhood is -- I have to compare it to Santa Maria. They have -- you know, they close it down for Halloween, for New Year's. They have parties. It's a very tight-knit neighborhood. These people have their children. They play there, they work there, and this is going to put a corridor, basically a canyon, if you allow them to build as high as they want to go. I strongly advocate what Maria Cruz said, to leave it -- to let them build as of right. This is not NIMBY, not in my backyard. They're not saying don't build anything, but just don't let them build it as tall as they want. Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Thank you, Doctor. Mr. Clerk.

City Clerk Urquia: Ms. Jennifer Davis.

Mayor Lago: Ms. Davis, thank you for being here.

Jennifer Davis: Thank you. Good evening. My name's Jennifer Davis. I'll take off my mask. My address is 133 San Sebastian Avenue. I live within a thousand feet of the proposed project. I submitted a letter to be entered into the record that chronicles meetings that were held between residents and the developers, Spencer Morris, on October 5th, 2021 and October 18th, 2021. We wrote the letter on November 12th to Commissioners out of concern that the developer had ignored the residents' suggestions in regards to its design, scale, density, and height. So, that's being passed around. I am in opposition to Ponce Park Residences. I'm a mother of three young children, the ages, 8, 8, and 12. We purchased our home in 2013, and I've noticed a dramatic increase in traffic. My son was almost struck by a car in front of San Sebastian Park last year. At the time the Plaza was under construction and the crew closed Malaga, and we were getting constant vehicles using San Sebastian to try to cut through to Douglas. I saw a man in an orange vest, presumably a construction worker, speeding west down San Sebastian towards Ponce de Leon. He had illegally parked up the street, and as he was leaving, drove by, almost hitting my son with me and my daughter just a few feet away around 12:30 in the afternoon. As a

neighborhood, we have been struggling with the over-development of the Plaza with such things as light pollution, traffic, illegal parking, and even dogs being off leash at our neighborhood park. Mayor Lago is well aware of these issues as we've held many neighborhood meetings with him, and he was so gracious to meet and help address them. So, now before us, we have another project, Ponce Park Residences at 149 feet. This...

Mayor Lago: Please continue.

Ms. Davis: Okay. This project, along with the Plaza, would create a concrete canyon at the entrance to the business district of our city. Do we really want some of our tallest buildings at the entrance? Usually, there should be a transition in height between the business district and our single-family homes. We need better city planning and design that should be influenced by the community around it, so it is harmonious. We need to hold up our Building Code, which is only 50 feet. Another item of discussion is the Mediterranean Bonus. The crescent shaped design resembles a giant slice of cheesecake and does not incorporate true classical architecture reminiscent of Europe as do the Colonnade building façade from 1926. The Colonnade pays homage to the Baroque style that was so popular in Spain and its colonies. We need to hold to -- up to a higher standard of what is really Mediterranean design, and this is not it. We wish the Morris team good luck in developing something great as we know they can. This unfortunately is not the right project at this location. Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Thank you. Have a nice night.

City Clerk Urquia: Ms. Sue Kawalerski.

Mayor Lago: Ms. Kawalerski, thank you for being here again.

City Clerk Urquia: Next is Maria Julia Yanez.

Sue Kawalerski: Good evening. My name is Sue Kawalerski. I live at 6830 Gratian Street. And tonight I'm representing the Coral Gables Neighbors Association. And for your memory, we represent almost 16,000 voters who are residents in the City who have opted into this association. This association stated months ago that we were against this project. We also stated this before the Planning and Zoning Board last week, and they agreed -- five to two -- against this project. This is very reminiscent of the Paseo de la Riviera. Mayor Lago, I'm sure you are aware of the Paseo de la Riviera. And many of the Commissioners who voted for that project a number of years ago have told me personally that they regret voting for that project. Why? Because that was zoned for 45 feet. It now looms over US 1 and the residential neighborhood at 150 plus feet. The music that comes from the rooftop is keeping the neighbors up at night. In fact, neighbors tell me, "Oh, it must be Jazz Night, it's Thursday," because they can hear it ten blocks away. This is one of those projects that we don't want you to regret after you're off the dais. We have heard many people say, "We regret the Paseo. We regret Gables Station. We regret the Plaza." This is one of those regrettable projects. We strongly advise you to keep to the right of project limits to 50 feet. And please, this is a precious neighborhood. You have just heard from a mother and her children. I go to Halloween parties in the neighborhood. This project would further destroy their neighborhood. Please vote no.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Clerk.

City Clerk Urquia: Maria Julia Yanez. Next is Mr. David Winker.

Maria Julia Yanez: Good afternoon. My name is Maria Julia Yanez. I live in 255 San Sebastian Avenue. I have lived in that site for 27 years. One of the reasons that made me move to Coral Gables was respect, you know, a place with rules and regulations and respect for those rules and regulations. There is no doubt that that space that is vacant now that we're talking about is a sore point. It is not -- according to the City. So, I am not opposed of doing something there, but do

something within the Code, within the height that is permitted. The same way that we -- all residents have to go by the Codes when we're doing anything in our homes, that should not be any exception. And also, keep up with the architecture -- with the Mediterranean architecture of Coral Gables. What we have seen is not Mediterranean architecture. So, thank you. Those are my thoughts.

Mayor Lago: Thank you.

City Clerk Urquia: Mr. David Winker.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Winker.

(COMMENTS MADE OFF THE RECORD)

Mayor Lago: Okay.

City Clerk Urquia: Okay. I believe it's Alberto Calderon. Jaime Salamanca.

Mayor Lago: Ms. Salamanca, thank you for being here. Whichever one you'd like, sir.

Alberto Calderon: Mayor, Commissioners, I live probably four blocks from the project, and I'm here to express my support for this project. I think it's beautiful. I think the Plaza is beautiful. I think it brings a lot to the community. And I'm here representing many friends and neighbors that unfortunately doesn't have the time to be here. But I told them, "Hey, somebody has to speak for ourselves," because probably many people here oppose the project, but many people at their houses, offices, work are very excited about it. And actually, a friend of mine -- he's outside -- he expressed to somebody here that he supported the project, and he was removed from an email that they have telling that this project is a monstrosity. It's pretty sad to me that these developments

that make our city beautiful are rejected because we don't want change. And this is, in my point of view, and as I mentioned, neighbors and friends, a great project to the City. That's the only reason I'm here. I respect everyone's opinion, but I wanted to be heard. Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Thank you very much, sir. Mr. Clerk.

City Clerk Urquia: Mr. David Hays.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Hays.

City Clerk Urquia: Robert Kirk will be next.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Hays, thank you for being here.

David Hays: Thank you, thank you. Good evening, Commission. Yes, my name's David Hays, and I live at 300 Fluvia Avenue. And my concerns about this project are the scope and the size of it. The architecture looks nice from the outside, although I think probably from the side it's going to have kind of a strange shape if you look at it from the end. But it's going to kind of resemble, as I said, of course, sort of a large piece of cheesecake. But the main issue is the height of it. And the west side of the project on Ponce, when you go from the Ubi building and working your way south are already sort of transitioning. And personally, I'd be fine with something maybe around the size of the Ubi building. And then the property of the south that's talked to sometimes and was talked about at the Zoning meeting is actually government-owned and never needs to be developed to any substantial size. But some other observations I have to it also are the elimination of the free left from University. On some of the schematics, I noticed that they've shown on the Malaga like a little acceleration lane or something. But actually, what you would need would be a right turn lane on Ponce so that right turning traffic would be able to separate from the through traffic because that's really what you actually would need there if you were to eliminate that slip



right turn lane. And I just think that it's mainly just the scale of it that's just too much for what it is now, and what they're proposing is too big of a jump for a transition that's already happening on the west side.

Mayor Lago: Thank you, Mr. Hays. I appreciate it. Thank you for being here.

Mr. Hays: Thank you.

City Clerk Urquia: J. Robert Kirk. Sara Conde will be next.

Mayor Lago: Good evening, sir.

J. Robert Kirk: Good evening. How are you? My wife has also asked to speak, but if she could yield my time if I run over, would that be alright?

Mayor Lago: Go ahead.

Mr. Kirk: Thank you very much.

Mayor Lago: What's your --? Did your wife also sign in?

Mr. Kirk: She's on Zoom. My name is Robert Kirk. I live on 117 Santander Avenue. I bought my house in 2004. I'm not one of those people who buys a house next to an airport and then starts complaining about the noise. When I bought my house, behind my house were single-family homes. Now, outside my bedroom window I see the Loew's Hotel rising 200-plus feet. I could throw a tennis ball at it if I wanted to. We've seen our neighborhood building by building slowly get pummeled by the development, and this project is just one more straw that's going to break the camel's back. We're asking you -- the neighborhood is asking you, let's stop this insanity. Let's

stop the over-development. Many of you, when you ran for office, you said, you know, “We’re going to support the neighbors now. We’re going to try to find a balance.” We have no problem with the applicant building something within what he’s allowed to do. I have no problem personally with an office building going there, You know why? Even though it might be more traffic, it’s not traffic on Saturday, it’s not traffic on Sunday, it’s not traffic at night. We have a peaceful community. When the weekend comes, we have the peaceful community that we used to always have. So, we really want to try to maintain that. We’re on the border there. I probably live closest to this property than anybody else. And I just want you to consider the neighborhood, consider our comments. And you know -- and for the ones of you who campaigned to help preserve the residential neighborhoods, we want you to know we voted for you because of that, and we hope that you’ll support us and please help us keep the peace and tranquility of our neighborhood.

Mayor Lago: Thank you, sir.

Mr. Kirk: Thank you.

City Clerk Urquia: Sara Conde.

Mayor Lago: Ms. Conde. Who’s next, Clerk?

City Clerk Urquia: Alan Gummerson.

Mayor Lago: So they’re ready. Ms. Conde, thank you for being here.

Sara Conde: I’d like to thank you so much for having this at 5 o’clock to accommodate all the residents.

Mayor Lago: Thank you.

Ms. Conde: And I do appreciate that you wanted to limit the amount of conversation. You don't want to be here all night. I understand that.

Mayor Lago: No, we will be -- I don't have a problem being here all night.

Ms. Conde: Okay.

Mayor Lago: The problem is that some people may have to leave.

Ms. Conde: Yeah, so my point is that, you know, when you would say seven on each side, it sort of indicates that there are seven on each side. No, there are few people for and there are over a hundred people opposed to this. And I know you made this at 5 o'clock, but most of the people that I spoke to in the neighborhood, they're working. They can't even attend on Zoom, not your fault. My point in saying this is that there are many, many more people who stand opposed that cannot be here and cannot be on Zoom, just to give you the magnitude of the opposition to this project. Thank you so much.

Mayor Lago: Thank you.

City Clerk Urquia: Alan Gummerson.

Mayor Lago: Good evening, sir.

Alan Gummerson: Howdy. I'm Alan Gummerson. I live at 228 Alesio and have for 27 years. I hope you're worried as I am about the state of our democracy. It seems to me it's in trouble. We seem to be hopelessly divided in this country. If you look at the two sides, however, it seems to

me there's something that unites them, and that is a concern about who's running the country. You look at -- you listen to Bernie or AOC, and what do they say? It's big corporations through the campaign contributions that are calling the shots. You listen to the Make America Great Again people, and what are they saying? They worry about the deep state running things and about professional elites running amuck. But both are saying it seems to me the same problem in different ways. That it's not a democracy anymore, that there's one set of rules for most of us that don't apply to the rich and the powerful. So, I'm seeing the issue before the Commission today as a microcosm of the danger to our democracy. A developer buys land zoned for a maximum of five stories, plans a project for 17 stories figuring the zoning only applies to the little guy. Now, the zoning is not some ancient idea leftover from the 1920s or even from the 1960s. This zoning plan is less than two years old. It's new, and it was put together with an eye on preserving the traditional character of the City Beautiful while allowing reasonable development. But less than two years after approving a major rewrite of our entire zoning code, the staff, our own deep state, I guess, sees -- thinks it's fine to allow a development twice as high as their own new zoning code allows and to give the developer some City land besides. Go door to door on the neighborhood south of University Avenue, as we have. You will find that it's not just the extremes of left and right that think that rules don't apply to the rich and powerful. It's a consensus there. I'd like another minute, if I can, somebody.

Mayor Lago: Go ahead, sir.

Mr. Gummerson: Thank you. You talk door to door, what do you hear? The system is rigged. The fix is in is the opinion at almost every door. I think this consensus is dangerous for the continued existence of our democratic system. I call on this Commission to prove that the consensus is wrong for a change and that the same rules apply to the rich as apply to the rest of us, alright? I hope you can see your way to do that, preserve what we have, develop reasonably, but the rules ought to be the same for everybody. And somebody who comes in knowing what the

limits of the zoning are and thinks he can get around them because he's rich and powerful, I don't think we should allow that to keep happening. Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Thank you for being here, sir.

Unidentified Speaker: Here, here. Here, here.

(APPLAUSE)

City Clerk Urquia: Mr. Mark Trowbridge. Patrick O'Connell will be next.

Mark Trowbridge: Good evening, leaders. Mark Trowbridge with our Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce. We're at 201 Alhambra Circle, Suite 100. It's an honor to be with you here this evening. I am representing our membership and our leadership. Mr. Morris and his team presented to our leadership a few months ago and received unanimous support for this project, and so I'm bringing that forward to share that with you in terms of what has been presented tonight. Technically, when he presented to us, it was a little bit larger in scale, but after he had sat and talked with residents and other stakeholders, obviously, there have been some changes to it, and so we continue to offer that level of support. One of the speakers before talked about kind of the gateway into the downtown. I thought that was a great sort of reminder that as you cross University Avenue there, you really do move into the business community and Central Business District, an area that we are very proud to work closely with not only property owners, but those that want to make the community even better for attracting business. We're in a very special time here where Florida -- and certainly, South Florida and Coral Gables are enjoying a renaissance of companies that want to be here, want to bring high-paying jobs, want to help buy down some of the costs through their taxes. And so, the business community, which contributes mightily to the overall tax base here in the City, we are proud to work closely with the residents in bringing those businesses here, and in many cases, helping build those buildings that are equally attractive to

those folks. You know, we spent 15 years in this neighborhood. Our Chamber was located at 224 Catalonia, so we know this neighborhood very well. I would dare say that I probably spent more time in the neighborhood than I did in my own neighborhood, just given the hours that we work on behalf of the business community. But the last thing I'll say is just that when you work with someone like Allen Morris -- and I got to meet him very early on in my tenure as Chamber president -- you know two things: a straight shooter, and most importantly, he loves this community. And I love working with him. I love the care and concern. You can look at other projects that he's built around this country, and here in Coral Gables, where he has been a lifelong supporter of everything that happens here in the community, including our Chamber. Full disclosure, he's a wonderful, wonderful member of ours. And so, I think sometimes we forget that, because at the end of the day, it's easier to come up and sometimes share words that are not always the most thoughtful and not always the most appropriate. But I do thank Mr. Morris for caring about Coral Gables in a way that we at our Chamber applaud. Thank you very much.

Vice Mayor Mena: Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Oscar Sosa.

Oscar Sosa: Hello. May I wait for the Mayor to come back? I'd rather everybody listen to my...

Vice Mayor Mena: Okay. He's using the restroom.

Mr. Sosa: I know.

Vice Mayor Mena: Would anybody else like to speak in the meantime or does everybody want to wait for him?

(COMMENTS MADE OFF THE RECORD)

Vice Mayor Mena: Okay.

(COMMENTS MADE OFF THE RECORD)

Commissioner Anderson: You're no substitute, Mike.

Vice Mayor Mena: That's okay.

Fernando Valdes: I'll do it.

Commissioner Menendez: Thank you.

Vice Mayor Mena: Thank you.

Mr. Valdes: (INAUDIBLE).

Mayor Lago: (INAUDIBLE) to the bathroom?

(LAUGHTER)

Mayor Lago: Everything that I've asked for -- and I've allowed everybody to speak -- has been broken tonight. (INAUDIBLE) let's try to limit the amount of people. Here, I'll just hold it, I guess. Go ahead, go ahead.

Mr. Valdes: Honorable Mayor, Commission, staff...

Mayor Lago: Neighbor, neighbor, how are you, sir?

Mr. Valdes: Neighbor, how are you? I'm Fernando Valdes. I live in the 400 block of Camilo. I, too, represent a number of neighbors and friends that are opposed to this project. I've got to go, so I'll make it quick. I think the message is getting out there that the Commission and Coral Gables and its residents are no longer a pushover. And when that message gets out there, more and more developers are going to get that message and not push things like this. I'm sure Allen Morris is a great person. He really cared about the citizens, he would stick to the 50 feet code and leave it at that. Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Thank you, sir.

City Clerk Urquia: Mr. Oscar Sosa.

Mr. Sosa: Hello. Oscar Sosa, 116 San Sebastian Avenue. Mayor, I hope you were able to finish your...

Mayor Lago: Well, I didn't get to...

Mr. Sosa: What you had to do.

Mayor Lago: I didn't get to go since you're asking. But I didn't get to go.

Mr. Sosa: Okay, sorry about that. I just wanted you to be...

Mayor Lago: Mr. Sosa, let me ask you a quick question since we're talking up here so candidly. How many times have you called me probably in the last year would you say?

Mr. Sosa: Twenty times at least.



Mayor Lago: How many times have I gone to your neighborhood?

Mr. Sosa: At least five times.

Mayor Lago: You think you would have let me go to the bathroom one minute without -- you think that I'd miss -- you think that I missed what you're about to tell me? Is there anything groundbreaking or different from what you've told me the last 20 times? Let's see.

Mr. Sosa: Let's see.

Mayor Lago: Probably not, right?

Mr. Sosa: Probably.

Mayor Lago: But your landscaping got taken care of, the issue the other day. The fence got taken care of, the issue the other day. The sidewalk got built. Everything that you -- we listen, we listen, but I needed to go to the bathroom. Bear with me. My friend, I had to go to the bathroom.

Commissioner Menendez: At least...

Mr. Sosa: I didn't have a problem.

Commissioner Menendez: At least he didn't follow you in.

Mr. Sosa: That's why I said we can wait a minute until he comes back.

Mayor Lago: Go ahead. I'm here.

Mr. Sosa: I wanted you to be here, Mr. Mayor, because exactly what you just said. We have come to you many times. You have been great. We have no complaints. Mr. City Manager also. He has been in our street helping us. But you understand and you know what we have been going through the past couple years with the Plaza. Traffic, the kids, the big, monster in back of our houses, you know. The building is huge. We have complained so many times, so we're asking you not to make the same mistake. We don't need another building the size of this. We met with Mr. Morris team, as Mr. De Yurre has said, many times. But every time we met with them, we said we'd oppose the project. After every meeting, we sent letters to all the Commissioners explaining everything that was offered and everything that we rejected about the offer. So, for Mr. De Yurre to say, "Oh, we met with the residents, we met with the residents. We listened to the residents," they didn't listen to -- the residents. The only reason why they went from 180 -- 189 to 149 is because it got rejected by Planning and Zoning. They told them, "Go home, redo this." They went home and they went down to 149, 40 feet. What are they allowed? 77 with the Mediterranean Bonus, which still we don't think the building should get the Mediterranean Bonus. So, not to be redundant, I just want to tell you one more time we're asking you as the residents, the residents of San Sebastian, the residents of the Crafts area, all the people that are going to continue to get affected by this construction. We're asking you to please deny the plans as they're presented. Thank you, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Thank you, sir.

City Clerk Urquia: Alberto Cardenas. Grace Prieto will be next.

Alberto Cardenas: Hi. How are you, gentlemen?

Mayor Lago: How are you, sir?

Mr. Cardenas: Mr. Mayor, members of the Commission.

Mayor Lago: Thank you for being here again.

Mr. Cardenas: Thank you. I started practicing law in Coral Gables 49 years ago with Joe Murphy here in Ponce de Leon Boulevard. My first two homes were bought here in Coral Gables. I pass by them, and I can't recognize them. Why? Because in 50 years, things evolve, a community evolves. I lived a block and a half from the Biltmore Hotel. Look at the height of that building. People are dying to come into the community, pay prices they've never paid before. They love being in that environment. And I'll tell you what's fair. What's fair is, if you look at the buildings surrounding this building and make a circle, this property, the project being suggested is perfectly compatible with that area, that build out. Number two, the major areas of development here in Coral Gables are Miracle Mile and Ponce, and that's why that has happened. If you look at the number of residents we have in Coral Gables today versus 50 years ago when I moved here, it's a pretty significant density increase. Now, you know, if we're going to be good neighbors along with our 36 other communities in Miami-Dade County, I ask you, don't we have a responsibility to do our part to house people? Because, you know, there's no more land. Miami-Dade County is the highest cost per square footage of housing anywhere in the country. And what are we, exempt from that because we're that cool, we're that sophisticated, we're that powerful as a community? My sense is that that's not really citizen responsibility or government's responsibility. We have a duty like every other community to do what's reasonable to provide housing. And the gentlemen from the Chamber of Commerce came here. This will be housing for people who will be investing in the community, going to restaurants, buying things. This is a great project. And lastly, I'll say this, for those who advocate this 50-foot height, let me ask you to undertake an exercise. Property in Coral Gables has increased in many parts two-fold in the last three years since the zoning ordinance was allowed. Just 10 seconds. Number two, look at construction cost that doubled or tripled in the last three years. So, do your math. Maybe you have an architect. Maybe you have a developer in your group. Maybe you're concerned citizens.

Put pencil to paper. How much will a contractor charge me per square foot for a five-story-high building? How much will this property cost? How much will the construction materials cost? And if you do that, you cannot build a five-story place in that location. It's financially not feasible. And those who put a blind eye to the reality of what can be built there, you can't even put a Section 8 housing in that location. Is that the quality of project you want for your community? Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Thank you very much, sir. Mr. Clerk.

City Clerk Urquia: David Fournier.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Fournier, how are you, sir?

David Fournier: I'm doing good.

Mayor Lago: (INAUDIBLE).

Mr. Fournier: He's getting...

Mayor Lago: No worries.

Mr. Fournier: Mayor, Vice Mayor, Commissioners, good evening. Thank you to accept this at 5 P.M. Four zero, four zero. This is how many times these people went in the front of the Planning and Zoning Board. These people from the Planning and Zoning Board are the professional. I am not a professional. I am not a developer, and I am not -- anyway, four times they denied. Four times they denied because of the height, because of the height. What is allowed? It's allowed 77. And what he wants? 149. From 77, you want to add 72 extra feet. This is a little bit harsh. We want something. We want something on this corner. Don't think that we don't want anything.

We want something. We want something beautiful. We want something that is Coral Gables. We want something who has signature of a Mediterranean building with some -- not only having only concrete but have also a little bit of grass. Like you said, this entrance is magical. This is the entrance of a downtown. Ponce de Leon is like -- imagine it is like the Champs-Élysées. This is the only beautiful entrance that you have to come inside into downtown. So, what we're asking, we're asking to have something beautiful, but we are asking to have something that is into the Code. We met with Mr. Morris. We have nothing against the team. We have nothing against them. The only issue that we have is their propose -- is proposing a building that is way too high for the place. We just want something which is 77. When he moved to 80 apart -- 80 condominium, that was us who told him because we didn't want to have rental. We have issues with rental. Thank you. He listened. So, I want him also to listen on the fight that we -- has to go lower. 77 is something that he can do magical. He can work with it. He can do a beautiful entrance on the left on the Plaza. The Plaza is -- all of you will vote no for the Plaza, correct? You all came to us. You all said the Plaza is -- should have never been built. Everybody said that. Please, we want you to say no to this particular project. We have nothing to have a project on this land. We want to have something beautiful, but we want to have something whose signature of Coral Gables, who is beautiful, but in Code, 77 feet. This is the size -- this is the height of the Zubi. Let's do Zubi but with the Mediterranean style. And when I say "Mediterranean style," I mean the entire building looks -- has to look Mediterranean. It's not because you have a window, a porch, an arch that is Mediterranean. No, the building is Mediterranean. The entire building has to look Mediterranean, okay? And that's it for now. Thank you very much for your time.

Mayor Lago: Thank you.

Mr. Fournier: I know it was a long day.

Mayor Lago: Thank you.

City Clerk Urquia: John Fisher. Barbara Perez will be next.

Mayor Lago: Okay.

City Clerk Urquia: Barbara Perez. Laureando Cancio will be next.

Mayor Lago: Ms. Perez, good evening.

Barbara Perez: Good evening. I will be...

Mayor Lago: Thank you for being here.

Ms. Perez: I promise -- and I am -- I believe I'm saying something different than what others have said. There's been mention about -- I'm sorry. I live at 210 Romano Avenue, which is that neighborhood between Ponce and Le Jeune. So, there's been some mention about the importance of bringing businesses to the City, which I wholeheartedly agree with. And I personally didn't learn this until recently that businesses are what contribute the most to the tax base of the City of Coral Gables, not us residents. However, about two or three months ago, Dr. Edward Murray, Ned Murray from the -- from FIU was a speaker with -- at the Economic Development Board meeting. And his position and what he advocated was that the way to attract businesses is to have more affordable housing. And 80 luxury condos that are 2,200 square feet, approximately 2,200 square feet each are not affordable housing. I think all of us who live here know that those are going to sell for in excess of \$1.5 million dollars, if not more than \$2 million, so that does not contribute to attracting businesses to the City because that is not affordable housing for their employees. As someone else said, if there's an office building, that obviously you will attract businesses and will contribute to the tax base of the City. So, as a resident and as an active member of boards in the community, I ask that you vote no to this project that will not contribute or attract businesses to the City.

Mayor Lago: Thank you. Have a nice night.

City Clerk Urquia: Laureando Cancio. And next is Ms. Olga Cancio.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Cancio, good evening.

Mr. Cancio: Good evening, Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Go ahead.

Mr. Cancio: Nice to see you again. I think you live in my neighborhood. I've seen you a couple times. I've said hello, so I don't have anything against you. I hope I didn't mislead you by speaking out of order. I've lived in the Gables for many, many years. I grew up in Little Gables. I came Peter Pan in 1961. I've been an attorney for over 40 years. I've been very involved in my community up north. I came from New Jersey. I was a college trustee. I was involved in politics. So, I have an MBA, so I didn't mean to be a rabblouser yelling from the backseat or -- as a matter of fact, I'm speaking rather softly because now I have a microphone in front of me. My objections to the proposal are the facts that we really don't need any more condos. We have enough condos. They're coming out our ears. In the 22 years I've lived in the Gables and practiced in the Gables for longer than that, I have seen a tremendous growth along Bird Road, tremendous growth of condominiums, and now they're growing all the way -- they're going to go about to Gables High School. There's a lot of money to be made with condos, not for you, not for me, but for a lot of people, they're making money. They've never had anything to do with Coral Gables. They never lived here, but they see the money, and they want to grab it. They want to grab that money at our expense. Because you know what happens? Property values actually go down when you build condos. Nobody has said that. You know why they go down? Because they compete directly with the lower priced homes. So, right now you're saying, "Well, a smaller home can earn almost

a million dollars on the market.” Yes, but it could get probably \$2 million. Just go to New York City. Go to San Francisco. How much does a small house cost in those towns? Actually, people come down and they see the Gables from New York, you know, the exodus of all these people buying homes. They’re saying, “My God, \$2 million for that home? Oh, my God. In New York, that’s \$20 million. Let me buy it right now.” So basically, all those condos are bringing in people at the low end who want the cache of being part of Coral Gables, but they don’t have the money to pay for it. The other thing is all those condos are affecting the school system. Right now, the area in question that has been affected by this development is the area between Bird Road and Miracle Mile, and between Douglas Road and Le Jeune Road. Do you know how those people don’t really have an elementary school to attend? They don’t. They have -- they’ve been relegated to have to go to school in Coconut Grove. They have to go to a charter school because there’s no other school system unless they move to South Miami, and a lot of our citizens are being sent to South Miami to attend, you know, elementary school or to Coconut Grove. And the more people that come -- actually, when I moved to the Gables, the population of Coral Gables was 40,000. That was about 22 years ago. Now, it’s 50,000, but the number of people living in homes has remained the same, which means most of the growth in the population has been -- most of the growth in the population has been condo dwellers. So, basically -- I know my two minutes are up, but I’m sorry, I had lots of things to tell you. But those are my two main points. But the bottom line is, this Commission represents the citizens of Coral Gables. They don’t represent the condo developers. They do not represent the people who want to move into Coral Gables and don’t have any money to come to Coral Gables. And so, the Commission should really represent the values, should represent the interests of the members of our community, not people from outside. Thank you so much.

Mayor Lago: Thank you, sir.

City Clerk Urquia: Olga Cancio.



Olga Cancio: Good evening. Can you hear me?

Mayor Lago: Yes, ma'am.

Ms. Cancio: My name is Olga Cancio, 1250 Bird Road. Everything mostly has been said, but I appreciate the fact that you've given me the opportunity to speak. And my concern is why do we need another big building in Coral Gables? Don't we have enough with the Plaza? And also, I'm really concerned when and where is this developing, new building is going to stop. It is really destroying the quaint character of our community, really is. And I will ask, please help us to conserve this beautiful city the way George Merrick intended it to be. Thank you so much.

Mayor Lago: Thank you very much. Mr. Clerk.

City Clerk Urquia: Enriqueta Bernal. Enrique Bernal will be next.

Mayor Lago: Dr. Bernal, nice to see you, sir.

Enrique Bernal: Good to see you, Mayor. (INAUDIBLE). Mayor, Commissioners, City Attorney, thank you for giving me an opportunity to speak here. We moved to Coral Gables in 2012. And one of the things that I have always appreciated is the Alhambra Tower. To me, it's an example of a really fine contribution to the City, and so I have a lot of confidence that eventually Mr. Morris will make a great contribution. But I come here to tell you that I think he's trying to bite too much of what belongs to us at this point. And I make two points. Number one is, as I heard today, you know, with the current lots that he owns, he's entitled to building 50 feet, so he's asking to build the building three times taller than he's allowed to build if I understood it right. However, if you now -- he's taking the incremental approach where he's saying, "Oh, vacate the alley. That's all I want." Well, when you vacate the alley, then he's allowed to build more. And he will come back and say that instead of three times, that he's reduced it to two times, but it's the same building,

alright. So, please don't allow this incremental creep. Face it honestly. He wants to build it a hundred -- much more than he's allowed to do. And please don't vacate the alley and allow this charade to proceed. Secondly, I believe that they have misrepresented consistently this park, okay. And I want to bring it to your attention and ask you to take it seriously because they keep saying that they're making a one million dollar contribution to the City, but they're taking credit for green space to the size of that park that they're building. So, the net value of their contribution is not a million dollars. It's a million dollars minus whatever the value of that green space is that they're not putting into the space that they own. Now, I'm going to tell you something that is a very sore point with me. I live in a building at 718 Valencia Avenue, a condominium. Almost every one of us is a retired person. We are very sensitive to security and safety of our people. We have -- because of the City's zoning -- a four-foot wall in the south part of our garage. The garage is full of Porsches and Mercedes, and you know, very attractive cars. During the last three years, we have had nine break-ins into our property that fortunately have not resulted in any safety issues, but we have lost like \$50,000 worth of properties in the form of expensive bicycles, all kinds of things. We have seven police reports because, you know, we have license plates, faces, and everything else. I had the Chief of Police come and speak to our community because we're very concerned. And basically, they say, "Look, you know, there is nothing we can do about it, okay. This is going to keep happening because people see this is kind of like looking at The Collection. When you walk by with a four-foot fence, all these construction people that are there and everything else, they see these expensive cars and everything else. They keep breaking in. I have tried for two and a half years to get the City to allow us to increase the height of the thing. Today, I submitted for a permit, but the thing is that I'm saying is for the average citizen to get consideration for something -- I've gone through two city managers of trying to make this happen. Just for a safety issue, the City just blocks you and just throws everything in front of you. To say like, "Well, you know, zoning doesn't allow it." But yet, every day that we have a Commission meeting, it seems like the zoning is up for auction to the developers. That's the view that we, the residents, have. And I ask you to consider, you know, how long is this going to happen. We just went through a rezoning, but every developer is coming here with a story about why they cannot

abide by the new zoning and why they have to have a special consideration. That's why, you know, I say, you know, you just don't have any credibility if you keep granting these things. Especially -- I mean, when we suffer this kind of pain for a really minor deviation that affects the health and safety of people, and then you're talking about just giving away the store, please don't do it anymore. You have made a great progress in the last year, but you know, you still -- it still looks like it's an auction for developers. And for the residents, just too bad, live with it. Thank you.

(APPLAUSE)

City Clerk Urquia: Enriqueta Bernal.

Enriqueta Bernal: No.

City Clerk Urquia: No? Okay. Aurelio Durana. Next is going to be C. Vidal. I don't have a first name.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Durana...

Aurelio Durana: Good evening...

Mayor Lago: Welcome.

Mr. Durana: Mr. Mayor, Commissioners. I'll be very brief. Essentially, you have a brand spanking new zoning code for which we paid beaucoup bucks, okay. Mr. Morris purchased this property knowing full well what the limitations were on what he could build. He did not buy a pig in a poke. He's now seeking a windfall at our expense, at the expense of all the residents of Coral Gables. Otherwise, I adopt wholeheartedly the remarks made by Maria Cruz and by Gordon

Sokoloff, and I urge you all to reject all of the changes, variances, amendments that Mr. Morris is seeking. Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Thank you, Mr. Durana.

(APPLAUSE)

City Clerk Urquia: C. Vidal. And next will be Mr. Enrique Lopez.

Mayor Lago: Ms. Vidal, how are you? Welcome to the City.

C. Vidal: First, I want to thank you for your time. I know you guys have put in a very long day, and I appreciate you letting us be here. I want to begin also by acknowledging and thanking Mr. Allen Morris because I had the opportunity to speak with him personally once at one of the meetings that he held with the community, and it was very gracious of him. He's a very well-mannered man and a real gentleman, and I want to appreciate the time that he has dedicated speaking with us. I want to also acknowledge the project. It's a nice project. We spoke on the phone. My grandfather was a modernist architect, so I grew up surrounded with hard lines, glass, and concrete. He was a -- one of the tropical modernists in Cuba, and he was a modernist architect in New York City, and then he moved here. And he was actually featured at the Coral Gables Museum at the big exhibit on Cuban modernism and the beautiful book that's been recently published by Victor Deupi at University of Miami School of Architecture. So, my family appreciates contemporary design, and I actually -- I like the building. The problem is the following: It doesn't belong where they're trying to put it. There's nothing wrong with the design. It's fine. It doesn't belong there. And that is the issue, and I think that I'm trying to avoid repeating what other people have said so that I can add a little bit of value to the conversation and not drag on other issues that you already know. So, I'm not going to talk about the Mediterranean Bonus or whether or not it's appropriate. I'm not going to talk about the Comprehensive Plan and whether

or not the concessions are appropriate within that context, and whether this is a case of spot zoning. I'm not going to talk about that. I do want to talk about the alley. It's been brought up, so I'm going to try to avoid the points that have already been made. It's historically protected. This has not been addressed yet. And it was designated within the City plan on June 21st of 2018. The entire City plan was designated historic, and it was landmarked. And this includes all right of ways, alleys, sidewalks, and also swales, all of it. This question of this particular alley actually went before the Historic Preservation Board. And on October 20th of 2021, they declined it. So, this has already been contemplated within the perspective of the historic City plan. That's an issue that hasn't been addressed yet, and the residents want this honored. The other issue is safety. I haven't heard anybody really talk about safety yet. I lived in New York City for about 15 years. Alleys serve a purpose. It's not for decoration, and it's not just for trash collection or dropping off deliveries. You saw the police and the fire speak here. They actually introduced the evening. For us, that's what it's for. So, in places like Chicago and New York City, these are bypass routes to get through gridlock traffic. And when you have the Plaza coming online -- it hasn't even started yet -- how are you going to get an ambulance or fire or even police to chase -- like they just had to the other day -- through gridlocked traffic? If you don't have alleys, they won't be able to get through. Drones can do some police work, but drones cannot pick up a child and take them to children's hospital. And that's really a safety issue. I want to go back though -- I hadn't thought about the following, and I'm inspired by the gentleman from the Chamber of Commerce when he talked about love. And that's a topic that I think can help to all -- focus all of us on the mission at hand. We really are here in a community that's supposed to love each other. We love our homes. We love our neighborhood. We love our families, and we want to have a beautiful place to conduct our lives. But we're supposed to love one another. We're supposed to love our neighbors, and that's really the mission behind our City. It wasn't really even George Merrick whose book I have with me. It was his father, Solomon Merrick. That's really who inspired this City. And it was built -- if you bother to read the book, it was built on love. And so, if this building cannot be created the way that it's intended to be financially viable, and I respect that -- another gentleman brought that up that five floors will not be viable -- there are solutions. And I've brought it up

before, and it's not a laughing point, it's very concrete. They can actually give us a real park, and that's not outlandish because it's so -- it turns out that Allen Morris has done that. He is such a great man that he gave Brickell a park. There's a park with his name on it next to Perricone's, and it's actually bigger than the .99 acres that this plot of land represents. So, if the alley is denied -- as it should be -- and they cannot build, they can always donate a park, and that's a win-win for everyone. And I propose that seriously. It's not a joke. I'm not being sarcastic. I mean it. It's a loving solution that really represents the spirit of our city. So, thank you. I went over time. Thank you for not interrupting me.

(APPLAUSE)

City Clerk Urquia: Mr. Enrique Lopez. Next will be Mr. Eduardo Gonzalez.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Lopez, good to see you, my friend.

Enrique Lopez: Great seeing you, Mayor. Good evening, Mr. Mayor, Commissioners, City Administrators, and fellow residents. Ponce Park comes across no different than any other major developments that we have seen. I do not recall a major development opposed by residents that has not ever not been justified by traffic experts, consultants who, by the way, make mistakes and invoice and get paid, staff recommendations, attorney opinions, plenty of attorneys, zoning attorneys, City Attorney, outside counsel, Administration hearing -- meetings with unregistered lobbyists. In essence, we -- it seems like the voice of the residents, if ever, is heard. Mixed-use, it's always the magic word for developers. Walk around our city, see the thousands and thousands of square feet empty, first floor. No, none of these claimed we're going to have retail space. Yeah, it's retail space, empty retail space. Yes, developers do increase the tax base -- or new developments, I should say. But at what expense? Our quality of life, or do we need that additional revenue to cover project cost overruns, or paid outside counsel fees, cover City staff mistakes. Yes, we've -- you lead the -- you are the elected officials. You hear the mistakes. And in many

cases, you're very giving. You've pardoned, and that's fine, not chastising you, but we see this. I can go on and on, but all you know and know it well. Please show us you truly represent us and respect us by voting this project down. Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Thank you, Mr. Lopez.

City Clerk Urquia: Eduardo Gonzalez.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Gonzalez, welcome.

Eduardo Gonzalez: I thank everybody, Mayor, Commission, and everybody present. This is the reason why I'm here, my baby. We leave in 243 Camilo Avenue. I'm a surgeon. I've been here for over 20 years, and the Gables is where I came to first. To -- 111 -- 114 Madrid was the first house I bought, and I did not make a penny on that remodeling because I loved the house. It was -- I remodeled it to look the way it did, and it was a 1924 house, and it still looks beautiful. It's beautiful, and I'm proud of it. I did not make a penny there. And -- because I share -- there's something of value in preserving and redoing -- and there's a vision there. I did not need to make additional monies. It is something else that we can do with our efforts in preservation and maintaining what's beautiful is part of the dream that Merrick had and the dream we all share as members of this community. Our children -- we cross the street in fear anymore going Salzedo or our little streets in the neighborhood. The traffic there is really kind of out of control. Cars do travel there very fast. It's a problem. It really is a problem. And this project, it's -- again, it really adds insult to injury already. It's really out of proportion, and it really should stay within the zoning, the Code, and 50 feet height. It really should. Let's respect each other. We try to be respectful here to each other, and there's no reason why we shouldn't. We're a divided country. We want democracy. Democracy's slipping away. We do feel that we're taking -- we're losing - - excuse me. We lose -- it is a general feeling -- it really is a general feeling. But in this community, in this microcosm, we do feel that you represent us, and you could represent us well. And so, I

really thank all of you for your efforts. And I hope that we really can come and have a good understanding of what's at stake here. It's really families, it's kids, it's residents. And so, I thank you very much for your time and...

Mayor Lago: Thank you, Doctor.

Mr. Gonzalez: Appreciate you.

Mayor Lago: Thank you for bringing your family.

City Clerk Urquia: Mr. Mayor, I have one more speaker on Zoom.

Mayor Lago: Okay.

City Clerk Urquia: It's Ms. Karelia Carbonell. However, she does not have her camera on, so I was not -- I'm not able to swear her in.

Mayor Lago: Madam City Attorney.

City Attorney Ramos: That's fine. She can speak. It just won't be considered testimony.

Mayor Lago: Okay. Ms. Carbonell, good evening.

Karelia Carbonell: Hello.

Unidentified Speaker: Yes.

Ms. Carbonell: Hi, everyone. Can you hear me?



Mayor Lago: Yes.

Ms. Carbonell: Okay, thank you. Yes, it's been a long meeting, and I thank everyone for your patience, but I would like to speak on behalf of the preservation community. And I'll say that with all due respect to the developer, please stay in your lane, as the saying goes. Keep hands off public land and build within code. I think this should remedy the issue. HPACG, the Historic Preservation Association, which I serve as president, has been opposing this project since its inception as it made its way through the Historic Preservation Board and also the P and Z Board, and today, of course, the City Commission. Historic and the Planning and Zoning both rejected the plan in their respective tier of influence, which I haven't heard anyone mention that this project has been rejected and denied recommendation. A letter from the Historic Preservation Board was submitted on July 21st to the Commission on Item F-13. And at this time, I just want to read an excerpt of the letter to just make it into the official record. On behalf of the Historic Preservation Association of Coral Gables, please accept this letter in opposition to Item F-13 requesting the vacating of a public alley. As per Coral Gables City plan, alleys are some of the -- are one of several protected historic resources within the City plan. Please note that last October, the Historic Preservation Board upheld the historical significance of the City plan and rejected the project request to vacate the alley on that ground. Presently, the Zoning Code allows -- basically, I've heard seven stories, five stories, but the proposed project will stand to be twice as high as the zoning stands. And this can only happen -- and this is really important -- this can only happen if the alley is vacated. That's why it's so important to reject this particular item. Giving away the alley is a key concession. And without the alley, the developer cannot build higher. The Code allows 50 feet. The developer's new proposals asks three times that height, at 150 feet. The historic City plan -- and I am quoting from the plan from page two, and it says, "Rights-of-way, parkways, roadways, alleys, open space, parks, swales, reservations, sidewalks, waterways all are -- are all protected," and they will adversely be affected by this project, as per the Secretary of the Interior standards and the National Historic Preservation Act guidelines. Additionally -- and I'm

almost done -- the proposed project will also encroach on the following historical properties within the 500 feet of the project, 21 -- 2901 Ponce de Leon Boulevard, 247 Malaga Avenue, and 205 Malaga Avenue, where a rare 1926 White Way streetlight stands today. The Historic Preservation Association of Coral Gables asks the City Commission to reject F-13 due to its irreversible effect on the integrity of the City Hall historic City plan, officially recognized as a local landmark by the Historic Preservation Board in 2018. And I thank you for your time.

Mayor Lago: Thank you, Karelia.

Ms. Carbonell: I'm done. Thank you.

City Clerk Urquia: That's it, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Clerk, can we close the public comment if there's no other public comments to be had?

City Clerk Urquia: Yes, sir.

Mayor Lago: Thank you very much. What is the will of the Commission?

Commissioner Anderson: Stand up and stretch for a moment.

Mayor Lago: No problem. Mr. De Yurre.

Mr. De Yurre: I was hoping I would have the opportunity -- at the end of the comments...

Mayor Lago: Of course.

Mr. De Yurre: To address some of the comments made here today.

Mayor Lago: You can address as many comments as you'd like.

Mr. De Yurre: Thank you. And I will try to be as brief as possible. Thank you very much for your time. Mr. Revuelta, Planning and Zoning member, probably put it best, to give you guys context. This block of the project is surrounded by high density. It is inconsistent -- the low part of it is inconsistent with the Comp Plan. So, there have been comments made about Planning and Zoning, about some uniform discussion, and I don't believe that's accurate. And in fact, all of our items, but for one, were -- failed to get a recommendation. And that one was tied and had to go back a second time. So, there's a recommendation here with the unanimous BOA. There's a recommendation here in that record with Planning and Zoning. There's a recommendation here in regards to the staff recommendation. And what you heard today is there's also recognition of the character and context of this neighborhood. They've referred to the -- everybody is evident -- record evidence of many larger buildings. We can't look at this project in a vacuum, and this project is not a monster. I understand they can throw tennis balls and they are very close to another project. Point out the fact that the residents are adjacent to that other project. This is a block that is strictly commercial -- to the north is strictly commercial, to the south it's strictly commercial, to the west it's also commercial, to the east it's commercial. In fact, to the west, there's going to be a 263-unit development. We're at 80 units. It's a commercial luxury product. Why? Because that's what the residents wanted. And I would just say that I thank Mr. Fournier at least for making a conciliatory comment that we did address certain concerns because we really took a lot of pride in those meetings, and we want to thank him for that comment. The last thing I'll just close out and tell you is that this, again, today is a project that will merit the name of the City Beautiful. Today is the exact opposite, and we hope that you support us because it seems the contention is -- it's not the building that's asking for the extra height. It's a portion of our building. And when you look at that little black box in contention with the rest of what's in the area, everybody admits that it is within context, but they're fighting the battle against the Plaza. That's not what we're

here on. We're here on just this little square so we can comply and address the comments for the luxury product. Thank you very much.

Mayor Lago: Thank you, sir. Okay.

Commissioner Anderson: Ready?

Commissioner Fors: I'll -- I mean, to break the ice, I can say that as proposed in this application, I can't vote in favor of this building at 12 stories. I mean, it's -- as a...

Commissioner Anderson: Say it again.

Commissioner Fors: Initial threshold issue.

Commissioner Anderson: I'm sorry, I didn't hear you.

Commissioner Fors: As an initial matter.

Commissioner Anderson: Repeat because you...

Commissioner Fors: Oh.

Commissioner Anderson: Speaking that way, and I...

Commissioner Fors: I said, to break the ice, I'll just come right out and say that, as proposed, I can't vote for this building at 12 stories. It's just -- it's too high...

Mayor Lago: So...

Commissioner Fors: In comparison to the Zoning Code and...

Mayor Lago: So...

Commissioner Fors: What it permits.

Mayor Lago: Okay. Anything else you want to say on that point, or no? Is there any other issues...

Commissioner Fors: For now.

Mayor Lago: Or concerns? Okay. So, the Zoning Code here -- because we've heard a few things. I want to just correct something on the record. The Zoning Code here allows for 77 feet on this property. It's not 50. It allows for a maximum of 77 feet. With that being said, all the residents here who I've met with, I've told them that I will not support this project, and I have not supported this project. So, we can be here for hours back and forth going. I will not support this project at 149 feet. I've spoken to several residents who have told me, "Listen, we're flexible," like we are with height, we've talked about on multiple different projects that have come before us. Twenty feet, thirty feet, what is the public benefit? The public benefit is a park, a piece of land, an actual piece of land that's given to the City where we build a beautiful park. We do some traffic calming. We do streetlights, things that enhance a community, enhance a community, a public benefit. I'm ready to vote today. I cannot support this project at this height. Let me be clear. We've also used -- this is my last point. There's this common example that's given now by developers, which says, "No, but they got it." I'm the only one on this Commission that voted for Paseo, Gables Station, and the Agave projects. I voted no on the height of the Agave project, and I voted no on the height at Gables Station. We have a zoning code, and I'm willing to be flexible, but I can only bend so much before I break, and this is almost double the height of what's permissible by the Zoning

Code. So, I'm more than willing to listen to everybody, but I'm pretty sure where I stand on this project.

Commissioner Fors: I'm also not opposed to, you know, permitting some -- whatever you want to call it, whether it be negotiation or a dialogue between the developer and the residents and everybody here today with respect to the height. But not that I know where that will go, but I wouldn't be opposed to that either to see if it's something acceptable to the residents, which may not -- may be higher than what they're technically allowed to build now, if there is some common benefit coming back for the neighborhood, and if it's a situation where flexibility is justified as we've identified in the context of other developments. But just wanted to put that out there to add it to my initial remark.

Commissioner Anderson: Okay. I'd like to also add some additional direction because I'm also a no vote on this project. We spent a lot of time, about a year ago, putting together a blue ribbon committee to examine what it is that we wanted out of the Mediterranean code. We didn't want an interpretation. We didn't want a reinterpretation or a more contemporary view of our Mediterranean design. This is the same slippery slope that occurred in years past that resulted in buildings like the Zubi building getting the Mediterranean Bonus. I was recently speaking to a resident that commented on a building. They thought that -- thought it was nice. I said, "Okay, it's nice, but did it deserve a Mediterranean Bonus?" And the person looked at me like, "It got a Med Bonus?" I said, "Yes, it got a Med Bonus." That's not what residents want. They want true Mediterranean. What we display when we display our city is true Mediterranean design. Just having expensive rock on the outside of the building alone doesn't make it Mediterranean. It's the architecture that goes into it. And I'm one of those that believes that there is art in architecture. And if I can't stand across the street and see that it's a Mediterranean design, and for all its faults, and I would have not voted for the Plaza at all, but it does have Mediterranean design in it, the detail that's necessary. Because across the street, you can't see what stone it is. It's only when you get next to it and touch it, and very, very close. And we should -- our Mediterranean code

should not be just checking the box. Does it have arches, you know. It's the quality of the arches. There's -- if you have -- if you go to traditional Mediterranean style architectural school -- and there's places where you can do it. Spoke to one of our residents that does Mediterranean design element, Maricris Longo, and she's an advocate for traditional Mediterranean design. And it was also her opinion too that this failed to meet that mark. So, when we're going from 77 feet to basically doubling the height another 72 feet, that's not something I'm not prepared to do, but I promised you some direction. Compatibility is one of the factors that's the cornerstone of our Zoning Code. It has to be compatible with the neighborhood. You pointed out a high-density unit in the Crafts Section, but that's only at 77, an area that was recently upzoned. It's not a transition to go up to 149 and then ask for a change in the Comp Plan that would enable that piece of land - - if you didn't develop it -- to go up to 190.5. It's a scary notion that it could turn into Plaza II with that type of a Comp Plan change. We have problems with traffic on Malaga and Catalonia, the lack of turn lanes. There are improvements that can be done there with light -- with lights and traffic control devices that would make it a safer area for traffic to go through. As far as the slip lane, I'm not in favor of getting rid of it. I'm in favor of getting rid of the parking in it. And that's all my comments at this time.

Mayor Lago: Okay.

Commissioner Menendez: Thank you. Something someone said earlier -- I think it was Mr. Kirk -- I like that name -- he said, "Let's find a balance." And I'm a big believer that -- I agree with my colleagues. As it stands right now, I feel it's too high, and I'm concerned for the neighbors in that area. I do, however, believe that it's a quality design. If you look at the building at 250 Catalonia, it's one large concrete block with no windows on the east and no windows on the west. This design is a vast improvement of what you have at 250 Catalonia. Mr. De Yurre mentioned 2801, back in the day, the one that was imploded. I lived across the street on 100 block of Sevilla when it was built, completed in 1970. It too was a hideous design. So, sometimes going back to the way things were isn't necessarily a step forward in terms of improving things. At that location, as Mr.

De Yurre accurately said, it's Royal Castle. The gas station wasn't like the gas stations we enjoy today. It was a full-service gas station with the cars up, where they're changing the tires. The guys that came to fill your gas had grease and oil all over you. If you went in the bathroom, you had to be sent away in some kind of government protection program. It was disgusting. And I was a kid, and I was disgusted. And before the Quickie Mart, it was a U-Tot-Em. So, that area has gone through a lot of changes. I had some visuals, but I won't go into that because I think it's overkill. Interestingly enough, the Mayor, in 2020, found online a map of Coral Gables in 1924, and he donated it to the Coral Gables Museum. I looked it up last night. This thing had me up. I was thinking about it a lot. When you look at the map, there was a chunk of Coral Gables missing in 1924. One year later, it was incorporated. That chunk was the Crafts Section. It didn't exist. It was not part of the plan. Then you move forward when it was part of the City, and quite honestly if -- and I have a picture, the San Sebastian, called the San Sebastian Hotel Apartments. And I went online, and when it flipped the image around, there was a note that that hotel was for the employees of the City of Coral Gables, the Coral Gables Corporation. And when I did further research, the Crafts Section, the 20s, and 30s, and 40s was mostly -- the plan was hotels and apartments because it was sort of -- I would almost describe it as an extension of the downtown without the intensity, but it was supposed to be sort of an extension where you sold your crafts. I saw a design, a drawing where the Ponce Circle Park had an actual structure on it. That was where they were going to sell the crafts. So, imagine today if somebody said, "Let's build a building on Ponce Circle Park." We'd be horrified, but originally, that was the design. Single-family homes were not built until after World War II. If you think about it, most of the homes -- not all of them, but the vast majority -- were built late 40s, 50s, 60s, and 70s, and I'll tell you why. Hurricane of '26, the Great Depression, Merrick had to scrap a lot of his plans. The GIs, the soldiers were training at the Biltmore Hotel. When the war was over, the GI Bill let them study at UM. Federal Government paid for it. Instead of being in Philadelphia and Boston, they go, let me go to sunny Coral Gables. Merrick died in 1942. After '42 and after World War, there was such a demand for housing that the City sort of scrapped the original Crafts vision, and that's when they started building single-family homes. So, the history of the Crafts section is sort of convoluted, but it's



what Merrick has always done. It's always been a balance in that area of obviously residential but also some commercial activity. But what Mr. Kirk said earlier is find a balance, and that's what I hope we can do. And I had a wonderful glass of chardonnay with a few of the neighbors on Friday, and you can do wonders with a glass of chardonnay, and we had a heart-to-heart talk. And all of a sudden, the walls came down from all of us, and we were very open, and you know, shared our thoughts. One thing I found out that on the San Sebastian, they've been asking for a gate. And I said, you know, "The biggest problem is, even if you get things approved, sometimes there isn't funding." So, I said, you know, "One thing that could come out of this is you get the funding for that." The slip lane, I'm concerned about the slip lane because I don't want it to go away. I wanted to make it safer because if you've seen cars go through that slip lane -- and I've seen cars go the wrong way in the slip lane, going east on University and head the wrong way. I've even taken photos and sent to City Manager at 10 o'clock at night, people going the wrong way. So, I would like to see that made safer and slow down the traffic. So, there's so much we can do to improve the Crafts Section, the community. So, I ask if there's any way that we can sort of try to find balance and fairness. And I have to admit -- and I agree with all of you -- this whole project started off on the wrong foot, then it had the foot cut off, and then the other foot broke, and it's been a series of confrontations all the way. And unfortunately, that's not the Coral Gables way, and we've all been sucked into this situation and we're -- here we are. So, I hope we can find a path forward for you all benefit and we could find balance. I hope we can. The only other thing I want to say is -- and for the gentleman that talked about -- and I apologize for saying it, because it really bothered me because I think it hurts us. Earlier, someone started talking about if you're wealthy or if you're poor, if you're poor, you're wealthy. I'm sorry, Coral Gables has no place for that kind of conversation. That's class warfare. We're not about that. You can easily say, "Oh, they shouldn't be able to do that because they're wealthy," and somebody go, "You shouldn't do that because you don't -- you're not wealthy." That's not the way we should deal with things. That's not the way we should conduct business. That's not the way we should treat each other. So, I'm with my colleagues.

(APPLAUSE)

Commissioner Menendez: I'm with my colleagues. I'll take that. I'm with my colleagues. The project has to be downsized. But I want the community to also not only bring -- help bring the size down, but also let's bring the walls down so we can find a balance. That's what I ask of you, and that's what I ask of my colleagues and of myself.

Mayor Lago: Vice Mayor.

Vice Mayor Mena: A few points. I just want to dovetail on a couple of things you said, Commissioner Menendez. One on the idea of street closures. You know, we -- Mayor led an effort that I supported, I don't know, three or four years ago maybe in the...

Mayor Lago: Monegro.

Vice Mayor Mena: On Monegro, just south where some of the streets were gated on the east side, and I think it was an improvement to the neighborhood. I wonder if that's something we could do here. Although, I have to say, I know the County's been giving a hard time on street closures, so it's nothing that I think could be promised, but I think it's a good thing to consider. I also think the safety of the slip lane is important. although, I will say I believe the applicant -- and Mr. De Yurre, correct me if I'm wrong -- the slip lane is going to have some sort of like pavers or something that -- in addition to eliminating some parking.

Mr. De Yurre: It will have whatever the City of Coral Gables decides it wants.

Vice Mayor Mena: Right, got it, right. So, a few points because a lot has been said tonight, and I'll try to just address some highlights. I took notes. I like the architecture. I think that we have a lot of poor examples of Mediterranean architecture in the City. I think that the arches here, the

articulation, not only of the building, but of the arches themselves, the scale of them, the stone, the plaza, et cetera, I think are all very nice features, and so I don't have an issue with that. So, I want to give you a sense of where my thoughts are. The density -- you know, 80 luxury units, I think that's obviously a lot better from where it started, and I do think it merits recognizing that in response to some of the criticism from the neighborhood, you all changed from the rentals to the condos. Eighty units I think is appropriate in terms of just a density consideration for the area, and I think it's better than an office building, personally. I know somebody earlier said they'd prefer an office building. To me, that would add a lot more traffic. So, from a density perspective, that's not my concern. And the public benefit, you know, a million dollars in park improvements, I wanted to -- I was a little confused by some of the comments. Is that --? Yeah, please. That was towards Ponce Circle, or that would be the park area...?

Mr. De Yurre: We've had a lot of different discussions, admittedly. That million dollars that we would -- would be for the build-out of that entire space, which is currently the right-of-way for University. So, ultimately, it's at whatever the City's discretion. There are a lot of different things that we can do there, including, you know, bringing in mature canopy kapoks or banyan trees that we've looked at to create the scape -- the hardscape and landscape that you saw in all that imagery. That's something we can create. And again, the neighbors didn't want us to use the square footage, but they did want the park and the investment in the neighborhood, so we're still willing to do that.

Vice Mayor Mena: Okay. So, to me, ultimately, this all bring -- that all brings me at least to the height, and that's really, I think, the most fundamental issue. You know, I think, as you've heard, there's not support for the height as it is. As you move forward, what I would say is, I am willing to go above 77 feet. I think this goes too far above the 77 feet. Again, I think considering that you're below the density that you could have at the height, I think if you find the right balance -- and we talked about that a little bit with respect to the Codina project, where, you know, we're willing to give more height in exchange for lower density at that height. So, I think there's a place where you could find a happy medium here. So, again, I'm willing to go above the 77 in exchange

for some of these things, but I think where it stands right now is a little too high. And so, I would ask you to come back with something, if you so choose, that works at a lower height.

Mr. De Yurre: Yeah. I would just like to respond to the height comment. It's clearly what -- the message here is to find balance. And so, to our west, we have a seven-story building. To our east, we have -- at the tallest -- a 300-foot building. And so when you look at our building, the bulk of the building, as you saw in the diagram, is under the 77-foot mark, which wasn't by accident. And so, the ask is specifically for that block that you saw of our building, which is a smaller portion of it.

Vice Mayor Mena: Right.

Mr. De Yurre: So, even though we have seven stories to the west and 300 feet to the right, it seemed like half that height for just a portion of the building would accomplish that balance. We get the message from this. We've had the conversation with the neighbors, and we did the best we could to deliver a luxury condominium project. And it's not just us. It's -- you know, as you mentioned, Codina said it. You need the height to do the luxury product. And so, is there something that would create more balance towards the west? It would have to bury...

Mayor Lago: Let me...

Mr. De Yurre: Yeah.

Mayor Lago: Let me discuss that really quick. I'm not going to negotiate up here.

Vice Mayor Mena: That's fine.

Mayor Lago: I'm not going to do that.

Vice Mayor Mena: But I think it's important to give direction.

Mayor Lago: No, no, but I'm saying...

Mr. De Yurre: That's what I was looking for.

Mayor Lago: But I can give you direction, very simple. We talked about Armando Codina and his project. His project was zoned -- when he bought it, it was zoned for what it was zoned for. He asked for an additional 14.5 feet in height. He gave us -- I don't want to overestimate. Mr. Manager, what is the value of the piece of land that he's giving us?

City Manager Iglesias: Over \$600,000 with rights.

Mayor Lago: No, no, the property he's giving us on the corner...

Commissioner Anderson: The Mercedes.

Mayor Lago: Where he's building a park.

City Manager Iglesias: Yes, that's 10,000 square feet.

Mayor Lago: So, what would you say, \$5 million, \$4 million?

City Manager Iglesias: If we had to buy, very expensive, over \$2 million.

Mayor Lago: If he wants to sell it for two million, I'm buying, just to put it to you that way. I know it's not two million.

City Manager Iglesias: I'm telling you what the appraisal was back then.

Mayor Lago: Back then.

City Manager Iglesias: Back then.

Mayor Lago: Okay, so the point is that we're not looking to negotiate here. We're looking for something that is fair. There is -- the Commission has been very clear in regards to what we think is appropriate. There's a reason why that property transitions down from the regions and then it goes down to the Zubi building, and then it comes down and tapers down into University. University is the last frontier from when you go into a residential area literally a stone's throw away. What happened in the Agave project should not have happened. That's why I voted no. You should not have a precipice dropping off on Christy's and in the residential neighborhood. You shouldn't. It just doesn't look good. Again, a lot of elements of the project, I like. And I'm not going to get into that today, but the height is not one of them. So -- I spoke to my City Attorney. I don't want to sit up here and negotiate. We're all more than willing to sit down with you and have a conversation. We've been -- it's been very clear at the Planning and Zoning Board. It's been very clear here in the Commission. It's been very clear what we're looking for. We're looking for a project that makes sense, that is something that tapers down into the neighborhood. I've said I'm willing to give additional height. We're negotiating right now with another developer who's giving us a park and an open space, and we're potentially going to look at giving an additional two floors in height for that open space because I would like to see -- and I've spoken to a lot of the residents here. They want to see open space on the ground floor. They want to see lush areas, and they're willing to be flexible. I had a long conversation with Mr. David Fournier who -- in regards to this, and he said that the residents are flexible, but there has to be a public

benefit, a public benefit. Doubling of the height is, in my opinion, a little too aggressive and not palatable at this moment for myself.

Commissioner Fors: I just want to put on the record that -- because I didn't say it myself -- that I also like the design, and I think what we're seeing here is just purely going down to height.

Mayor Lago: Yeah. I don't have an issue...

Commissioner Fors: And that's what needs to be fleshed out.

Mayor Lago: I don't have an issue with the design either.

Vice Mayor Mena: I -- yeah, I would say this -- and this is -- again, we all have our own opinions. I understand that there's a lot of people that regret the height of the Plaza project. I wasn't here when that was voted on, but it's there, and we can't ignore the fact that it's there. And so, you know, I think this by comparison to that, especially if it were to come down in height, and again, at 80 units currently, you know, wherever that ends up at a lower height, if it were to go to a lower height, you know, I think is reasonable across from that project which is there. That's also why, again, I go back to, to me, an office building at 77 feet, you know, and the traffic that that generates is a worse result.

Mr. De Yurre: Right.

Vice Mayor Mena: So, I think there's somewhere in the middle there that can -- that could potentially work. But you know, I -- that would be just me communicating to you where I am on this. Again, I like the architecture. I'm okay with the density. And I think there's some -- maybe some public benefit things that could be discussed. I thought the street closure idea is an interesting one, things like that. I don't think that's going to be the issue here. You know, I think the issue

comes down to height and whether your client is able to make a project work at a lower height that folks can live with and that is a better result than a project with greater density at the allowable height on Mediterranean. So, you know, I think, again, we're not here to negotiate that right now, but I wanted to at least give you that feedback so that you have an idea where we are as you move forward.

Mr. De Yurre: The good thing about Coral Gables is you can always have these conversations, and we can get the direction to strike that balance. Obviously, it's delicate for folks who live in the shadow of the Plaza, and they're dealing with the construction all this time. Hopefully, their pain will be at an end soon, and there'll be a light at the end of the tunnel. What I'm hearing is that really the condition that needs to be addressed is one of height and balance in the area.

Commissioner Anderson: Well, also, don't forget the comments of the residents about the cheesecake, that sharp corner.

Mr. De Yurre: I -- that is something that we are working on at creating -- softening the building, introducing actual landscape materials and more detail that the BOA requested that is just impossible for me to display in this environment. It's just difficult, but duly noted, duly noted.

Commissioner Menendez: I'm going to ask -- I think it's appropriate now to ask the City Attorney guidance, legal guidance in terms of what steps can we take to allow -- create the opportunity to work towards something that's fair and balanced. What steps can we -- should we take now to create that opportunity?

Mayor Lago: So, I went and spoke to the...

Commissioner Menendez: I figured.



Mayor Lago: To the City Attorney.

City Attorney Ramos: So, I think you've expressed your thoughts. I think you've expressed your thoughts. They're free to go back and bring a different project. And today...

Mayor Lago: At this moment...

City Attorney Ramos: There's items for your vote. And so, you either vote or you continue. There's only two options.

Mr. De Yurre: We would -- if we can interject, there's a...

Mayor Lago: But at the end of the day, if they modify the project, they have to go back through the process anyways.

Mr. De Yurre: We...

Mayor Lago: So, it's not like whether our vote -- we take a vote today or not, if they redesign the project, density, intensity, FAR, height, whatever is affected, they're going to have to go back through the process because it's not the same project before they present before the Commission.

City Attorney Ramos: Yeah. This isn't a small tweak or a little condition...

Mayor Lago: Yes.

City Attorney Ramos: That you're...

Mr. De Yurre: There...

City Attorney Ramos: You know, it's a big change.

Mr. De Yurre: There's a precedent for it even in regards to this project. When the project reduced height several stories, we were required -- because it changed the architecture -- we were required to go back to BOA. Because it was a reduction on all the points, the one thing that changed potentially that needed to be reviewed had to be reviewed by BOA. So, to the extent that we, again -- we don't want to be punished for doing what is directed. We would go and follow the precedent that's already done in this project and go back to BOA to have that architecture reviewed because it's only going to be less.

Mayor Lago: So, with that being said, does anyone have a motion they'd like to make on the floor?

City Attorney Ramos: There's two ordinances on for a vote.

Mayor Lago: Yes.

Mr. De Yurre: If there is a vote and denies, then we would be stuck for a significant period of time. And so, we would ask for a deferral to allow us to go -- present and go to BOA.

Mayor Lago: Hold on. Hold on one second.

(COMMENTS MADE OFF THE RECORD)

Mayor Lago: Madam City Attorney, can you --? Madam City Attorney, the gentleman just mentioned that he would request a deferral...

(COMMENTS MADE OFF THE RECORD)

Mayor Lago: And to be able to...

Vice Mayor Mena: Please, folks, please. If we're going to do this, let's convene the meeting at that point.

Mayor Lago: But this is...

Vice Mayor Mena: Yeah.

Mayor Lago: This is -- we can't do this like this. We can't.

Vice Mayor Mena: All these comments about love and respect and all these things, and then the minute somebody disagrees, we start hissing at each other, hissing. That's not appropriate, guys. Everybody...

(COMMENTS MADE OFF THE RECORD)

Vice Mayor Mena: We were very respectful of everybody when they spoke. We listened to your comments. It's not appropriate to hiss at people when they have a conversation. You would never...

(COMMENTS MADE OFF THE RECORD)

Vice Mayor Mena: Do that. You would never do that to people in the street or anywhere else. Let's -- we're just trying to talk through the options here so that we can make a decision.

Mayor Lago: Yeah . the best part about it -- and this is interesting -- is there are several lawyers in the room that are doing it. Imagine they did that in a courtroom. You know what the judge would do? Take them out.

Vice Mayor Mena: Yeah.

Mayor Lago: Kick them out, but we can't do that here, obviously, because that's not the right thing to do. We're Coral Gables. Madam City Attorney, my question was, give me, procedurally, a little bit of background in regards to...

City Attorney Ramos: So, if they redesign the project, there's no restriction on restriction on time. They can come back next week -- next month, if they have the time to go through all the process, right. If it's substantially the same project, then they're banned for six months.

Mayor Lago: Yeah. I mean, this is -- we're talking -- listen, I'm being very clear.

Vice Mayor Mena: Say that -- sorry. I didn't understand the last part.

Mayor Lago: Guys...

Vice Mayor Mena: Can you say the last part again?

City Attorney Ramos: The property sub -- if the project substantially changes...

Mayor Lago: What constitutes substantially changed?

City Attorney Ramos: Well, that's a question...

Commissioner Fors: It's up to the development...

Mayor Lago: No, no, but I mean -- hold on one second.

City Attorney Ramos: Presumably, that's a determination that would be made by the development review official...

Commissioner Fors: Correct.

City Attorney Ramos: If it's a substantial change in the project, then it's a new project. And as soon as they -- as fast as they can get through the process, they can get up here. If it's basically the same project with a couple tweaks, then it's substantially the same project. They have to wait six months.

Mayor Lago: The developer has come before us asking for guidance and asking for a vote for an approval or a denial. The City Attorney has been very clear. This is going -- for me, for me, this is a 100 percent increase in height. This is not going to happen for me at 140, at 130, at 120. This has got to be reduced significantly. What does that mean? That it's a significant change to the project. So, one way or another, they're going to have to go through the process, just like my pool plans right now are going through the BOA. And after that, they got to be reviewed by the City. So, I need -- we need to make a decision here, and I would like to have a motion on the floor in regards to the project. Are we approving or are we denying the project?

City Attorney Ramos: And I just want to note one more thing. The restriction is conditional uses and variances, six months. For changes in zoning map, zoning text amendments, comprehensive map amendments, future land use map amendments, an application of abandonment or vacation of non-fee simple interest is 12 months.

Mr. De Yurre: Which is why we request a deferral to actually...

Mayor Lago: I make...

Mr. De Yurre: Accomplish...

Mayor Lago: Mr. Chair -- Mr. Vice Mayor, I make a motion to deny the project.

Commissioner Anderson: I'll second it.

City Attorney Ramos: Mayor, you passed the gavel, yes? Yeah.

Mayor Lago: Yes.

Vice Mayor Mena: Any comments from the Commissioners before we take a vote on that?

Commissioner Menendez: I have a...

Commissioner Fors: Yeah.

Commissioner Anderson: I...

Commissioner Fors: I think...

Commissioner Anderson: I have no further comments.

Commissioner Fors: I feel it's a bit draconian to not allow one deferral if it comes back at a height that we're willing to work at. If not, then I guess deny it at that point.

Mayor Lago: Okay.

Commissioner Fors: I also have to warn everyone that I was supposed to speak publicly at an event like ten minutes ago. I pushed it back an hour. So, when we're done voting, I'm going to run out of here, so don't consider me to be rude if I don't speak to you on the way out. But either way, I need to go ASAP.

Commissioner Menendez: I -- but I...

Commissioner Fors: Sorry about that.

Mayor Lago: So, obviously, no one...

City Attorney Ramos: No second?

Mayor Lago: We have a motion and a second on the floor.

Commissioner Menendez: My only comment is, if they are able to come back with a project that's fair and appropriate and balanced, and there's support, should we penalize them for a year when they can accomplish what the community -- or we hope to reach? That's my...

Mayor Lago: I'm going to remove my motion, but I'm asking for somebody to make a motion.

Vice Mayor Mena: I'll make a motion to continue it.

Mayor Lago: Okay. Second?

Commissioner Menendez: I'll second.

City Attorney Ramos: Are you continuing indefinitely until they're ready?

Vice Mayor Mena: I didn't -- I can't...

City Attorney Ramos: Or you're continuing...?

Vice Mayor Mena: Understand you, I'm sorry.

City Attorney Ramos: I'm sorry.

Vice Mayor Mena: It's hard to...

City Attorney Ramos: Are you continuing indefinitely, or you're continuing to a date certain?

Vice Mayor Mena: Until they're able to come back with a...

City Attorney Ramos: Okay.

Vice Mayor Mena: With a new plan that we...

Commissioner Menendez: That staff would be...

Vice Mayor Mena: That (INAUDIBLE) is appropriate.

Commissioner Menendez: Supportive.



City Attorney Ramos: Okay, perfect.

Vice Mayor Mena: And then we'll take it from there. This is the first time they come to the Commission, to be clear.

City Attorney Ramos: Agreed.

Commissioner Menendez: Yeah.

Vice Mayor Mena: This is the first time you're here. I know this has -- project has had a long and winding road. And I know -- I'm sure the residents feel that, and I totally respect that, but it's the first time you come here, and historically, when...

Commissioner Fors: (INAUDIBLE) another shot.

Vice Mayor Mena: We've given feedback to people on a project, we've given them at least an opportunity to come back, and then we'll make a decision. And I think it's correct to do that here.

Commissioner Menendez: And as you can tell, if you come back with something almost mirrors what you did now, it's not going to turn out well. So, you know, take some -- take the time to understand what happened here tonight to see what can happen, hopefully, find that balance.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Clerk, you have a motion and a second to continue.

Commissioner Fors: Yes.

Vice Mayor Mena: Yes.

Commissioner Menendez: Yes.

Commissioner Anderson: No.

Mayor Lago: No.

(Vote: 3-2)

Mayor Lago: Thank you. We're going to -- oh, we got to take a second -- did we take both together?

City Attorney Ramos: I took that as a motion to continue F-12 and F-13.

Mayor Lago: Okay, perfect.

Vice Mayor Mena: Yeah.

Mayor Lago: Alright. Well, I want to thank everyone for being here, and we're almost done, almost done. I want to thank everyone for being here. I want to wish you all a happy and safe summer. I ask you to please, please come together with love. Sit down with the developer and Tony De Yurre, his attorney, and come to an understanding on something that has extensive public benefits and something that we'll be -- that we will be proud of to have here in the City of Coral Gables. Mr. Morris is an exceptional developer who has done great things here in the City. I know that with this wonderful group of residents, you can (END OF AUDIO).