City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting Agenda Item F-6 February 11, 2020 City Commission Chambers 405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

<u>City Commission</u> Mayor Raul Valdes-Fauli Vice Mayor Vince Lago Commissioner Pat Keon Commissioner Michael Mena Commissioner Jorge Fors

<u>City Staff</u> City Manager, Peter Iglesias City Attorney, Miriam Ramos City Clerk, Billy Urquia Planning and Zoning Director, Ramon Trias

Public Speaker(s) Mario Garcia-Serra

Agenda Item F-6 [10:25 a.m.]

A Resolution of the City Commission of Coral Gables, Florida granting conditional use approval pursuant to Zoning Code Article 4, "Zoning Districts," Division 2, "Overlay and Special Purpose Districts," Section 4-208.A.3(a), "Residential Infill Regulations (RIR)," for a multi-family building on property zoned Multi-Family 2 (MF2) legally described as lots 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16, Block 11 of Douglas Section (211 Santillane Avenue), Coral Gables, Florida; including required conditions; providing for severability, repealer, and an effective date.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: F-6.

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City Attorney Ramos: F-6 is a resolution of the City Commission of Coral Gables, Florida granting conditional use approval pursuant to Zoning Code Article 4, "Zoning Districts," Division 2, "Overlay and Special Purpose Districts," Section 4-208.A.3(a), "Residential Infill Regulations (RIR)," for a multi-family building on property zoned Multi-Family 2 (MF2) legally described as Lots 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16, Block 11 of Douglas Section (211 Santillane Avenue), Coral Gables, Florida; including required conditions; providing for severability, repealer, and an effective date. This is a public hearing item and all parties testifying in this item should be sworn in.

City Clerk Urquia: Would anyone expecting to testify today please stand and raise your right hand? Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony you will offer today will be the truth and nothing but the truth?

Unidentified Speaker: Yes, I do.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yes, sir.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Mayor, Vice Mayor, Commissioners, the request is for conditional use, which is the request anytime someone wants to take advantage of the North Ponce Overlay. The North Ponce Overlay, as you remember, allows for additional densities and so on. The location is in Santillane, about -- right next to the commercial area of Ponce de Leon. So, it's very close to the Ponce de Leon. However, it's in the residential, the MF2 area of the North Ponce. The location is a little more closely shown here with Salzedo at one end and Ponce de Leon on the other end. So, this area, as you can see, is a transition from the more commercial and mixed use ideas of the North Ponce, which have been fronting on Ponce de Leon into the residential. It's in the grid, which, has to do with traffic concurrency. And as you may recall, the infill regulations applied for MF2 properties allow up to a hundred units per acre, which is a significant increase on the required or allowed density. Allow 2.5 FAR, but the important thing is that they're only applicable for properties that are at least 20,000 square feet. So, the property is 30,000 square feet.

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The FAR is 2.49; the height is 99. And as you can see, there's a mix of apartments, from studios to two-bedroom units. The site plan complies with the requirements of the infill. As you can see, there's that front lawn continuously along the front. There's also a public space that functions as a paseo, where that big idea of the future paseo that transitions from the mixed use to the residential area, ideally all throughout the North Ponce Overlay. And in the numbers, as you can see, the onsite percentage is over 30 percent. There's also the 4 percent on the right-of-way. So, the total area for open space is 34 percent. This may be a little bit clear, the way that that's organized. The conceptual design or the rendering shows very clearly that they have followed the requirements of the infill overlay as far as the massing of the frontage and the way that there's a liner at the ground level. There's no parking directly along the right-of-way. The timeline, as you can see, includes the Development Review Committee in March, the Board of Architects in August, and the required neighborhood meeting in November, and the Planning and Zoning meeting in January. Staff has reviewed the project. All the staff, different team members of our City, and have provided comments. Letters were sent to property owners within a thousand feet and the public notifications include three letters, three times letters to the property owners. Three times that the property was posted for the DRC, Board of Architects, and Planning and Zoning. The four times the property was posted, the website and then the two newspaper advertisements. Staff recommends approval. Staff recommends approval with conditions. And if you have any questions, I believe that the applicant has a presentation and then we can answer.

Vice Mayor Lago: Thank you, Ramon.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Thank you.

Mario Garcia-Serra: Good morning, Mr. Mayor and Commissioners. Mario Garcia-Serra, with offices at 600 Brickell Avenue, here today representing 211 Santillane LLC, joined by Luis Arevalo, the principal of 211 Santillane LLC, along with Glenn Pratt, Marshall Bellin and David Fuentes, our project architects, as well as Sarah Fiol, our project traffic engineer. As Ramon mentioned in his presentation, the site in question is the 30,000 square foot property at 211

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Santillane. What has always intrigued me about this site is how long it has been vacant considering its prime location in the North Ponce area, just a property down from Ponce de Leon Boulevard. The fact that this site slot was not previously redeveloped is indicative that it's old MF2 zoning was not appropriate to motivate and incentivize redevelopment. This under-utilization of a prime piece of land in this area of the City is why, in great part, the City Commission adopted the North Ponce residential infill regulations in 2017. The project proposed is consistent and complies with these City regulations. It consists of a nine-story, 69-unit rental building, with structured parking and amenities. Of particular note with this project is the fact that it is setback on the east side double of what it is required, thereby creating an opportunity for a fairly grand sort of courtyard where both the yard and the spaces fronting the yard can be utilized for public benefit and ultimately connected to another property to the north when it is redeveloped to provide a cross-block sort of paseo experience on that block. With that said, I'd ask Glenn to sort of walk through the project and address, in particular, comments that came up at the Planning and Zoning Board.

Glenn Pratt: Thank you.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Morning.

Mr. Pratt: Good morning.

Vice Mayor Lago: Morning.

Mr. Pratt: Glen Pratt, Bellin Pratt Fuentes Architects, 285 Sevilla Avenue, Coral Gables.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Can you get...

Mr. Pratt: Is that better? Can you hear me? Is that on? Yes. In the development of, 211 Santillane, we did a number of things that we felt were very significant in terms of trying to enhance the pedestrian and just the general community in itself. One of the things that when we first met with

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Planning and Mr. Trias, one of the suggestions was to implement the idea of having an inner-city paseo that would line the area behind the commercial sector. And in looking at -- excuse me. In looking at the sector, that area of east Ponce and Ponce de Leon, our project would -- could be developed that -- in shifting the project to the west, it allowed us to concentrate more open space on the east side of the property that would be more of a green liner behind the commercial development that would be lining Ponce de Leon. The other thing that it did was that it allowed us to, in addition, to -- pushing the more active areas of the project that were occurring on the east with the entrance of the garage that would remove and would put more of the traffic -- the in and out of the building, the vehicular traffic, more along the Ponce side and less along the residential side. And so, we thought that that was really a nice application, or it was best to try and congregate all of that more active area on the east. In addition, we have concealed the parking. All of the parking is completely within the building and is completely enclosed, unlike a lot of projects that there's a mismatch in terms of the zoning requirement for the setback for the parking as opposed for the setback of the building. So, in a lot of projects you see up in the North Ponce area, the parking extends beyond the building or extends at the grade level outside of the building envelope. We worked very hard to create a building that contained all of the parking, and so that none of the parking will be visible from the street, nor the adjacent neighbors. All of the -- as I said, all of the parking is contained within the envelope of the building, which we thought was a very neighborly thing to do. In addition, we put -- we've got five, two-story residential units that line the street that create a buffer visually between the -- and also address the street and -- with the more pedestrian so that all of the -- those liner units, the two-story units they're a part of the project and they're -we've called them townhouses, but they're really not -- they're not townhouses. They're units within the development, even though they're two-story. They have their own separate entrances and they have a street entrance for each of the units. In addressing the -- in the presentation that we made to the Planning and Zoning Board, the comments -- one of the comments that they concerned themselves with was that they wanted to have -- the windows have more of an appearance on the residential sector. So, we...

Vice Mayor Lago: And they're talking about...

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Mr. Pratt: Did that...

Vice Mayor Lago: They're talking about the parking liner? Is that what they're talking about, or the entire project?

Commissioner Keon: No, it's the units.

Mr. Pratt: No, just the residential units. Yeah. Well, essentially, it was really the residential units that make the liner.

Vice Mayor Lago: Yeah, that's what I was saying.

Mr. Pratt: And so, we had some -- one of the things that we're looking to do, which will come back through as a separate process, was one of the things for the Art in Public Places that we were looking to try and see if it would be feasible to do, would be to make -- throughout Spain and one of the things -- actually, hearing the gentleman talk about Sevilla and the project or the Giralda fest is -- and throughout the -- throughout Spain and one of the things that the Moorish influence brought into Spain was a sense of -- it's an element called the Mostra (INAUDIBLE). And there are screens that are put over like a bay window and that they really were kind of the first makings of like the eyes on the street. They allow people to see and monitor without being seen. And so, one of the things that we had the ideas -- and as I said, we'll come back to you in the Art in Public Places for that, but one of the ideas that we thought that would be kind of a very nice element on the building would be these screens that would be placed in the two-story section of the -- of those two-story townhouse units, both for just the visual privacy of the unit, but also that these (INAUDIBLE) screens could be an Art in Public Places element similar to the 29 palms on the -or there's numerous other Art in Public Places elements. We saw some work of some artists, Cristina Iglesias, who is a Spanish artist that does these wonderful screens. And we've also been talking to another artist that could do something along that lines. The idea would be that the

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screens could potentially be made out of like Corten Steel or copper. There would be something very, very high scale or high end, something -- I don't know if you're familiar with the artist, Richard Serra, that works a lot with Corten. But anyway, that's another issue and we'll be coming back to the Commission for that Art in Public Places. So, anyway, we -- from this presentation, we've removed the screens. They were really just a placeholder and they kind of confused the Planning and Zoning Board, thinking that we were hiding or concealing the parking behind them; we're not. We've gone to great lengths to create two-story townhouse units that completely conceal the parking. We've also, in the massing, the -- one of the things that we did -- and going back to what I was saying about our initial meetings with Mr. Trias -- is that he suggested -- or that we make a more open green space that could potentially connect up with the green space that is just north. There is vacant lots. And the idea would be that as these commercial parcels are developed, these green spaces that would be adjacent to them, would also afford those developments, those other commercial developments, to have more of a green benefit too, so that they could also utilize the open space of the park and maybe contribute green space on their part to making more green buffers that would then be a series of these paseos that could eventually someday link urbanistically the whole city, or at least the Ponce corridor. So, there's another -- there's other projects in the works that are still going through the process, but there are other potential areas where these green pocket parks and linear parks could be implemented to create a kind of a natural green paseo that would line the commercial corridor and be a green buffer between the commercial corridor and the residential sector of a more residential area to the east and the west of Ponce. So, anyway, that's basically kind of the concept of the building. And if you have any other questions, I'd be happy to answer.

Vice Mayor Lago: Thank you.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you.

Vice Mayor Lago: If I just may add some comments really quickly. Mayor, first of all, I wanted to commend Glenn and Marshall for designing a beautiful building. I think it's going to fit in

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perfectly with the character of the neighborhood, and I think it's just exceptional. So, I want to commend you on that. I know you've been working long and hard on this project. I think we've been talking about it for over a year now, so congratulations on the design. It's beautiful.

Mr. Pratt: Thank you very much.

Vice Mayor Lago: When I proffered and this Commission approved the open space ordinance, this is the reason, an exact example of what we were looking for. We were looking for projects to complement the neighborhood and provide that open space. This developer has gone above and beyond in their effort to really provide that, again, moving away from concrete and putting together that lush feeling, which I think is what really defines these neighborhoods and will be more inviting for people, especially young professionals and people who want to live in these neighborhoods. The idea of having an adjacent, open parcel, which in the future with proper planning, I think staff will do a good job if and when the adjacent parcel comes before us. We could have an actual open space that could be a swath of land that could be incorporated and just really provide an amenity for the entire neighborhood as a whole. I love that concept of the corner. I think it's wonderful right there on the side where people are sitting outside and enjoying. It's just going to be an amenity that's going to be enjoyed by not only the owners or the people who are living in the building, but also the entire community as a whole. It's very inviting. As always, I always mentioned the following because I want to reiterate to staff when you talk about the trees on Santillane, I want to be 100 percent sure that we're not planting small caliber trees, please. The developer sees the value in it. They understand that bringing in shade trees of a significant magnitude have immediate dividends. And I mean, the trees are -- and you really can't tell by the renderings. They look pretty, obviously, large in scale as a result of you're seeing two and three floors. But I think it's something that will benefit the community as a whole. I know it's an added expense and I understand that, but I think there's a big significant benefit and I think we need to really consider that.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: It is a beautiful project.

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Vice Mayor Lago: Yeah.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yeah.

Vice Mayor Lago: And the final point, and this is something that we've discussed, I know Commissioner Mena's brought it up before and we actually had a similar project where this was incorporated. While I love the idea of incorporating art into design, I think it's a wonderful opportunity, but I think we need to be very careful when we do that. The monies that are in place for Art in Public Places should be looked at -- in my opinion, that's something that's defined as an artwork that can be looked at as an artwork, either a sculpture, a wall relief, something -- or it can be donated into the trust. I want to be careful when we're looking at doors and panels, which again, can be misconstrued as an upgrade on finishes, where I think what we need as a community -- there's a reason why it's there in place. And I think we need to be very considerate when we're using the Art in Public Places for upgrading and finishes and not actual tangible art pieces that can be enjoyed by all. So, I commend you on the project. I think it's beautiful. It's going to be a great addition to the neighborhood, and I look forward to...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you, Vice Mayor.

Vice Mayor Lago: Beginning construction. Thank you.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you. Any other comments by the Commission?

Commissioner Mena: I agree with the Vice Mayor completely. And on that last point, again, it is something we've discussed before, so just be mindful of that.

Mr. Garcia-Serra: Understood.

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Commissioner Mena: It's a great idea. I'm sure it would look wonderful, but we need to be careful of sort of making sure it's really public art as opposed to a feature of the building.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Commissioner Keon.

Commissioner Keon: Yeah. I -- well, I think that if some element that you build into your building provides some extraordinary benefit at the street level, I think it could be art. So, I saw on the original drawings that went to the Planning and Zoning Board, the screens that were on those windows, and I think it was more that they were somewhat dense. And I think it -- you know, the ones I know that I've seen so often in Spain and you see particularly in Latin America...

Mr. Pratt: Yes.

Commissioner Keon: Are generally smaller. It's so you can look and you can talk, but you can't touch.

Mr. Pratt: Yes, yes.

Commissioner Keon: It protected all the young girls in those times, so they did certainly serve a purpose and it would be nice to have that element in your thing. You know, it shows that increasing the density and in putting in the overlay has spread the redevelopment in the area. So, I'm happy for that. I'm glad you're doing this project. It's really a pretty project. I have a question for Ramon. Ramon, with regard to the paseo -- because we are requiring or we're asking that there be these sort of mid-block or breaks because these are very long blocks and so we know that we want to try and break these blocks in the North Gables so that they are much more pedestrian friendly. When -- so what exists now is just a green -- is a green space; is that right? Or is there a actual paseo? Because there were some -- the paseos were defined in the Code when we did the overlay. And the hope was that, you know, they could potentially be activated...

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Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yeah.

Commissioner Keon: At some point or whatever and they have to be open to the sky. Is it -- is the green space acting as a paseo or is there actually a paseo?

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: The green space is acting as a paseo because of the location and the...

Commissioner Keon: Right.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Design of the building. Now in addition, the building at the ground level is designed to open up towards the green space. So, that's the coordination...

Commissioner Keon: Okay.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Of the (INAUDIBLE).

Commissioner Keon: Okay. So, what happens when -- I mean the way it's -- you know, and even in your drawings and the way it's presented there, it looks like in the back there is a green space...

Mr. Pratt: Yes, there...

Commissioner Keon: Beyond your building.

Mr. Pratt: Actually, there is. There's a green space here and then there's a parking lot.

Commissioner Keon: Then there's a parking lot.

Mr. Pratt: Yes.

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Commissioner Keon: Right.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Vacant.

Mr. Pratt: Both of those are vacant.

Commissioner Keon: So, the thought is, as that area along Ponce becomes developed, that they will continue -- there'll be required to continue this paseo through, is that right?

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yes, that's the big planning idea.

Commissioner Keon: Right.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: But it does require a case by case implementation.

Commissioner Keon: Absolutely. And that's why we did it as conditional use when we began the development in the North Ponce is so that we could really look at how those changes to the Code would live out.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yes.

Commissioner Keon: And so, is there -- as they -- is there a develop -- is there a requirement on the landowner or the -- whoever ends up with this building, the owner of the building at the time that the adjacent building or the building behind them is developed, that they would then continue it through? What -- how does that -- how do we ensure that that happens?

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Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Through the conditional use process, mostly. It is a requirement in terms of what the Code says. But to make sure that it actually works from a design point of view, the conditional use review allows you to verify that.

Commissioner Keon: Okay. I'm asking the City Attorney. How do we ensure? Is the language in the Code such, or does it need to be part of the site plan review to ensure that those paseos are at some point connected when the next development occurs? Because that -- we know that the very likelihood is that those developments along Ponce are going to occur. I mean...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yes.

Commissioner Keon: It's a very desirable area. It's commercial, you know, the -- all of the requirements are -- the allowances for the building are attractive on Ponce, so we know it's going to develop.

City Attorney Ramos: So, the conditions are going to be set forth in the resolution, right.

Commissioner Keon: Right.

City Attorney Ramos: Then it's a matter of staff making sure that the conditions are met and then looking at the street holistically, so when the next project comes, that we're making sure that they're connecting. There's no way to tie the projects together...

Commissioner Keon: Right, no, no, no.

City Attorney Ramos: But as we approve them, we should look at them holistically.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: The specific design of the site plan is one of the conditions.

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Commissioner Keon: Okay.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: So, what happens is that that is what you're approving. And the next project, hopefully, you'll have the same opportunity to coordinate and approve an appropriate design.

Commissioner Keon: So, we do have the midblock connections...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yes.

Commissioner Keon: From street to street. Okay.

Commissioner Mena: It's not exactly mid-block.

Vice Mayor Lago: Yeah.

Commissioner Keon: Well, it's...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Well, it...

Commissioner Keon: Not quite mid-block, but it breaks the block into -- I mean, it -- how long are these blocks? I remember -- I don't remember the -- I remember when we did the charettes and everything in the North Gables, we talked about how long the blocks were. And there is a...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Typically, they're 600. I think they're a little bit less here, but about 600 is the typical block.

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Commissioner Keon: Right. And there was a discussion from urban planning as to how long of a stretch is a walkable stretch before it breaks, and what was that? I thought it was about 200 -- 300, 250 feet or something?

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: About 300 feet or so, more or less.

Commissioner Keon: 250 to 300 feet, so...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: The idea of the paseo is really a transition from the mixed use to the residential. I mean, that was kind of like the big planning idea.

Commissioner Keon: That's some -- yeah, that's part of it. But it's also...

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

Commissioner Keon: To break, to try and reduce the length of that block.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: That's -- yes, yes.

Commissioner Keon: Okay. So, it could be, but it would -- if you broke it in the middle, it would make the parcel not as usable and...

Commissioner Mena: Right.

Commissioner Keon: Would affect their ability to build on it. But the fact that it -- at least we're beginning to see it is a good thing...

Commissioner Mena: I just want...

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Commissioner Keon: Is a positive. So, thank you.

Commissioner Mena: I just want to be careful not to overly burden the adjacent property owner in terms of, you know, now they're beholden to the approved design for a neighboring property in which they really had no input.

Commissioner Keon: Right. But it would be...

Commissioner Mena: To have a paseo that's basically...

Commissioner Keon: No, I understand.

Commissioner Mena: One building away from Ponce de Leon.

Commissioner Keon: Okay. No, I understand what you're saying. But I think what you want is that it is incumbent on staff to look at that element.

Commissioner Mena: Sure. It's an option.

Commissioner Keon: And try and connect them.

Commissioner Mena: Right.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Alright.

Commissioner Keon: You're not requiring them to do it. It is part of the overlay. They're supposed to be doing it. And then sometimes, depending on how the parcel is shaped or whatever it is, you may not be able to; but when you can, you should.

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Commissioner Fors: I just have a quick...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Commissioner Fors.

Commissioner Fors: I have a quick -- yeah, quick comment, Mayor. This is not really related to the site plan. But if I'm not mistaken, there, on the back right of the lot, of the structure, is a playground for a preschool. Is that right? Am I reading that correctly?

Mr. Pratt: Yeah. There's a playground...

Commissioner Keon: There's the Vanguard.

Mr. Pratt: In that...

Commissioner Fors: The Vanguard Academy. I don't know what their status is or how long they're going to be there, but has there been any special considerations with respect to construction or with respect to anything unique to having a preschool playground right there on the edge of the -- of what's going to be the site?

Mr. Pratt: I'm not exactly sure. I completely understand. You're talking about during the course of construction or...

Commissioner Fors: Yeah.

Mr. Pratt: After the construction?

Commissioner Fors: During the course of construction. And if any design elements have taken that into account.

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Mr. Pratt: Well, I think that actually, to your question, I think that one of the benefits of actually pulling the building to the west and creating the more open space on the east is actually a benefit to the playground that will be there because the construction will be farther away than -- and so that -- I mean, and as far as during the course of construction, you know, the necessary screening and fencing and...

Vice Mayor Lago: Dust mitigation.

Mr. Pratt: Yeah, all of that will be -- all of that's a part of the Code and requirement of the construction...

City Manager Iglesias: Commissioner, the Building Code addresses protection of adjacent structures as part of the actual Florida Building Code.

Vice Mayor Lago: But I think that's something -- like what Commissioner Fors mentioned, I think it's a great point because I think we need to keep a very close eye on that, especially with the young kids playing outside. When you have these construction sites, there's a lot of dust that's created, a lot.

Mr. Pratt: Yep.

Vice Mayor Lago: And you have all -- and you also -- I mean, not to mention you have falling debris, so you need to be extremely careful.

Mr. Pratt: Well, the other thing...

Vice Mayor Lago: That's a good point, by the way.

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Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yeah.

Commissioner Fors: I just wanted to note it for the record so, you know, special consideration is given to that throughout the process.

City Manager Iglesias: We will take special considerations. Anytime that you have a playground or something like that next to a construction site, we do take special considerations. And I believe it's being noted by our Development Services Director.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Any other comments?

Commissioner Fors: I have no further comments.

Commissioner Keon: Move it.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay, it's moved. Second?

City Attorney Ramos: Mr. Clerk, there's no speaker cards?

City Clerk Urquia: No, ma'am.

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Commissioner Keon: Oh, wait a minute. I think there is.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Second?

Vice Mayor Lago: Second.

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

Commissioner Keon: Oh, did someone want to speak?

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: No.

Commissioner Keon: There's no speaker cards.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: No speaker card.

Commissioner Mena: Yes. Commissioner Fors: Yes. Commissioner Keon: Yes. Vice Mayor Lago: Yes. Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yes. (Vote: 5-0)

Mr. Pratt: Thank you.

Mr. Garcia-Serra: Thank you very much...

Mr. Pratt: Thank you very much.

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Mr. Garcia-Serra: Mr. Mayor, Commissioners.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you.

Mr. Garcia-Serra: Have a good day.

Unidentified Speaker: Thank you.

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