

CITY
OF
CORAL GABLES
HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD
MEETING

405 Biltmore Way,
Coral Gables, Florida
Wednesday, 4:02 p.m.,
January 15, 2020.

PARTICIPANTS:

BRUCE EHRENHAFT, Chairperson
ALBERT MENENDEZ, Vice Chairperson
CESAR GARCIA-PONS, Board Member
JOHN FULLERTON, Board Member
XAVIER DURANA, Board Member
RAUL R. RODRIGUEZ, Board Member
MIKE SARDINAS, Board Member

KARA KAUTZ, Historic Preservation Officer

ELIZABETH GUIN, Historic Preservation Coordinator

GUSTAVO J. CEBALLOS, Assistant City Attorney

1 MR. EHRENHAFT: Good afternoon. Welcome to
2 the regularly-scheduled meeting of the City of Coral
3 Gables Historic Preservation Board.

4 We are residents of Coral Gables and are
5 charged with the preservation and protection of historic
6 and architecturally worthy buildings, structures, sites,
7 neighborhoods and artifacts which impart a distinct
8 historical heritage of the city.

9 The board is comprised of nine members, seven
10 of whom are appointed by the commission, one by the city
11 manager, and the ninth is selected by the board and
12 confirmed by the commission.

13 Five members of the board constitute a
14 quorum, and five affirmative votes are necessary for the
15 adoption of any motion.

16 At this time, following the tragic death of
17 our fellow board member, Janice E. Thomson, on November
18 11th, we remain eight members in number.

19 Any person who acts as a lobbyist pursuant to
20 the City of Coral Gables Ordinance Number 2006-11 must
21 register with the city clerk prior to engaging in lobbying
22 activities or presentations before the city staff, boards,
23 committees, and/or city commission. A copy of the
24 ordinance is available in the office of the city clerk.

25 Failure to register and provide proof of

1 registration shall prohibit your ability to present to the
2 historic preservation board on applications under
3 consideration this afternoon.

4 "Lobbyist" is defined as an individual,
5 corporation, partnership or other legal entity employed or
6 retained, whether paid or not, by a principal who seeks to
7 encourage the approval, disapproval, adoption, repeal,
8 passage, defeat or modifications of:

9 A, Any ordinance, resolution, action, or
10 decision of any city commissioner.

11 B, Any action, decision, recommendation of
12 the city manager and board or committee, including, but
13 not limited to, quasi-judicial, quasi-judicial advisory
14 board, trust, authority or council.

15 Or C, Any action, decision or recommendation
16 of city personnel during the time or period of the entire
17 decision-making process on the action, decision on or
18 recommendation which foreseeably will be heard or reviewed
19 by the city commission or a city board or committee,
20 including, but not limited to, quasi-judicial advisory
21 board, trust, authority or council.

22 Presentations made before this board are
23 subject to the city's false claims ordinance, Chapter 39
24 of the City of Coral Gables City Code.

25

1 I now officially call the City of Coral
2 Gables Historic Preservation Board meeting of January
3 15th, 2020, to order. The time is 4:04 p.m.

4 Present today are the following board
5 members:

6 To my right, Xavier Durana; John P.
7 Fullerton; and Cesar Garcia-Pons.

8 To my left, Albert Menendez, who is our vice
9 chair; Mike Sardinias; and Raul R. Rodriguez; and I am
10 Bruce Ehrenhaft.

11 Staff present today from the Historical
12 Resources and Cultural Arts Department are Kara N. Kautz,
13 the city's historic preservation officer; and ElizaBeth B.
14 Guin, the city historic preservation coordinator.

15 We have one request in writing for an excused
16 absence by our board member, Alicia Bache-Wiig. May I
17 have a motion to excuse her absence?

18 MR. FULLERTON: So moved.

19 MR. EHRENHAFT: Is there a second?

20 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Second.

21 MR. EHRENHAFT: Okay. All in favor, say aye.

22 THE BOARD MEMBERS: Aye (collectively).

23 MR. EHRENHAFT: Any opposed, say nay. Okay.

24 Motion passes. Okay.

25 The next agenda item is approval of the

1 minutes for our last two meetings which were held
2 respectively on November 20, 2019, and December 18th,
3 2019. I'll take them one at a time.

4 Are there changes or corrections to the
5 minutes of the November 20, '19 meeting? Okay. I found
6 one minor, minor item, Page 41, Line 21, the sixth word is
7 "lot" in the phrase "lot coverage," not "low." Other than
8 that, I found no changes.

9 Okay. So is there a motion to approve the
10 November --

11 MR. MENENDEZ: So moved.

12 MR. EHRENHAFT: -- minutes? Second?

13 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Second.

14 MR. EHRENHAFT: Okay. All in favor?

15 THE BOARD MEMBERS: Aye (collectively).

16 MR. EHRENHAFT: Opposed? Motion passes.

17 Okay.

18 Same for the December 18th, 2019 minutes:
19 Are there any corrections? Okay. Hearing none, is there
20 a motion to approve?

21 MR. DURANA: Motion to approve.

22 MR. EHRENHAFT: Second?

23 MR. MENENDEZ: Second.

24 MR. EHRENHAFT: Okay. All in favor, say aye.

25 THE BOARD MEMBERS: Aye (collectively).

1 MR. EHRENHAFT: Okay. Any opposed? Okay.

2 MR. SARDINAS: I was not present.

3 MR. EHRENHAFT: You were -- okay. Please
4 note for the record that Mr. Sardinas was not present.
5 Okay? Thank you. Okay. Motion passes. Okay, okay.

6 Please be advised that this board is a
7 quasi-judicial board and the items on the agenda are
8 quasi-judicial in nature which requires board members to
9 disclose all ex parte communications.

10 An ex parte communication is defined as any
11 contact, communication, conversation, correspondence,
12 memorandum or other written or verbal communication that
13 takes place outside a public hearing between a member of
14 the public and a member of the quasi-judicial board
15 regarding matters -- matters to be heard by the
16 quasi-judicial board.

17 If anyone has made a contact with a board
18 member, when the issue comes before the board, the member
19 must state on the record the existence of the ex parte
20 communication, the party who originated the communication,
21 and whether the communication will affect the board
22 member's ability to impartially consider the evidence to
23 be presented regarding the matter.

24 Regarding deferral of an agenda item, the
25 distributed agenda for today's HP board meeting indicates

1 one item which was on the December 18, 2019 agenda and was
2 then deferred and it has again been deferred.

3 This is Case File COA (SP) 2019-021, an
4 application for a special certificate of appropriateness
5 for the property located at 4600 Booker (sic) Street.

6 Does staff have any particular input for the
7 record regarding the second deferral?

8 MS. KAUTZ: We requested it.

9 MR. EHRENHAFT: Okay, perfect. Is there any
10 other item on today's agenda being deferred?

11 MS. KAUTZ: No.

12 MR. EHRENHAFT: Okay. Thank you. If there
13 are persons in the audience who will be testifying today,
14 please rise to be sworn.

15 And if there's any individual who is going to
16 be speaking today who has not signed the sign-in sheet,
17 please approach the secretary's desk and do so.
18 (Thereupon, the audience members who would be testifying
19 were duly sworn on oath by the court reporter.)

20 MR. EHRENHAFT: So the first item on today's
21 agenda is a local historic designation, Case File LHD
22 2019-008, which is 1208 Asturia, consideration of the
23 local historic designation of this property which is
24 located as described as Lots 13 and 14, Block Six, Coral
25 Gables Section E, according to the plat thereof as

1 recorded in Plat Book Eight at Page 13 of the public
2 records of Miami-Dade County.

3 MS. KAUTZ: Thank you. Before we begin, can
4 I make sure that everybody who is in attendance in the
5 audience has signed in for the meeting? If you have not,
6 let us know. Pull up the Power Point, please.

7 MR. CEBALLOS: I believe before we discuss
8 this item, I believe there should be any sort of
9 identification of any sort of ex parte communications in
10 regards to this particular item.

11 MR. EHRENHAFT: Yes, yes.

12 MR. CEBALLO: Additionally, all board members
13 received some form of communication on Friday afternoon
14 that discussed, among other things, a litany of historic
15 items that come before this board and procedures, things
16 of that nature, but more specifically, it alluded to this
17 particular item that has come before this board's decision
18 right now.

19 So I'm going to ask that each board member
20 divulge any sort of ex parte communication they've had in
21 addition to this particular communication and state
22 whether you believe that you can be fair and impartial.

23 So if we would like to start from the very
24 end, we're just going to go down the row. If you have any
25 additional ex parte communication, I'd like for you to put

1 it on the record and state whether you can be impartial
2 and fair.

3 MR. EHRENHAFT: We should state our names so
4 it's clear for the reporter as we go.

5 MR. DURANA: Xavier Durana. No ex parte
6 communication, and I feel I can be, I guess -- what's the
7 term?

8 MR. CEBALLOS: Fair and impartial.

9 MR. DURANA: Fair and impartial.

10 MR. CEBALLOS: Thank you.

11 MR. FULLERTON: John Fullerton. Other than
12 the letter I got that you alluded to, there have been none
13 other, no other ex parte conversations, so.

14 MR. CEBALLOS: And you believe you could be
15 fair and impartial?

16 MR. FULLERTON: And I can be fair and
17 impartial.

18 MR. CEBALLOS: Thank you.

19 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Cesar Garcia-Pons. I did
20 receive the letter. I also read The Herald article about
21 the property to be heard today that we're going to talk
22 about now.

23 I have not received any other ex parte
24 communication, and I can be fair and impartial, although I
25 have several questions regarding the letter that I'm going

1 to ask about staff when it's time.

2 MR. CEBALLOS: Thank you.

3 MR. EHRENHAFT: Okay. My name is Bruce
4 Ehrenhaft. I too received the letter. It will not affect
5 my deliberations. I can be fair and impartial with
6 respect to that.

7 I also need to note for the record that I am
8 a board member of Dade Heritage Trust which is a nonprofit
9 organization here in Miami, and counsel for the owner who
10 opposes the item is Marcio -- Mario Garcia-Serra. I know
11 him because he is a board member and treasurer of the DHT
12 board, as am I. I've had no communications with him.

13 And also Christine Rupp, the executive
14 director of Dade Heritage Trust, I note in our packet has
15 written, without my knowledge or participation or any
16 discussions, has sent a letter in support.

17 So I can -- with respect to those items, they
18 also will not change my impartiality and I can be fair and
19 impartial. Thank you.

20 MR. CEBALLOS: Thank you.

21 MR. MENENDEZ: Albert Menendez. I did
22 receive the letter on Friday. I have not spoken about
23 this to anybody else, and I can be fair and impartial when
24 it comes to this subject.

25 MR. SARDINAS: Mike Sardinas. I received the

1 e-mail in question. I have not received any additional ex
2 parte communication, and I feel I can be fair and
3 impartial.

4 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Raul Rodriguez. I also
5 received the letter and I've had no communications
6 regarding the subject matter other than read the passing
7 reference in that letter.

8 I also commented last time about the letter
9 -- the article in The Herald that appeared the morning of
10 our meeting, and I just want to express -- I expressed my
11 concerns then, but the article did not affect me. It did
12 not, it did not persuade me one way or the other. I can
13 be fair and impartial.

14 MR. CEBALLOS: Thank you. In regards to the
15 language that's in that letter that specifically speaks to
16 this property, I'd love to give an opportunity to both
17 city staff and counsel if they want to address that
18 particular item now, or they can address it at a later
19 point.

20 MS. KAUTZ: It's, actually we will be
21 addressing it as part of our presentation.

22 MR. CEBALLOS: Perfect. Thank you.

23 MS. KAUTZ: Bring the Power Point up, please.
24 Thank you.

25 MS. GUIN: You want me to go?

1 MR. EHRENHAFT: Yes, I did. Thank you.

2 MS. GUIN: So the property under
3 consideration is at 1208 Asturia Avenue, and here we have
4 a picture circa 1940, a historic photo. Sorry. Here you
5 see the location of the single family residence. It's a
6 north-facing home on a 100-by-25 interior lot.

7 This application came to us as a historic
8 significance determination, and just to refresh everyone's
9 memory, there's several avenues by which a property comes
10 to you for historic designation.

11 One of them is the result of a historic
12 significance determination. In most cases someone who is
13 contemplating substantial demo of a property will submit
14 an application for a determinaton.

15 This is the result of an ordinance that was
16 passed in 2004 that requires any permit involving
17 substantial demo to be accompanied by a letter of historic
18 significance determination that states that it does not
19 meet the minimum requirements for local historic landmark.

20 In the event that the determination is that
21 the property does meet the minimum eligibility for
22 designation, then by code the staff needs to bring that
23 property to you within 60 days for a determination.

24 So in this case the application came to us on
25 September 25th, 2019. On October 4th, the preservation

1 officer issued a determination that the property does meet
2 the minimum eligibility.

3 The item was deferred by a request of the
4 applicant on November, in the November meeting and the
5 December meeting, and so this is our first opportunity to
6 present this to you.

7 I also want to note that all observations,
8 all pictures that are included in the report and in the
9 Power Point were taken from the public right of way or
10 they were provided by the applicant. We had no access to
11 the property.

12 So since the passing of the ordinance in
13 2004, our office has done considerable work with realtors
14 so that they're aware of the historic significance
15 determination provision in the code.

16 What you see up here is a current real estate
17 ad for the home. In this case you can see the property
18 overview that the realtor included in the ad, the fact
19 that the home may qualify for this designation.

20 And what you can see at the bottom where the
21 orange arrow is, is that this property overview was taken
22 from the December 2017 ad, and the current owners
23 purchased the property in April 2018.

24 So local historic landmark, reading for the
25 record, Article Three, Section 3-1103 of Coral Gables

1 Zoning Code, "The criteria for designation of a historic
2 landmark:

3 "Historic landmark must have significant,
4 character, interest, or value as part of historical,
5 cultural, archeological, esthetic or architectural
6 heritage of the city, state or nation.

7 "For designation, a property must meet one of
8 the criteria outlined in the code."

9 For the property at 1208 Asturia Avenue,
10 we're putting forth that it's eligible as a local historic
11 landmark based on the following three significance
12 criteria:

13 Historical, cultural significance, it
14 exemplifies the historical, cultural, political, economic
15 or social trends of the community.

16 Also architectural significance, portrays the
17 environment in an era of history characterized by one or
18 more distinctive architectural style or embodies those
19 distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style
20 or period or method of construction.

21 So we say this often to you all, but it bears
22 repeating today:

23 The decision before you today is that the
24 property meets one of these criteria. Other factors such
25 as economics, what the owners plan to do with the

1 property, the condition of the building, those are all
2 factors that by code are addressed under different
3 processes, and those processes occur after designation.

4 So today the only discussion is whether the
5 property meets one of the significance criteria.

6 So I was asked to do a very brief infomercial
7 for how historic preservation in the city is governed. I
8 know that I'm preaching to the choir to you all here, but
9 for those in the general public who might be listening,
10 I'm hoping that this might provide some edification.

11 So we as a city are governed by the federal
12 legislation put forth by the National Historic
13 Preservation Act which was first enacted in 1966 and has
14 had several amendments since. The NHPA sets the federal
15 policy, and the City of Coral Gables, like many cities
16 across the nation, has adopted it.

17 You're all familiar with the Secretary of
18 Interior's standards which employs -- that we employ with
19 every intervention on historic property in the city and
20 which is cited in every certificate of appropriateness
21 that you see.

22 It established partnerships. The most
23 impactful to us is the establishment of the state historic
24 preservation office. It established the National Register
25 of Historic Places and the national landmark programs,

1 and with those programs, it was established how we assess
2 historic significance and historic integrity which are the
3 key factors of every designation that we put forth before
4 you.

5 It also established the Advisory Council on
6 Historic Preservation.

7 So the Preservation Act is implemented
8 by the Department of the Interior, specifically the
9 National Park Service, and then the advisory council is an
10 independent federal agency that provides some oversight of
11 the National Park Service and advises the President and
12 Congress on policy issues.

13 The act also launched the Certified Local
14 Government program which is actually the element that I'll
15 talk a little bit more about today. The City of Coral
16 Gables is a certified local government.

17 The Certified Local Government program is a
18 voluntary certification process that a municipality or a
19 county can achieve. It links the federal, state and local
20 governments and preservation partnership and acknowledges
21 the grass roots foundation of preservation.

22 Through the CLG certification, historic
23 preservation becomes public policy with the passage of
24 historic preservation ordinances, and for federal projects
25 involving -- for projects involving federal funds, one

1 must abide by the federal guidelines. For all other
2 projects, it's a local ordinance that takes precedence.

3 Coral Gables passed its first preservation
4 ordinance in 1973, which is very early in the history of
5 preservation, and you'll see as we go through a little bit
6 that the city has always been on the forefront of
7 preservation.

8 Through the ordinance, the Historic
9 Preservation Board must be established, and so it's
10 through this program that your board, its makeup, and your
11 functions are established. Those are our guiding
12 principles.

13 Another component of the CLG is an agreement
14 by the municipality to commit to telling their whole
15 story, meaning how the community evolved over time and is
16 representative of all populations.

17 And as you may be aware, the grassroots
18 efforts to save Mount Vernon is often hailed as the
19 beginning of preservation in the country, and while it's
20 not universally true, but pretty much during the early
21 20th century, preservation weighted heavily on historic
22 figures and a very narrow interpretation of history.

23 So through the CLG program, it was initiated
24 in large part in the 1980s, it strove to create a more
25 balanced and representative narrative of our communities

1 and how they evolved.

2 So the Certified Local Government, its goal,
3 and this is a quote directly from our Florida state
4 historic preservation office and is included in every
5 designation report that you get, "By using a variety of
6 tools, provide continuity and context to a local
7 government by the retention of significant elements of the
8 built environment that are tangible touchstones providing
9 a sense of community, a sense of evolution, a sense of
10 identity, a sense of ownership, and a sense of place.

11 And recently CLGs have adopted the theme of
12 telling a fuller American story through historic
13 preservation.

14 So Florida initiated the Certified Local
15 Government program in January of 1986, and by November of
16 1986, Coral Gables had met all the requirements and became
17 a certified local government.

18 So through the CLG process, the city states
19 its commitment to historic preservation and demonstrates
20 how it will accomplish it, through the ordinances, through
21 the Historic Preservation Board.

22 The benefits of becoming a CLG is that we
23 qualify for additional funding like the funding that we
24 got for the Merrick House to do that restoration. We got
25 those because we're a CLG, we qualified. There's also

1 additional technical and advocacy.

2 Two years ago, we were asked by the state
3 historic preservation office to co-host a regional CLG
4 workshop, and if you would like to know more about that,
5 Mr. Menendez was one of our star attendees. Thank you
6 very much for coming.

7 For the purpose of this infomercial, it was
8 to help folks understand the city has a commitment as a
9 Certified Local Government to preserve the full story of
10 its character in the ongoing story of Coral Gables.

11 So coming back to the property at hand at
12 1208 Asturia, this property was permitted in 1936. The
13 architect was Russell T. Pancoast, and the style is a
14 traditional custom ranch house.

15 In this home, Pancoast embodied the newly
16 evolving ranch home while incorporating Art Deco and Art
17 Moderne influences, hence breaking away from the
18 Mediterranean Revival foundation of the city and launching
19 a new chapter in Coral Gables' architectural history.

20 Coral Gables development history, as you all
21 know, is divided broadly into three major historical
22 properties.

23 The first, prior to 1926, was the initial
24 planning and development with George Merrick developing
25 the city very heavily, heavy Mediterranean Revival.

1 The second period is the aftermath of the
2 1926 hurricane, the Great Depression, New Deal, the
3 wartime, and that's the time period that this property was
4 built in. What we see during this time period is breaking
5 away from the heavy Mediterranean Revival using those
6 elements and other that we see a lot of modernistic
7 influences as well as some early traditional custom ranch
8 houses.

9 So here is a table of Coral Gables building
10 permits from 1925 to 1934, and this is just to put the
11 building history of the city in some perspective. You can
12 see the huge number of permits in 1925 at the height of
13 Merrick's building his Mediterranean-inspired city, see
14 the steep decline after the aftermath of the '26 hurricane
15 and the economic downturn of both in Florida and of the
16 nation.

17 Between 1929 and 1933, 148 state and national
18 banks in Florida collapsed. By 1933, one out of every
19 four Floridians was receiving some type of public relief.

20 As the decade wore on, relief measures
21 expanded under the New Deal and people adjusted to a new
22 way of life, and their priorities and their aesthetics
23 changed. This was reflected in all aspects of life,
24 including the types of homes that they were building.

25 As you can see, the building permits began to

1 increase in 1936. The new homes that were built in the
2 late '30s were predominantly minimal traditional, masonry
3 vernacular, some Mediterranean transitional, and you saw
4 the Art -- the modernistic homes of Art Deco and Art
5 Moderne influences, and as I said, some early traditional
6 custom ranch houses.

7 The initial construction of the single family
8 home at 1208 Asturia occurred in March 1936 and was
9 amongst the first homes designed as the building boom
10 began to resurge in the city and is indicative of the
11 higher style architecture that emerged during this period.

12 This chart shows the single family residence
13 building permits from '36 to '65. You can see this home
14 was one of about 100 built as the city began to rebound,
15 and you see the small uptick until Word War II when
16 construction came to a stand-still, and then the huge
17 mid-century building boom.

18 So as I mentioned earlier, the home that
19 you're considering is a ranch house. Let me give you a
20 little bit of background to put the ranch house in
21 perspective, in particular this house.

22 The ranch house was conceived from a variety
23 of stylistic influences that incorporated references to
24 the past as well as those associated with more
25 forward-thinking and avant-garde tenets of modernism.

1 Ranch houses were built in the 1930s and the
2 1940s but really proliferated after World War II when they
3 became the preferred choice for residential design. By
4 far it was the ranch house that was built during the
5 mid-century boom that we saw in the previous slide.

6 Few architectural idioms have had as profound
7 impact on the built environment and of the nation as the
8 ranch house. The ranch house represented a radical
9 departure from tradition, and that is the key to
10 understanding the significance of this property.

11 When it was constructed in 1936, this home
12 was a radical departure not only from the building stock
13 in the city, but also what we were seeing across the
14 nation.

15 The architect, Russell Pancoast, who I'll
16 talk a little bit more about later, was known for breaking
17 new ground, and that's what he did with this home, and
18 while the ranch home became wildly popular and prolific,
19 that doesn't dilute the fact that when this house was
20 built, it was innovative.

21 The ranch house was a deliberate new style
22 and form of residential architecture which accommodated
23 modern aesthetics, facilitated the opportunities for
24 expanding suburbia and the automobile-centric communities,
25 and embraced family living.

1 In the late 1930s, ranch homes were promoted
2 through the country in architectural journals and
3 magazines. Its simplicity was a subtle response to the
4 economic hardships of The Depression and the ornate styles
5 of the 1920s. Ranch homes combined a restrained
6 combination of features from earlier house styles while
7 adhering to the burgeoning modern aesthetics of subtle
8 ornamentation and streamlined homes.

9 The homes were well built, often using modern
10 materials, and the ranch typology and style was very
11 flexible.

12 In general, the ranch house refers to a one
13 story single family residence with a rambling footprint,
14 horizontal massing, and an emphasis on open and
15 free-flowing zone interior plan that has an integral
16 relationship with the outdoors. The informal composition
17 of the ranch house type exhibits many of the same spacial
18 and structural tendencies seen in other modern residential
19 architecture of the period but in a more moderate manner.

20 Another characteristic of the ranch house is
21 its siting and its orientation. In breaking with the
22 traditional siting, the ranch house is usually situated
23 laterally across the width of the lot from front to back.
24 The back of the house, usually open to a yard, is an
25 extension of the family living space, and the ranch houses

1 almost always were accompanied by an attached garage.

2 Unlike the previous building stock with the
3 detached garage to the back, here it was attached, really
4 celebrating the automobile, celebrating the family.

5 During the 1930s, the ranch house was
6 associated with affluence and high-style design. Due to
7 the larger lot sizes and the subtle suburban setting that
8 were generally required of these homes, those built in the
9 1930s tended to be high-style residences that were custom
10 designed. They were intentionally unpretentious in
11 character and hailed for their sophisticated simplicity,
12 and while they were no larger in square footage of the
13 1920s neighbors, the long and rambling layout suggested
14 spatial living.

15 The ranch house evolved and proliferated, and
16 society's contemporary of its view, view of it changed
17 over time. The ranch house was at the heart of the 20th
18 century mid-century building boom, and it's fair to say
19 that no other time has a single type of home housed so
20 many people in such a short period of time and had such a
21 profound effect on the built environment as the ranch
22 house.

23 And while the ranch house was well accepted
24 prior to World War II, they're most strongly associated
25 with the rapid suburbanization that occurred after the

1 war.

2 By the 1970s, the ranch house had become
3 firmly ingrained in the public's consciousness as an
4 ubiquitous component of suburban America. The ranch house
5 is flexible and became a house type based on distinctive
6 patterns rather than the stylistic conventions seen here,
7 the many faces of the ranch.

8 So where it started and where it went, I'll
9 talk a little bit more about that and how it happened to
10 try and put some perspective in ranch overall.

11 Houses are reflective of historical
12 lifestyles and domestic trends, and the rise of the ranch
13 house is a spectacular case in point. The unassuming
14 ranch houses, in fact, are a remarkable work of
15 residential architecture. It was a new kind of house for
16 a new kind of idea about family living which obviously
17 resonated as it was wildly popular for decades.

18 It's also been said that it was the most
19 widely advertised house type in American history.

20 During the post-World War years with VHA and
21 VA-backed mortgages, home ownership became a reality for
22 the middle class, and advertisers capitalized on that with
23 the ranch home becoming the hallmark of family living.

24 Here is an advertisement from 1954, the
25 National Plan Service, entitled Your Prelude to Happiness,

1 complete with the baby pointing at you, telling you, "You
2 deserve the best you can do, and if you want to start them
3 right, you'll give them a home," in this case meaning buy
4 a home.

5 And when you open and look in Prelude to
6 Happiness, you get it: Most of what's in there were ranch
7 homes.

8 As we all know, its popularity of the ranch
9 led to subdivision based on the ranch house.

10 Here you can see more of the same
11 themed-advertising such as this one for the Cinderella
12 Estates in 1955 to 1957, and it's been cited in the 1950s
13 that nine out of every ten homes built were a ranch home.

14 Many suburban ranch houses of the 1940s and
15 the '50s are true to form and showed great finesse. The
16 flip side is that the ranch typology was also mass
17 produced, first for defense workers in World War II, and
18 then later as low-cost housing.

19 These homes were minimal in character. They
20 took the basic features of the ranch house, often with the
21 loss of its salient characteristics. Variation was
22 achieved through different orientation of plans, treatment
23 of elevations, different materials.

24 In these federal projects, the use of pre-cut
25 lumber in staging areas of the site ensured a timely

1 completion and cost efficiency, which you can see examples
2 of here.

3 While the standardization of these projects
4 was a necessity at the time, this approach to design and
5 construction became a blueprint for later tract
6 development of ranch homes. These tract developments
7 contributed heavily to the criticism of the ranch home,
8 both at the time and subsequently.

9 Over time, the use of the word "ranch" became
10 synonymous with this fast-built tract housing typology.
11 This is unfortunate because the unassuming ranch house
12 was, in fact, a remarkable work of residential
13 architecture.

14 Okay, so what's my point? I know. It's a
15 new year, and I know an architectural history lesson was
16 probably not on your list of resolutions, so here is my
17 point:

18 There are a gazillion ranch houses out there,
19 and the diversity of the ranch house is extreme, more than
20 any other kind of historic house, and that makes all of
21 our jobs that much tougher to classify them, to discern
22 which are worthy of preservation.

23 The ranch house is a huge part of this, of
24 the story of our city and of the nation, and there are
25 some out there that are irreplaceable historic resources.

1 At first glance, the understanding
2 classification and evaluation of the ranch house presents
3 daunting challenges. They are by nature unassuming, and
4 their character-defining features are few.

5 The vast number of ranch houses built have a
6 wide variety and extreme diversity, ranging from the
7 modern atomic homes to the tract houses. Seemingly they
8 defy ordering in traditional stylistic sense.

9 Generally the ranch house is divided into
10 three broad categories:

11 The traditional custom ranch house, which we
12 see from 1930 to 1975, which is where this house
13 classifies.

14 During the 1930s to 1945, the transitional
15 period of the ranch style served as a precursor to what we
16 see later, and these were thoughtfully-designed homes
17 bringing forth this new typology.

18 We have the contemporary ranch house spanning
19 from 1945 to 1975, and these are custom designed single
20 family homes that blend, that blend the prevailing design
21 philosophy of the ranch homes with abstract forms and
22 geometries.

23 You may remember we brought one of those, you
24 designated those a few years ago.

25 And finally the minimal ranch which

1 incorporates those homes that were not custom designed
2 that were often mass-produced.

3 The traditional custom ranch house: The home
4 at 1208 Asturia is an early traditional custom ranch
5 house. These types feature stylistic details that were
6 stark and modern.

7 They're exclusively one story single family
8 residences, custom designed by architects, rambling
9 elongated plans with a horizontal emphasis and general
10 asymmetry, free-flowing interiors with a design connection
11 to the outdoors, low pitched roofs with wide eaves,
12 shutters, multiple windows and shapes, broad and low
13 chimneys, rear patio and covered porch, and may
14 incorporate simple ornamentation of a current regional
15 style or design elements.

16 Early examples of the traditional custom
17 ranch in southeastern Florida followed the housing trends
18 across the nation and often incorporated elements from the
19 dominant regional styles, particularly Art Deco and Art
20 Moderne.

21 I mentioned earlier that during the 1930s,
22 the ranch house was associated with affluence and
23 high-style design. This was the case for the home at 1208
24 Asturia. It was constructed in Section E, which is
25 located in the vicinity of the Granada Golf Course and the

1 main thoroughfares of Alhambra Circle and Granada
2 Boulevard.

3 It was intended by Merrick to be a prominent
4 section. It was platted with larger lots, 75 by 125. It
5 was one of the earliest areas of Coral Gables to be
6 developed, which is illustrated in this annotated map,
7 with many of the homes being built on multiple lots.

8 Here you can see examples of some of these
9 prominent earlier Mediterranean Revival homes on the 1200
10 block of Asturia.

11 As discussed previously, during the 1930s,
12 New Deal era, as people adjusted to a new way of life,
13 their priorities and aesthetics changed. This was
14 reflected in all aspects of life, including the types of
15 homes that were built. Coral Gables began to follow the
16 national home building trends at this time.

17 While the home at 1208 Asturia, we see the
18 nationally-acclaimed architect Russell Pancoast
19 introducing the traditional custom ranch on one of the
20 first -- one of the first in the city by bringing the
21 modern influences of the ranch typology and breaking away
22 from the Mediterranean Revival foundation of the city,
23 hence launching a new chapter in Coral Gables history on a
24 prominent block.

25 Russell Pancoast was a distinguished

1 architect who was known for respectively breaking new
2 stylistic ground repeatedly. He's been quoted numerous
3 times stating that one needs to evolve and build in their
4 present time and climate. His designs range from
5 traditional to fully modern with many defined stylistic
6 categories.

7 Most notably, Pancoast is considered by many
8 to be key in helping shape the architecturally exotic Art
9 Deco on Miami Beach.

10 And I love this picture with him and all
11 these other gentlemen architects.

12 Pancoast was the grandson of Miami Beach
13 mogul John Collins. He studied at Cornell. When he came
14 back to Miami, he worked for Kiehnel and Elliott before
15 starting his own firm in 1926. His own firm has gone
16 through many iterations and is currently known as the firm
17 of Spillis Candella.

18 I think we all know Pancoast's pedigree. He
19 designed Miami Beach Art and Library Center, which is now
20 the Bass Museum of Art, in 1930, which is considered by
21 many to be the city's first Art Deco building. It was
22 listed on the National Register of Historic Places in
23 1979.

24 Pancoast was innovative, groundbreaking, and
25 a leader in the field of architecture.

1 The single family home at 1208 Asturia is a
2 prime example of his work. With this home, he
3 thoughtfully introduced a new style and typology into the
4 landscape of Merrick's Mediterranean-inspired city.

5 So here is the home at 1208 Asturia which
6 hits all the hallmarks of a ranch house, meaning it's one
7 story, single family residence, the rambling footprint,
8 oriented along the length of the lot, horizontal massing
9 and emphasis, and has a zoned interior plan with an
10 integral relationship with the outside.

11 It was originally permitted as a
12 three-bedroom, two-bath house with an attached garage and
13 a large covered rear porch.

14 The interior of the ranch house is zoned.
15 This was a relatively new concept in floor plans with
16 family activities in one zone, private or individual
17 spaces in another zone, and the family spaces were often
18 open, one space flowing into the other.

19 On the exterior, the family car moved from
20 its traditional place in a free-standing backyard to the
21 front of the house itself with an attached garage.

22 In a classic ranch house arrangement, the
23 sleeping section at one end is demarked in a different way
24 than the central living space. It's not uncommon for the
25 front-facing garage configuration to have a utility room

1 and kitchen located behind the garage.

2 The home at 1208 Asturia is an early example
3 of this zoned layout.

4 So some of the prominent and defining
5 character-defining features of this home, one story; built
6 low to the ground; horizontal emphasis; low pitched roof;
7 wide roof overhangs; no dormers; garage is attached to the
8 main facade; large windows; wall changes at the base of
9 the windows; asymmetrical facade; off-center front entry
10 sheltered under the main roof of the house; wall cladding
11 that changes in the gabled end, and I'll show that, a
12 better picture of that later; elements and patterns of
13 three; a broad low chimney; the covered porch and patio
14 opening to the backyard.

15 It also incorporates simple ornamentation of
16 current original styles, in this case Art Deco and Art
17 Moderne, with its smooth stucco; the punctured
18 fenestration openings; the sculptural built-in exterior
19 shelves; the full-height broad pilasters; and sculptural
20 eaves and cornices.

21 So looking at some of the details of the
22 home, here you see the front entrance with its horizontal
23 emphasis. The front facade is broad and extends the full
24 length of the lot, and in this shot of the front entrance
25 ensemble, you can see how the combination of the side

1 lights and the shutters combine to create the horizontal
2 element coupled with the wide eave overhangs and how the
3 brick line in the front stoop is extended along the front
4 facade, and even the masonry crawl space vents are
5 carefully detailed.

6 And that's important when you're looking at
7 the ranch homes, to realize that these were simple,
8 elegant and streamlined homes, but when you look at the
9 various and you look at the details, that's where we see
10 the difference and that's where we look at this and we
11 look at how Pancoast carefully detailed some of these
12 elements. It really makes it stand out.

13 In this shot we see the detail of the
14 projecting bay that has some hallmark features of the
15 home. It's a very shallow front-facing gabled roof. The
16 gabled end is visually minimized by this hip skirt that
17 becomes the wide projecting eave of the front bay,
18 beautifully detailed, and the siding in the gable also
19 contributes to the horizontal emphasis.

20 The bay is framed by the wide pilasters with
21 simple molded capitals and corresponding bases that are
22 demarked by lines and sides in the smooth stucco, and I'll
23 show you a detail of that in the next slide.

24 The center of this bay is stepped back to
25 frame a large window. The hallmark of this bay and the

1 major feature of the front facade are the
2 Art-Deco-inspired masonry shelves that flank.

3 These shelves start at the same plane as the
4 window and follow the curve of the projecting frame --
5 frame and terminate along the front facade with the
6 rounded shelves. Three shelves flank the window and a
7 fourth rounded shelf wraps into a shallow ledge above the
8 masonry crawl space. These bottom shelves align with the
9 inscribed pilaster base and the brick course of the
10 central entry bay. This bay has a decided Art Deco flare
11 to it.

12 Here you get a better view of those shelves
13 and how deep that recess is and how the shelves wrap back
14 to make this very sculptural element.

15 In this detail you can see those corner
16 pilasters which is an element that's carried throughout
17 all the facades of the home. You can see the scribed
18 lines at the bottom denoting the base that aligns with the
19 bottom shelf.

20 And then from this historic 1940s photo, you
21 can see that the pilasters were actually painted a
22 slightly different color which would make that element
23 pop. Right now the home is monochromatic so you sort of
24 miss some of these details because of how it's currently
25 painted.

1 This photo supplied by the applicant shows a
2 side facade where you can see another example of the
3 pilaster, and then the original drawings that show you how
4 often that detail appears all around the home.

5 We have the garage bay which is slightly
6 lower in height than the living space. Its side-gabled
7 roof is slightly shallower with a ridge further south than
8 the main house, producing a larger street roof plane, so
9 putting a little more emphasis on that front-facing garage
10 which was a new element at the time.

11 The vehicular opening is framed along its
12 vertical edges by a course of bricks which is in turn
13 framed by another set of those pilasters.

14 Here you can see the roof condition that I
15 mentioned previously. The blue arrows indicate that
16 gabled roof on the projecting bay and you can see that hip
17 skirt feature, and then the red shows the offset of the
18 roof ridge of the main house and the garage.

19 The windows of the home were originally steel
20 casements and arranged in a streamlined appearance
21 creating a horizontal band often seen in Art Moderne
22 buildings, which is a style that Pancoast was extremely
23 proficient in.

24 These windows are recessed several inches
25 giving the impression of punctured openings, and the

1 bottom of the openings is slightly slanted which aids in
2 water run-off and gives it more visual interest, and with
3 the hurricane shutters you sort of miss that feature. The
4 change in the window type is one of the few alterations to
5 the character-defining features of the home.

6 Here you can see the exterior and interior
7 rear porches, and the red arrow, you can see that, the
8 convex eave, eave detail a little better.

9 And although we don't designate the
10 interiors, I just wanted to give you a glimpse of the
11 attention to detail by Pancoast. I mean, look at that
12 gorgeous fireplace mantel.

13 So in comparing historic photos to the
14 current, there's been few changes to the
15 character-defining features of the home. It retains a
16 high degree of historic integrity.

17 The most dominant alteration was the change
18 in the windows that I talked about. The size of the
19 fenestration have remained the same.

20 The other changes of note are the carriage
21 doors of the garage were replaced with a single
22 double-wide door, and the cement walkway was replaced by
23 brick pavers.

24 But overall you can see that there have been
25 few changes to the home and it retains a high degree of

1 historic integrity.

2 So our summary statement of significance:

3 The single family residence at 1208 Asturia is a prime
4 example of an early traditional custom ranch house.

5 In Coral Gables when home building began to
6 regain its footing in the mid-1930s, there was a
7 distinctive departure from its ornamented and picturesque
8 Mediterranean Revival style that dominated the city's
9 landscape since its inception. Building began to follow
10 national trends and included some early traditional custom
11 ranch houses.

12 Across the nation, the early traditional
13 custom ranch homes were designed by prominent architects
14 for clients who were embracing this revolutionary
15 architectural type. These homes are distinct and often
16 unique. Such was the case for the home at 1208 Asturia
17 Avenue which was built on a prominent city block by a
18 nationally-acclaimed architect who was known for breaking
19 new ground.

20 Designed by Architect Russell Pancoast, who
21 was known for his cutting edge thinking, it was one of the
22 first residences of this style in Coral Gables. Pancoast
23 designed the Bass Museum of Art building in 1930 which is
24 considered to be Miami Beach's first Art Deco building and
25 contributed heavily to the development of the Art Deco in

1 the region.

2 In this home, he brings these modern
3 influences to the new evolving ranch typology, hence
4 breaking away from the Mediterranean Revival foundations
5 of the city and launching a new chapter in Coral Gables
6 architectural history.

7 This precedent-setting home retains a high
8 degree of historic integrity and significantly contributes
9 to the historic fabric of the City of Coral Gables.

10 Staff recommends approval of the local
11 historic designation of the property at 1208 Asturia based
12 on its historical, cultural and architectural
13 significance.

14 MS. KAUTZ: Okay. Thank you all.

15 MR. EHRENHAFT: Does the board have questions
16 for staff?

17 MS. KAUTZ: I have two comments to follow up
18 on.

19 MR. EHRENHAFT: Okay.

20 MS. KAUTZ: The letter you all received on
21 Friday, there are two points that I want to reference in
22 that letter.

23 The first has to do with how a designation is
24 initiated, and the letter states that, "All property" --
25 "If the property is 50 years or older, the application to

1 request to demolish the building is referred to historic
2 staff to determine whether the property qualifies for
3 historic designation.

4 "If staff determines the property is eligible
5 for designation, staff prepares the recommendations for
6 the historic board's consideration. This means that any
7 property built before 1970 qualifies."

8 And that is not true. The 50-year benchmark
9 that we use to evaluate properties is just that, it's a
10 benchmark. It has to meet the criteria in the code,
11 period.

12 We don't bring everything to you. We are
13 very cognizant that we cannot and will not designate
14 everything in the city.

15 As an example, the only and last ranch house
16 that we designated was 625 Candia Avenue. It was a 1950
17 contemporary ranch that was designated in December of
18 2016, the only one in the history of the ordinance so far
19 that we have designated, and this is only the second one
20 that we're bringing forward to you.

21 In the time that we designated that in
22 December of 2006 (sic) up until December of last year, so
23 in the three years that followed, we had 230 historic
24 significance determination applications that our
25 department processed. Of those, we brought 16 of them to

1 you, and of those, of the 230, 106 were homes that we've
2 qualified as ranch houses that we've let be demolished.

3 So we don't bring everything to you. We are
4 very aware of what we do and do not bring to you.

5 This is a very special home, which is the
6 reason why we did bring it to you.

7 The second item states that, "Most recently,
8 a ranch style house was recommended for designation for
9 being a ranch style house. An article even appeared on
10 the front page of The Herald on the issue. One of the
11 excuses was that it had a great architect design the
12 house.

13 "I invite you to look at the staff report.
14 The reason for designation does not even mention the
15 house's architect."

16 We don't have to. We have to meet three
17 criteria in the code. We discussed it as staff and
18 decided to focus on the three criteria that we brought
19 forward with you.

20 However, Pancoast, because he was such an
21 innovative architect and had such a design, important
22 design philosophy, informs those other three criteria and
23 makes them stronger cases, so we don't have to rely on the
24 prominent architect criteria.

25 Pancoast touches all three of the ones that

1 we bring forward to you to make them stronger, so I just
2 wanted to make that clear.

3 We can -- do you have any questions for us,
4 if you want to hear from opposing counsel, at your will?

5 MR. GARCIA-PONS: I'd like to hear from the
6 homeowner.

7 MR. MENENDEZ: Yeah, yeah.

8 MS. GUIN: Can you put the Power Point back
9 up, please? Can you bring the Power Point back up?

10 MR. GARCIA-SERRA: Good afternoon,
11 Mr. Chair, members of the board. Mario Garcia-Serra with
12 offices at 600 Brickell Avenue, and I'm here today
13 accompanied by my client, the owners of the property,
14 Lourdes Valls along with her daughter, Desiree Valls, and
15 her husband Nick Lebess. I'm also accompanied by our
16 expert witness who will be part of the presentation,
17 Mr. Ramon Pacheco.

18 Our position today is simple and
19 straightforward. The building at 1208 Asturia Avenue
20 simply does not rise to the level of historical and
21 architectural significance which is legally required in
22 order for it to be designated as an historic landmark.
23 Keep that phrase in mind because that's the phrase used in
24 your code, historic landmark.

25 We're not discussing here whether there's

1 some sort of interesting historical features or details of
2 this case. You're deciding whether this building is so
3 valuable, so meaningful to the history of Coral Gables
4 that it has to be preserved forever, for posterity,
5 regardless of the cost and regardless of the burdens
6 involved.

7 That historic designation is a forever
8 designation, a forever obligation which you have to
9 justify as necessary because if we lose this building, the
10 city will be losing part of its history, part of its
11 identity, part of what Coral Gables means and stands for.

12 Despite the considerable and thorough efforts
13 by staff to prove their point, we feel that they have
14 fallen short of satisfying this high standard.

15 These are the main areas of deficiency with
16 the proposed designation which we'll go into more detail
17 on, but I at least want to give you a summary of the three
18 major points that we want to make.

19 Number one and most importantly, the criteria
20 of historic and architectural significance are simply not
21 met.

22 With regards to this building's significance
23 to its neighborhood and the city as a whole, it is nowhere
24 near the significance of truly historic buildings such as
25 this city hall in which we are meeting in today as far as

1 its significance in the category of public buildings, or
2 the significance of the Biltmore Hotel, which everybody is
3 familiar with in the category of commercial buildings.

4 This building does not have that same
5 significance for the category of single family homes in
6 Coral Gables as what we usually attribute to a true
7 historic landmark.

8 Secondly, the process by which this has
9 transpired has not been an equitable one. My client being
10 thrust into this difficult and challenging situation of
11 having their child's home, their child's first home that
12 they're going to be constructing as a married couple be
13 involved in this sort of back-and-forth battle is not the
14 way that we should be handling purchases of homes and
15 construction of new homes in Coral Gables.

16 Lastly, there are several policy reasons why
17 this designation of this property is not appropriate. You
18 have to look at the bigger picture of what's going on
19 here.

20 I tend to think one of the deficiencies in
21 the staff analysis is they get enamored of the details.
22 Certain historical details and features of the house they
23 find so fascinating that they lose sight of the bigger
24 picture. They lose sight of the forest because of their
25 fascination with flowers on some of the trees in that

1 forest, and what happens then is a result at the end of
2 the day, which is not equitable, but more importantly
3 doesn't rise to the level that it needs to rise to in
4 order to call it a historic landmark.

5 Firstly, we're going to discuss the merits
6 issue, and for that I'm going to be assisted by our expert
7 witness, Mr. Ramon Pacheco, who I would ask to come up
8 here right now and join me.

9 Mr. Pacheco has been a registered and
10 practicing architect in Florida for over 40 years and is
11 an award-winning member of the American Institute of
12 Architects. His work has been recognized repeatedly over
13 the course of his career for its excellence, but that is
14 just the start of what he means to this city and what he
15 means to this case in particular.

16 Mr. Pacheco has served as the official
17 association architect for both the Cocoplum and Gables
18 Estates subdivisions for decades, and as part of that
19 process has been integral in reviewing the architectural
20 fabric of those neighborhoods in the city.

21 Aside from designing some incredible homes
22 themselves, some homes which I might point out with enough
23 passage of time and reflection of history may themselves
24 be designated historic, Mr. Pacheco has been the first
25 level of review in these important neighborhoods.

1 Mr. Pacheco knows firsthand what good home
2 architecture is about, and he's practiced it all his life.
3 Even more importantly for our purposes today, Mr. Pacheco
4 knew Russell Pancoast, Mr. Pacheco worked for
5 Mr. Pancoast's firm, and Mr. Pacheco has over the years
6 been involved in, when appropriate, preservation,
7 renovation and additions to Pancoast-designed homes, and
8 when appropriate he's been involved in replacement of
9 Pancoast-designed buildings when they didn't merit
10 preservation and something new deserved to be built

11 Mr. Pacheco knows Mr. Pancoast's work.
12 Mr. Pacheco knows what is worth preserving and what is not
13 worth preserving and when something new is appropriate to
14 be built.

15 And now that we've mentioned his name
16 repeatedly, a word on Mr. Russell Pancoast himself:

17 My client, Mr. Pacheco, everyone involved on
18 my side recognize that Mr. Pancoast was a great architect.
19 There is no denying that.

20 However, there is also no denying that not
21 every project of a great architect merits to be a historic
22 landmark.

23 Babe Ruth was one of the greatest baseball
24 players of all time. Not every at-bat for Babe Ruth was a
25 home run. Ironically, some seasons when he led the league

1 in home runs, he also led the league in strike-outs.

2 Not every project of a great architect rises
3 to the level of a historic landmark. Great architects
4 sometimes do just average buildings. Great architects
5 sometimes do what their clients are obligating them to do,
6 what the economic circumstances are obligating them to do,
7 what other limitations might be obligating them to do.

8 With that said, let's go and get deeper into
9 the merits with Mr. Pacheco's help and talk about
10 historical and architectural significance. If we could
11 bring up the Power Point presentation, yes.

12 Mr. Pacheco, were you sworn earlier as a
13 witness?

14 MR. PACHECO: Yes, I did.

15 MR. GARCIA-SERRA: Okay. Ramon, here, we've
16 got a street view of the property indicating the
17 properties to its immediate left and right which were both
18 constructed in the 1920s, one of which is already
19 designated historic.

20 MR. PACHECO: Thank you.

21 MR. GARCIA-SERRA: An observation of the
22 block that I have made is that it is predominantly
23 Mediterranean style in architect, in architecture. This
24 home is a bit of an anomaly here and an anomaly which I
25 think is a significant, historically architecturally

1 significant anomaly.

2 Ramon, if you could just elaborate further
3 and advise what your opinion is.

4 MR. PACHECO: Okay. Good afternoon to
5 everybody. As a graduate architect of the University of
6 Florida in 1968, the first office that I have to work for
7 was from Pancoast, Ferendino and Grafton. I worked there
8 and with a great honor to Russell, which I admire
9 tremendously.

10 I feel that this house had compromises that I
11 don't think Russell had intended to do it, and I analyze
12 to save the property first. I analyze it, how can we grow
13 into this property, how can we make it work?

14 I have done two houses in Asturia. One was
15 historical, and we're very close to, with the historical
16 preservation board. I respect them tremendously and I
17 respect what they're doing for the city, but in this case,
18 honestly, I don't agree.

19 If you see the survey that I handed to all of
20 you, I don't think was the intention of Russell to have
21 this house two feet, eight inches from the next-door
22 property that was existing there already.

23 Things happen in the construction a lot of
24 time. There are compromises, and a lot of the times we
25 have to have, we have to have compromises, and I think

1 Russell was forced to compromise. I don't know what was
2 the code at that time, but you don't do a house two feet,
3 eight inches away from a property and seven inches on the
4 other side -- seven feet on the other side.

5 What happened is, if we see the value of this
6 property, which probably it's between 800 and a million
7 dollar, and you know that you have to do new electrical,
8 new plumbing, new air-conditioning, new repairs -- they
9 did a report -- new roofing, new windows, it's going to go
10 over the 50 percent rule. When you go over the 50 percent
11 rule, you have to bring the house to code, or not. That's
12 something that probably they can tell me.

13 He pushed the house back ten feet than what
14 is required. The set-back in the front is 25. He push it
15 35 feet, why it's limiting to me to add toward the back
16 ten feet, which I thought is help -- is not helping the
17 situation.

18 By the way, I don't have any economical issue
19 on this, being here. I'm here because of a principle. I
20 think the case has to be studied extremely well, and I
21 don't think it has been, and I admire the report for
22 ranch-house houses.

23 I feel that if you see that survey, there's
24 no way you can add to the back to have a house for a young
25 couple that wants to grow a family there, that wants to

1 have at least 4,000-square-feet home. The house right now
2 is 2,300.

3 How can you grow toward the back? Two story?
4 I don't recommend it. You're going to eat the lot
5 coverage of the house, you're not going to have lot
6 coverage, and that is not going to be approved. If we
7 have to follow the rule of the 50 percent, this house is
8 not going to be possible to expand it.

9 This is my way to see this property. I
10 think, honestly, it's not a Russell Pancoast.

11 I remodel in Star Island a Russell Pancoast
12 house that was magnificent. My principle was bring
13 everything to what Russell Pancoast wanted to have.

14 We found the microfilms, and we did not only
15 exteriorly, we did interiorly everything the way Russell
16 had it, because all these houses have transformation.

17 This one had had already transformation.
18 This is not the original house that Russell did. It has
19 transformation.

20 So I think you need to look at all those
21 issues. This is not the original house, and that's what
22 I'm here.

23 MR. GARCIA-SERRA: Thank you, Ramon.

24 MR. PACHECO: Okay? Thank you.

25 MR. GARCIA-SERRA: Sort of synopsis of what

1 our conclusions have been:

2 Architecturally speaking, this house is
3 nothing special. The layout and profile is a typical
4 ranch house. Any attempt to try to maybe modify for
5 modern needs, add a second floor, do expansions, will
6 start defeating the purpose of designating a ranch house.
7 It will no longer be a ranch house and have those
8 qualities of horizontality, one floor, one floor, a
9 specific layout.

10 Historically speaking, also this house was
11 not groundbreaking at either the local or the national
12 level. The style was already in existence for some time
13 beforehand, well established in other parts of the
14 country, and it did not lead to any flood of imitation
15 ranch houses around that time period. The only time
16 period at which ranch houses then started a lot, whether
17 it be locally or even nationally, was ten to fifteen years
18 later after the second world war, in great part more so by
19 the economic forces that staff talks about in their report
20 than certainly this house that was constructed here at
21 1208 Asturia.

22 Our next slide, so here we have images of
23 Pancoast's truly great work. There's no denying that
24 these are historic landmarks. When you look at the Surf
25 Club in Surfside, the Bass Museum of Art, the Miami Beach

1 Women's Club, all of these are buildings that I think
2 everyone that's reasonable can agree need to be preserved
3 into posterity regardless of the cost, regardless of the
4 burdens.

5 They are part of who we are. They're part of
6 what, in this case in particular, Miami Beach, Surfside
7 are about. Those can, need to, and should be saved.

8 Can we really say that that other image on
9 the other side of 1208 Asturia, even if we try to
10 proportionately analyze it to say we're talking about
11 family homes here and not necessarily public or commercial
12 buildings, does it have the same weight? Is it really so
13 much part of our identity that we cannot stand to conceive
14 of a future without this building in Coral Gables?

15 The criteria for significance, as has been
16 stated by staff, as I have stated, they are relying upon
17 the architectural and historical significance of this one
18 particular building, it's very important to note, and I
19 think staff will readily agree with me.

20 There are several criteria by which they
21 could have determined this home to be historic. One of
22 those criteria is whether the building is an outstanding
23 work of a prominent designer or building. Please note,
24 members of the board, that criteria was not cited by
25 staff. It was not cited by staff. They themselves

1 acknowledge this is not a great work of Russell Pancoast.

2 MS. KAUTZ: No.

3 MR. GARCIA-SERRA: I'm sorry about that. No.
4 I'll let them correct themselves.

5 I will at least point out that it is not
6 cited as a criteria on here, and it not being cited on a,
7 as a criteria on here, you are relying completely on the
8 historical and architectural significance of the building,
9 which means we should look at that building and decide
10 does it portray those important characteristics of history
11 and architecture that we need to preserve?

12 The next slide has to do with the ranch style
13 characteristics. I think everybody agrees what they are.

14 They tend to be single story, L or U shaped,
15 emphasis on the horizontal usually, relatively wide
16 buildings compared to other homes of an earlier time, and
17 there's no denying what those characteristics are.

18 You know, staff through a lengthy part of
19 their presentation as well as within the report dedicated
20 almost half the report talking about the ranch style.
21 None of us disagree on what the ranch style is, but is
22 this home in particular such a great exemplar of that
23 style or role in the history of the development of that
24 style that it needs to be preserved? That's again where
25 we disagree with them.

1 There's no denying that this is a ranch
2 house. So what? There are hundreds of thousands of
3 others like it, literally, in Miami-Dade County. It was
4 not the first in the nation, nor the city, nor is it such
5 a great example of any perhaps derivative style that came
6 later, some of which you do have examples of in the City
7 of Coral Gables.

8 This next slide has to do with the ranch
9 style history, important to note that it started out west.
10 Cliff May was the architect who is credited with being
11 sort of the father of the ranch style.

12 No doubt it was a revolutionary trend, but it
13 did not start in Florida. It did not start with Russell
14 Pancoast, Russell experimenting with it at some point in
15 time.

16 And what you have to think about here, look
17 at two of those -- look at those Bullet Points Two and
18 Three. At one point nine out every ten homes in the
19 United States was a ranch home. Ninety percent of all the
20 homes, single family homes in the United States was a
21 ranch home. Seventy percent of American homes built in
22 the 25 years after World War II were ranch houses.

23 Think how huge that number is. With such a
24 big number, for one house to be so special, to be a
25 historic landmark, something again we need to preserve for

1 forever at all costs, regardless of what the burdens are,
2 it really has to be special.

3 I submit to you that this building simply
4 does not rise to that level of significance. It doesn't
5 rise to that level of significance in architectural style
6 or history. It doesn't rise to that level of significance
7 I think in the City of Coral Gables.

8 Coral Gables, as we all know, planned city,
9 inspired more than anything by Mediterranean architecture.
10 It did, however, George Merrick in his original plan,
11 recognize other architectures. We have the various
12 villages that display other styles of architecture
13 designated, and no doubt they should be designated.

14 But ranch was a style that came along. Some
15 architects started using it. Economically it started
16 making a lot of sense after World War II so then it took
17 off afterwards. It's one of many styles, other than
18 Mediterranean, that have been utilized in Coral Gables. I
19 don't think it's what Coral Gables identifies itself as.

20 I think Coral Gables, and as you can see by
21 the quote that's here on this slide even produced by our
22 own Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce magazine,

23 "Coral Gables, the City Beautiful, stands out
24 as a rare pearl in South Florida, a cohesive community
25 built on a grand Mediterranean Revival architecture to

1 create an overall harmony with the environment."

2 Again emphasis on our planning origins and on
3 our Mediterranean style origins, not to deny there are
4 other architectural styles within the city that may rise
5 to that level of historic merit, but it is not exemplified
6 in this building.

7 Our findings and conclusions slide pretty
8 much summarizes where we're coming from. The building is
9 a competent example of simple and pragmatic ranch style
10 architecture.

11 However, architecturally this building is not
12 trend setting, unique, or iconic. It does not elevate to
13 new levels, nor explore new interpretations of the ranch
14 style. It is merely a good reproduction of an existing
15 simple and generic style.

16 The building did not ever historically affect
17 the Coral Gables community because there was and has not
18 been any direct impact in the surrounding neighborhood to
19 create a ranch style district. Indeed, everything has
20 been generally Mediterranean in style along that block,
21 and the very nature of this type of simplistic ranch style
22 architecture was at the time not appealing to the affluent
23 and unavailable to the mass market until after the second
24 world war and the 15 years later. Ramon, you want to add
25 something?

1 MR. PACHECO: Yes. Something else that I
2 forgot to tell you is that you see this house is in
3 between two Mediterranean homes that were built in 1920 --
4 when this house was built, there were only two houses that
5 were built already.

6 I find very strange that Russell didn't pay
7 attention to what he had next door which are two -- one
8 historical, the other one I don't know, but I think
9 probably is going to be historical. They were built much
10 before, before that.

11 Didn't pay attention, and that's strange
12 because this guy was very talented. He -- that's what I
13 -- I don't want to give him the full credit because I see
14 so many issues here that I don't think he was able to do.

15 He loved, he loved, he loved Art Deco
16 tremendously, and I see very little Art Deco here.

17 I knows it's ranch, I'm sure it's ranch, but
18 this is not the best ranch in Coral Gables.

19 Coral Gables also is the the best investment
20 for any person that wants to invest in South Florida.
21 When you buy a lot for 800 to a million dollars in
22 Asturia, you need to, you need to know that your
23 investments are secure.

24 This investment is not secure. It's very
25 difficult for my client to collect this money, and you can

1 -- and they can tell you how much they pay. I'm not sure,
2 but I think it -- I know from my own clients how much they
3 paid, so you need to put in balance that also.

4 I don't want a house that because it become
5 historic, I depreciate the value. It should increase the
6 value, and that to me is extremely important for Coral
7 Gables.

8 You cannot make any house historical. The
9 value has to go up, not go down. Today, in economic
10 reasons that we have today, we have to make the houses to
11 improve the price, and I know it's not this case at this
12 time. So thank you for listening to me.

13 MR. GARCIA-SERRA: Thank you, Ramon. Ninety
14 percent of our presentation has -- was this discussion of
15 whether we think it reaches to the level of being
16 recognized as a historic landmark, but I would be remiss
17 if I didn't talk about process and I didn't talk about
18 policy, because that's important here also, and it
19 dovetails quite well with what Mr. Pacheco was saying
20 right now.

21 When you're talking about historic
22 preservation, it's one thing when you're talking about
23 historic preservation with the public sector being
24 involved. Sometimes there are buildings of such importance
25 that government needs to come in and acquire those to make

1 sure those are preserved in posterity. A great example of
2 that is Merrick House, the original home of the Merrick
3 family here in Coral Gables, and that happens, it happens
4 sometimes.

5 But when you're talking historic preservation
6 in the context of a private property owner, in order to
7 have a system that really works, that is really effective,
8 you need historic preservation to be a win-win. Everybody
9 should be feeling good about it. Government should be
10 feeling good about it, the property owner should be
11 feeling good about it, the neighbors should be feeling
12 good about it if it's done right.

13 You know, it has to be a process that
14 internally is consistent and makes sense to everyone
15 involved in order for this to work well, and unfortunately
16 what do we have here?

17 We shouldn't have a situation here of a
18 battle being played out on television and on The Miami
19 Herald over a young couple's new home. I mean, come on,
20 do they -- should they really go through that? Should
21 anybody in the City of Coral Gables have to go through
22 that?

23 We should not have a system that almost is
24 set up with pitfalls and booby traps so that when you are
25 acquiring a property, you don't know what you're getting

1 into, and then you think you're doing fine and going along
2 and getting your permits and doing whatever else you have
3 to do, and this surprise is sprung up on you.

4 Imagine if the family involved here wasn't
5 a family that had the resources to hire attorneys and to
6 hire consultants and to hire architects and so forth to
7 try to represent themselves adequately. Is that the sort
8 of city that we want where new people we're welcoming into
9 our city, the next generation of Coral Gables which we
10 hope to keep here, might fall into these potential traps
11 and pitfalls?

12 There needs to be a better way of identifying
13 what is of historic value and what rises to the level of
14 historic value that merits preservation and requires this
15 burden to be created, and when you create the burden,
16 let's find ways to help address that burden.

17 Other cities have done it through
18 transferable development rights or finding ways to perhaps
19 permit additions that will work for homes and so forth.

20 But this is a very, very difficult,
21 precarious situation that the average homeowner who, it's
22 one thing to expect a speculator or commercial investor or
23 somebody that's buying for investment purposes or a
24 developer to be able to be to go out there and do all this
25 due diligence and analysis and determine potentially there

1 isn't any historical significance, but for the average
2 person who deals with a realtor and a title company maybe
3 to somehow figure all this out, there needs to be a better
4 process.

5 And I can tell you right now, my client is
6 suffering through this process, but hopefully we'll try to
7 get some addressed today and resolve the issue today.

8 Lastly, that goes into policy. Again,
9 historic preservation is about who we are, our identity as
10 a city.

11 When you look at the image of 1208 Asturia,
12 is that exactly what you think Coral Gables is all about?
13 Is that what you think is the story of Coral Gables that
14 needs to be preserved for the next thousand years and to
15 make sure that regardless of what the consequences or the
16 impact it might have on the property owner, on the
17 neighborhood, on the overall sense of, you know, what
18 property rights are in Coral Gables and so forth, it's
19 worth it to have those negative impacts on those people so
20 that we preserve this home here because it's such a great
21 part and such a significant part of Coral Gables history?

22 I have to tell you, from my point of view, I
23 think the answer is no. I think from a legal point of
24 view, the answer is no. Just as importantly, from a
25 fairness point of view, the answer is no.

1 We would ask that you not designate this
2 property historic.

3 We are available, of course, to answer any
4 questions that you might have, and I would reserve some
5 time for rebuttal in the event there is any issues or
6 comments that which I need to respond to for the sake of
7 my client.

8 There are members here of the public and of
9 the neighborhood in support. I would ask, number one,
10 that they stand up who are here opposed to the designation
11 and supporting the property owner, and I would ask also
12 that if they can, to, if they're signing in, to come up
13 and speak and provide their views on what they think is
14 the lack of historic significance here for this building.
15 Thank you very much.

16 MR. CEBALLOS: Pardon my interruption. I'd
17 like to clarify some things because the legality of this
18 process was challenged right now.

19 The city attorney's office has reviewed the
20 historic preservation sections, and we find no fault in it
21 as the way it currently stands.

22 I'd also like to reiterate and remind the
23 board that during your consideration of whether to
24 designate or not designate this property, the only
25 consideration should be the criteria that is in Section 11

1 -- 3-1103 of the city zoning code.

2 The fact that it is not financially feasible
3 or that they're not going to get an economic return or the
4 fact that the property can be expanded or not, none of
5 those are criteria, so I would simply remind the board,
6 whether you go one way or the other, that you simply stay
7 on the topics and the criteria that's set forth in Section
8 3-1103. Thank you.

9 MR. VOLSKY: Mr. Chairman, I believe I'm --
10 my name, I'm first on the list of people speaking --

11 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Actually --

12 MR. VOLSKY: -- so with your indulgence.

13 MR. GARCIA-PONS: -- Mr. Chairman, I'd like
14 to hear from staff --

15 MR. EHRENHAFT: Yes.

16 MR. GARCIA-PONS: -- if they have any
17 comments based on the presentation made by the --

18 MS. KAUTZ: We can wait until after the
19 public hearing.

20 MR. CEBALLOS: Also in regards to the public
21 hearing, I feel like I did see a couple individuals come
22 in after --

23 MR. EHRENHAFT: Yes.

24 MR. CEBALLOS: -- the swearing in was, so if
25 anyone does come up that was not sworn in, please let us

1 know so we can go ahead and swear you in. Thank you.

2 MR. VOLSKY: I was sworn in.

3 MR. EHRENHAFT: Okay, all right. So I will,
4 at this point I will open the portion of the hearing to
5 public comment, and so as each individual comes forward to
6 speak in support or in opposition to this case, when you
7 come to the microphone, although you have signed in to the
8 sign-in sheet, please clearly state your full name and
9 your address for the record.

10 MR. VOLSKY: My name is George Volsky. I
11 live at 1008 Alhambra Circle, and I've lived there for the
12 last 53 years and for another seven years in North Gables.
13 I have seen over my years -- actually I came to Coral
14 Gables for the first time in 1947. I believe most of you
15 possibly were not even born there, and I've been coming at
16 least three times a year until I came in '96 to want to
17 reside in Coral Gables.

18 I've observed over the years a number of
19 issues like this one, and I believe that all of them
20 encompass a, what I would call a global, or what
21 economists call a global historic gentrification issue.

22 And speaking about my expertise, I hope to be
23 totally, totally impartial because I don't live there, but
24 I know Asturia. Something which you might not know, in
25 1962, I met the then-mayor -- I'm sorry, he wasn't the

1 mayor. Maurice Ferre who lived on Asturia.

2 I don't know whether Mr. Ehrenhaft knows
3 about this, and today Asturia is a very, very elegant,
4 very shaded street which fortunately has not been
5 discovered by motorists from out of town who criss-cross
6 our city.

7 It's quiet. People can walk the street and
8 people cycle, unlike my street, Alhambra, which is
9 involved now, this part of it, in an issue of bicycles
10 which I had for 50 some years. Nobody, nobody bicycles
11 there, nor do we even talk because the traffic is so
12 incredible.

13 And then I heard about this issue yesterday.
14 I saw the house from front to back, and then, again, my
15 expertise, if I can call it, I was for more than 30 years
16 the New York Times correspondent in Florida, and among
17 other things, I covered real estate in Miami-Dade County.
18 I don't know whether you know that, that Florida -- that
19 Miami was initially the precursor of condominium
20 construction and condominium laws. There was no one,
21 Florida or Miami-Dade, made this, and I covered it.

22 In addition, after I retired from New York
23 Times, I've written maybe half a million words about the
24 operations of the city, and I was instrumental in, with my
25 friend, Patrick Thomson, in saving, saving the Biltmore,

1 which at one time was in great danger of being destroyed
2 -- I don't know whether you know that -- and purchased a
3 number of properties and so on.

4 And so I heard the presentation of the city
5 denying all this, trying -- of naming that street, or
6 rather that property, 1208, historic, and I can say that
7 if I were to write a story for the New York Times about
8 this, I would have to say what a lot of people say about
9 historic preservation department: It is a group in search
10 of a purpose.

11 But here you have something which, speaking
12 about historic, historic movement -- and I studied this in
13 the school of economics. Beginning with things historic,
14 in other words, it's a building, forget about what kind of
15 building it is, if someone, something important happened
16 there -- obviously here in Florida we don't have a house
17 in which George Washington slept or visited and so on
18 because Florida, Florida wasn't even part of the United
19 States at the time. I think probably that was in 18, 18,
20 1813 or 1814. I'm very old but I wasn't alive then.

21 In any event, here we don't have a big issue.
22 We don't have a, say, a Parthenon in Rome, or we don't
23 have a Maison Carree in Nimes.

24 We have a small, small house which is on a
25 block in which there are a number of very elegant, very,

1 very classic Mediterranean, Mediterranean houses, and
2 these houses are in a way diminished by the presence of
3 that house which is now the issue before you, and I can
4 tell you frankly, and I have over my decades, of many
5 decades, more than half a century of living here, that
6 this is possibly the ugliest, ugliest house I have seen in
7 Coral Gables.

8 And I don't believe any -- I know Pancoast.
9 I don't believe any architect today -- you say speaking of
10 architects, and my friend here -- where is he here? I was
11 instrumental in saving the water tower with you, your
12 brother.

13 So this is one of the things that I'm proud
14 of, and I was instrumental in making my, my block, which
15 is the first block of Alhambra Circle from going west from
16 Granada, now it's become better.

17 My interest has always been Coral Gables, not
18 my own property, which is historic, and I live on a very
19 high -- my lot is 19,000 square feet. When I moved to the
20 house, I didn't have to do anything because it was
21 historic and it was well done.

22 This house, as I said, is beyond repair. I
23 will not bother you with talking about this, but I think
24 you will see it in the front, in the back, in the back,
25 just, it give me shivers. I mean, I couldn't possibly --

1 even if somebody offered me this house to live there, I
2 wouldn't do it even if they did it for nothing, so I say
3 it's beyond salvation totally,

4 And again, I am not very surprised or should
5 be that the department wanted to have a designation
6 because something which you possibly know that the whole
7 issue, historic issue for the city is going to go through
8 a process of revision.

9 City of Coral Gables very soon is going to be
10 a hundred years old. The whole concept of historic has to
11 be renewal. We cannot regard someone who built -- is
12 built only 50 years ago is historic. Historic means
13 preserving what is good, what is really good, and not, not
14 what is built some time ago.

15 And as you know, history of preservation has
16 all kinds of phases. I'm sure you've traveled all over
17 the world. You know what happened in middle of 19th
18 century in Paris in which historic areas were totally
19 swept away and city became different, so this might happen
20 in this city today. We have to be looking in the future.

21 Designating something like this historic and
22 making it impossible to change is taking the city back,
23 and this is what I'm sure this board doesn't want it, even
24 though the department of historic allocation looking for
25 survival under criteria which no longer exists.

1 So I certainly hope you will review this
2 carefully, and because I'm sure that whoever -- I don't
3 know who owns it. I just met the lady today. I didn't
4 know anything about this, but I'm sure that if that
5 building is torn down, what is going to happen with a new
6 house, it's going to be much better than it is now and the
7 whole, the whole area is going to be improve and it is
8 going to be -- the block will be better and the value of
9 buildings there is going to improve, improve, and also
10 Coral Gables will gain by maintaining this.

11 Again, it's something that, you know there
12 are properties that, for example, I'm sure you know in
13 Barcelona there were some properties supposedly historic.
14 They maintain the facade, and everything else was new.

15 This cannot happen with this house. It's
16 just, house looks like a, like a sausage, and from
17 everything like I said before.

18 So please consider this carefully in view of
19 the future of Coral Gables and not necessarily of a very
20 -- of regulations which are I think left to the
21 arbitrators when it's your board, I'm sure, is looking
22 forward to what is best for the city. Thank you.

23 I have to go because it's so cold and I'm --
24 I don't want to get a cold, so thank you, Mr. Chairman,
25 and all the members.

1 MR. FULLERTON: Thank you, Mr. Volsky.

2 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Mr. Chairman?

3 MR. EHRENHAFT: Yes.

4 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Could I ask that you
5 reinform the public --

6 MR. EHRENHAFT: Yes.

7 MR. GARCIA-PONS: -- to please be brief and
8 to speak specifically to the designation of this property?

9 MR. EHRENHAFT: Yes.

10 MR. BALSERA: Good afternoon. My name is
11 Freddie Balsera. I live at 841 Andalusia Avenue, and I've
12 lived in this neighborhood for about 20 years, and I came
13 here voluntarily. I have no financial interest in this.

14 But I came here because as a property owner
15 and somebody who chose to live in Coral Gables because of
16 the historic nature, because of the historic
17 characteristics and the architecture, it concerns me that
18 all of a sudden now, because a city staffer arbitrarily
19 thinks that a piece of property is historic only because
20 it's old and only because they can cite some reference to
21 an architect that, without question, was one of the
22 greatest that we had in our community, troubles me,
23 because my first home here was a ranch home, so I know the
24 value of a ranch home. I lived in a ranch home. I know
25 the comfort of a ranch home.

1 And as I listened to the presentation, there
2 were really three things that struck me as extremely
3 bizarre that I would like to share with you.

4 First, using the presentation that staff
5 presented over the course of 45 minutes, there was a quote
6 that they mentioned there saying architecture should meet
7 the needs of the current time and place.

8 I thought it to be a very fitting quote as we
9 debate this because if we apply that to today and we talk
10 about the needs of the current time and place, I think the
11 decision is very evident that this home should not be
12 designated historic and that the precedent being set by an
13 affirmative designation would be extremely dangerous for
14 Coral Gables, its property values, for its nature and for
15 its citizens,

16 It also struck me as I walked in as we debate
17 the historic value of properties, the pictures on the
18 wall. I didn't see one ranch house out there in city
19 hall, and city staff puts up the historic pictures of
20 Coral Gables, and the reason that is, is because ranch
21 houses aren't emblematic of the historic nature of Coral
22 Gables.

23 I'm a student of history and I've read a lot
24 about the man whose portrait is looking over us right now,
25 and we know ranch houses were in many ways a rejection to

1 his strict requirement of a Mediterranean style. My house
2 is surrounded by Mediterranean homes -- I'm sorry,
3 historic homes.

4 There's three surrounding me, including the
5 Merrick House, but there is a ranch style house across the
6 street that has no architectural value, and one day, if
7 somebody buys that house and wants to improve it and make
8 it better, if some staffer decides that they feel that
9 house, because of one, two or three, is historic, that
10 property owner is going to be subject to a process like
11 this, an expensive process because staff has unlimited
12 resources to be able to do a 45-minute presentation
13 without affecting their pocket, but as Mario said, the
14 private citizen has to pay for it out of their expenses.

15 And then finally, as we debate all this, and
16 I know that you all are very accomplished folks in your
17 own right and have a very comprehensive view of these
18 issues, we know that ranch houses are not part of what
19 defines Coral Gables, because if a ranch house in Coral
20 Gables like this one is considered historic, does that
21 mean that all houses are like the homes in Hialeah where
22 there's plenty of ranch homes, homes in Palmetto Bay, The
23 Falls, Kendall, Miramar, Fort Lauderdale?

24 Our community is littered with ranch style
25 homes, many of which have been adapted in Coral Gables

1 with marble features, which is not characteristic of a
2 marble home, with barrel tile roofs, which is not
3 characteristic of a marble home -- I'm sorry, of a ranch
4 style home like the one that I previously owned, and this
5 city allowed for that to happen.

6 People did these things with permits, and at
7 that time, because these houses were not 50 years old, the
8 city allowed people to modify them and make them look more
9 Mediterranean, sometimes required them, some of these
10 boards required people to make them look more
11 Mediterranean.

12 So what does that say about the historic
13 relationship between the city and these properties?

14 I think that if this board were to approve
15 this designation, the precedent from a public policy
16 perspective would be terrible, and I think that the
17 economic ramifications in the city would be disastrous,
18 and I urge you to reject the recommendation from staff and
19 not designate this property historic. Thank you.

20 THE COURT REPORTER: Were you sworn in?

21 MR. BALSERA: I was not sworn in.

22 (Thereupon, Mr. Balsera was duly sworn on oath that the
23 testimony he had given was truthful.).

24 MR. EHRENHAFT: Okay. Excuse me, excuse me.
25 Let's have some decorum and refrain from applause. Okay.

1 This is a proceeding that is to take evidence and input
2 that addresses the criteria in the report, and so.

3 MR. FREIXAS: My name is Guillermo Freixas.
4 I am a real estate agent with Berkshire Hathaway, EWM
5 Realty. I was not involved in the transaction.

6 I've been friends with the homeowners for a
7 very long time. I went to school with them at Saint
8 Theresa. I grew up in Coral Gables. I live at 100
9 Edgewater Drive.

10 My real estate team, we probably produce
11 about 250 transactions a year, most of them in Coral
12 Gables, Coconut Grove and Pinecrest.

13 And what I can tell you about these ranch
14 style homes is that for the most part, they're selling for
15 land value, and when you designate a property historic and
16 you can't improve the house, you lose the value of the lot
17 and the land, and when you drive prices down that way,
18 especially in Coral Gables, I worry.

19 I think Mr. Balsera was very eloquent in what
20 he said. I would corroborate a lot of what he had said in
21 terms of home values, and I do believe that Mr. Pacheco
22 was very eloquent when he said about how that property was
23 laid out on the lot and the fact that architecturally, it
24 wasn't Mr. -- sorry, the builder -- Pancoast's best work.

25 He was definitely a great builder, but that

1 property was not due to -- like it wasn't his standard,
2 and I think this is the City Beautiful, not the City
3 Mediocre, and that's not his best work, and I would
4 recommend that you do not designate that property
5 historic.

6 MR. EHRENHAFT: Thank you. Is there anybody
7 else? Okay. Please be brief or we're going to be here
8 until midnight.

9 MR. FULLERTON: I think another thing we
10 should ask is that they refrain from discussing the value
11 issue. It's not part of our deliberation, so.

12 MR. EHRENHAFT: It's not a criteria that
13 we're here or allowed to consider. Okay.

14 MS. NICOLE VALLS: Good evening. My name is
15 Nicole Valls and I currently reside in 505 Southwest 22nd
16 Road, but I grew up in the City Beautiful and at the end
17 of this month, I will reside in a historic home at 534
18 Menendez Avenue in George Merrick's Chinese Village.

19 I do not agree with deeming this property
20 historic. I do not think it goes with George Merrick's
21 vision of the city, nor it being up to par to being
22 declared a historic landmark.

23 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Thank you

24 MR. EHRENHAFT: Thank you.

25 MS. CARBONELL: Good afternoon -- well, good

1 evening, I guess, maybe. My name is Karelia Martinez
2 Carbonell. I am president of the Historic Preservation
3 Association of Coral Gables, and I'm here with some of our
4 board members as well and really also representing our
5 membership here in Coral Gables.

6 We have been established since 1991, and our
7 mission is to promote the importance and understanding of
8 historical resources and their preservation.

9 And I think we're missing, when we hear ranch
10 style and we're hearing that it's not -- it's mediocre and
11 it's not the Mediterranean style of Coral Gables, we
12 really have to take a look at when this home was designed,
13 and it was really a break from the -- it was like
14 inventing something that was not previously done, and yes,
15 after that there were many variations.

16 But this Pancoast home was a particular -- it
17 was the mold that then became obviously well established.
18 Pancoast is like saying, you know -- Pancoast building a
19 mediocre structure is like saying Frank Lloyd Wright, any,
20 is -- you know, there's homes that just aren't Frank Lloyd
21 because they're kind of mediocre.

22 No. All Frank Lloyd homes are valuable,
23 whether they're -- some have a, you know, higher quality
24 or less quality, but because of his innovation in design.

25 So please, when you consider this home, don't

1 consider everything else that went after. Consider this
2 particular home, particular home in Coral Gables. It
3 broke the mold. George Merrick was not all Mediterranean.
4 Yes, it was, Coral Gables was founded on Mediterranean
5 style, but he was open to many different architectural
6 styles including Chinese, Dutch, Italian and so forth, and
7 even modern. If he were here today, I think he'd consider
8 the modern style, the mid-modern, the Deco, the brutalist.

9 So as a preservationist, we're living in a
10 city that values its historic history. It's in its DNA,
11 and it's not just Mediterranean.

12 And please consider, staff really put a lot
13 of time into this. As they said, they don't bring these
14 homes every, every week or every month. This is a very
15 particular home because of its defining breakthrough in
16 architecture.

17 So I'd say please accept their
18 recommendation. Thank you.

19 MR. EHRENHAFT: Thank you.

20 MS. BUTTON: Good evening. I'm a member --
21 my name is Patricia Button. I live at 1245 Obispo Avenue.
22 I've been here since 1975, which is 45 years, so I'm
23 fairly much a neighbor of the Asturia property, and I
24 agree with the previous reader, that yes, the home is
25 historical.

1 If we have a board that directs what
2 historical means and they've worked for hundreds of hous
3 deciding what that criteria is and they say this house
4 fitted certain numbers of that criteria to qualify that
5 home as historic, then I have to respect the opinion of
6 that board, and we heard earlier today that that's what
7 was said regarding this property.

8 In addition, when a home is designated
9 historical, that does put the price value up of the home,
10 so that in and of itself makes it valuable to a new buyer.

11 In addition, I think a home of this nature
12 has the freedom to be added to. Yes, permits, of course,
13 may be stricter on a historic home, but they are feasible
14 and a person can make the home to what they look like.

15 As for Pancoast, I think this is one of his
16 very first homes, and he lived in a 1920s house where he
17 found that many things were deficient.

18 The overhangs were not present for our heavy
19 rains that we have in the rainy season, so in the '30s he
20 went into a home that, like the ranch style, that had
21 overhang.

22 Window sizes in the 1920 houses were much
23 smaller, and he realized by living in such a home that
24 larger windows were more important for our sun to come in
25 and affect the beauty of the Florida climate.

1 So I'm simply saying a lot of what was said
2 today was opinion. I would like to go with the facts, and
3 I think the facts shows us that the home met criteria for
4 being historical, and that's how we should continue to
5 keep it. Thank you.

6 MR. MASVIDAL: My name is Raul Masvidal. I
7 live at 66 Valencia.

8 MR. EHRENHAFT: Can you pull the microphone a
9 little bit closer to you so that it's --

10 MR. MASVIDAL: Closer to me like this?

11 MR. EHRENHAFT: Thank you,

12 MR. MASVIDAL: You want me to repeat my name?
13 Raul Masvidal, 66 Valencia Avenue.

14 I came to Coral Gables, as a matter of fact,
15 I welcomed George Washington to Coral Gables. I was here
16 August 13th, 1959. I have owned and remodeled several
17 Pancoast homes in Coral Gables.

18 All I'm going to say to you takes five
19 seconds. If there was a national historic record or
20 registry of ugly homes, this would be, this home that
21 we're discussing here today will be the front cover.
22 Thank you.

23 MR. LEAL: Good afternoon. My name is Silvio
24 Leal. I'm a Coral Gables resident for the last 15 years.

25 MR. EHRENHAFT: Your address, please?

1 MR. LEAL: 650 Valencia.

2 MR. EHRENHAFT: Thank you.

3 MR. LEAL: I am a friend of Desiree and Nick
4 Lebess. What I want to say is a lot of what has been said
5 here today about that home. I don't find anything
6 particularly -- even though we've been told a lot about
7 the architectural virtues of the house, my feeling is that
8 if there was this board or something similar in 1936 when
9 this home was built, it wouldn't have been approved,
10 looking what the neighborhood looked like then.

11 As a matter of fact, it looks almost like if
12 a spaceship landed in the middle of an Andalusian town or
13 something like that, that would look that house then in
14 Coral Gables.

15 So now this whole family is stuck with a
16 house that really doesn't fit the whole history and look
17 and feel of Coral Gables. Thank you.

18 MS. LOURDES VALLS: Hi.

19 MR. EHRENHAFT: Your name and address,
20 please?

21 MS. LOURDES VALLS: I'm Lourdes Valls. I
22 wasn't going to say anything because I always cry.

23 THE COURT REPORTER: Can you repeat your
24 first name?

25 MS. LOURDES VALLS: Lourdes Valls. I bought

1 the property. Sorry. Okay. I have six daughters. They
2 all were born eight blocks away from the property that I
3 bought.

4 MS. GABY VALLS: Mom, take a breath.

5 MS. LOURDES VALLS: I have four here today.
6 I'm an architectural student from the University of Miami.
7 I honor Merrick, what he did to the city, the City
8 Beautiful. My oldest daughter just bought a house in the
9 Chinese Village.

10 We are all for preservation because as an
11 architectural student, I enjoy looking at beautiful
12 things, and when I bought this house, my intentions was,
13 "Oh, let me fix it, my daughter is getting married, it
14 will be a great place to start a home."

15 They all went to Saint Theresa. They were
16 all born at 1906 Ferdinand across the water tower. We saw
17 the water tower be restored. We walked every day the golf
18 course because it was a block away from my house and I
19 would walk with my kids. We walked the neighborhood.

20 So when I saw this property for sale, I said,
21 "Beautiful, my daughter could start her family and
22 continue the Coral Gables experience with my
23 grandchildren."

24 I thought it was going to be a great place.
25 I started looking. I had several builders go to the

1 house, and they told me, "You're -- this is not worth it.
2 The house really, it's not worth it. Like you're trying
3 to save a house instead of building a home."

4 Because what I want to do here is build a
5 home to continue the legacy of many families to come back
6 to the Gables, but it's impossible because every house
7 that a young couple can afford is a house like that. They
8 can't afford the beautiful preserved, historic, gorgeous
9 home, because they can't, so they look for these houses so
10 they could start a new family and bring the Gables back to
11 life.

12 You know, that's what you want to do, you
13 want to bring the Gables -- you want to bring history. My
14 kids saw the water tower be restored. My kids walked the
15 golf course. My kids saw the banyan trees when the
16 hurricane came and the golf course. They saw them, how
17 they were lifted again.

18 So you want to bring this life back to the
19 city, and these things are impossible.

20 Honestly, I'm a fanatic of Pancoast. The
21 place, the Ritz they just remodeled, they did the Surf
22 Club, it's spectacular, like you go there and I could
23 stare at a wall for an hour and say, "Wow, this is
24 architecture, this deserves to be restored."

25 Honestly, this house has no architectural

1 value. It's like, you know, you pass by that house, next,
2 the whole block, I counted today, there's 19 houses in
3 that house -- in that block between my block and the block
4 across the street, 19 homes, they're all Mediterranean
5 homes. There are four houses that are not. You could
6 tell they were probably built in the '70s, '80s.

7 You know, this house, honestly, it doesn't
8 belong there. You know, it's fine if it's there, but to
9 deem this house historic, you know, it's like when you
10 think of something historic that is preserved, you're
11 thinking you're going to find a jewel, that you're going
12 to say, "Wow, my God, this is so beautiful. This needs to
13 be here forever. This can never be knocked down."

14 Really, do any of you feel that? I bet you,
15 you pass by this street a hundred times and you haven't
16 noticed that house. I bet you notice the house on the
17 corner and the house on the other corner, but that house?

18 So I just want you to take into consideration
19 what all this -- I mean, the board, I think it's great
20 that you want to preserve things, but at the same time,
21 you have to think of the future of the Gables and what you
22 want to bring back to the Gables, and it's impossible.

23 Like I walked to -- I saw a house the other
24 day, it looks like ruins, in Almeria. Somebody -- you
25 probably made somebody leave three walls, and they

1 probably can't even finish that house. It's below ground
2 level. It's going to get flooded. You know?

3 So there's certain things that you have to
4 consider for the future because you can't restore
5 something that ten years from now, if you're considering,
6 "Oh, we're going to have rising sea levels, oh, so I'm
7 putting all this money into this house, it's going to be
8 flooded in 20 years."

9 So there's certain things that the board,
10 when you're going to deem something historic, that you
11 have to review a lot of things, not only, "Oh, the house
12 looks beautiful," like they told me, I go, "But the house
13 inside is really falling apart," their answer was, "Oh, we
14 don't care about the inside," but unfortunately, I live on
15 the inside of the house. I don't live on the outside.

16 So I want you to take into consideration
17 everything you've heard today, and I hope that I get my
18 daughter to live in the house that she's dreamed of.
19 Thank you.

20 MR. EHRENHAFT: Thank you.

21 MS. DANGUILLECOURT: Hi. My name is Mary
22 Anne Danguillecourt. I live at 541 Hardee Road, a French
23 historic house, and I live on the inside of the house,
24 thank God, because I think the house is ugly from the
25 outside. It was deemed historic. I don't care for the

1 French style and the look of my house, so I don't think
2 that should be that criteria, whether the house is ugly
3 from the inside or the outside.

4 I did grow up in a ranch house in 1960 and
5 '70, so I do think it's old and it should be preserved.

6 And I've met with Tara (sic) before at her
7 board because I'm on the secretary of the Historic
8 Preservation Association, so I do value her opinion in
9 this matter, and whether the house is ugly or not and it's
10 old, and I think it should be saved because once you tear
11 it down, you'll never get it back. Thank you.

12 MR. EHRENHAFT: Thank you.

13 MR. ESTRADA: My name is Rick Estrada. I
14 live at 833 Coral Way. I've been a homeowner in Coral
15 Gables for 20 plus years, and I'm here to speak against
16 this designation.

17 And the longer I've sat in here and I've
18 heard the presentation and other people speak, you know,
19 my conclusion is I don't understand the historical
20 significance of a house that's a reactionary from the
21 Great Depression and World War II where there's literally
22 millions of them. I don't understand the historical
23 significance of something that it's couple of hundred
24 million others that were built around the country.

25 Just because it's in Coral Gables and just

1 because it's old, I don't understand why this is being
2 called historical if it's not unique, it's not
3 significant, it's not beautiful, but that's the eye of the
4 beholder.

5 So whether -- I mean, it's a cookie-cutter.
6 You know, whether it's the mold or the tenth millionth
7 cookie, it's still the same cutter. It's still the same
8 mold.

9 I don't understand the reason for a
10 historical designation and then to something that is all
11 over the country, that's in every community in the United
12 States, that's in every municipality here in Dade County.

13 With all due respect to the board and to the
14 staff, I think your work is valuable and I appreciate it.
15 I live here. I want things to look the way they're
16 supposed to look, the way we all want them to look, which
17 is the reason why we buy here.

18 But as far as this particular house, and for
19 years I've been either riding in front of that house or
20 walking my dog in front of that house, and until I
21 realized that Desi had bought that house, I had never even
22 looked at that house. It's a non-descript home in pretty
23 bad shape on a good lot, you know, so what she's trying to
24 do, to me, makes a lot of sense.

25 You know, you look for a home that, you know,

1 it's not in very good shape and you can knock it down and
2 you can build your dream home, and whatever she's going to
3 build, besides the architectural significance of it, it's
4 going to become before the board of Coral Gables and you
5 guys are going to decide, you know, does this fit or
6 doesn't fit. You know?

7 So it's going to be something beautiful
8 that's going to add to the neighborhood, that's going to
9 add to the block.

10 So to reiterate, you know, something that's
11 ten, twenty million around the country, that's not
12 historical. That's just common. You know? So given
13 something like that, a historical designation just because
14 it happens to be in Coral Gables -- and in my mind, it
15 doesn't really fit the character of it.

16 You know, I understand the villages, I
17 understand if you drive down a street like, you know,
18 Santa Maria and you look at some of these homes, you go,
19 "That needs to be preserved," you know, but this I really
20 don't understand. Okay?

21 And I just wanted to, I just wanted to say
22 that. Thank you.

23 MR. EHRENHAFT: Thank you. Is there anybody
24 else that would like to speak? Okay.

25 MR. GILLIS: Hello, good evening. Brett

1 Gillis, 915 Ferdinand Street, and I know this can be an
2 emotional experience and just buying a home in general I
3 think overall can be an emotional experience for any
4 person buying a home.

5 I went through that five years ago when I
6 bought my 1923 home on Ferdinand Street, so maybe I'll
7 provide a different perspective.

8 Whenever I bought my home, I moved into the
9 Granada section area of Coral Gables, and I think whenever
10 some residents buy homes there, we look at this as a
11 historic neighborhood thinking that if I move into my
12 home, our goal is, of course, to improve, try to do
13 better, but also that what we move into, the neighborhood
14 we move into, because we are a historic city, we have a
15 chance of living in a neighborhood that is still going to
16 be preserved.

17 So the city staff has prepared a very elegant
18 and well-prepared report. I think that they go over the
19 criteria and it's the evidence and findings of fact are
20 there and they stand for themselves, but I did want to
21 just go over a few other points that I think are a
22 sideshow for today that are really taking away from the
23 meaning of the property and its significance.

24 So just to give one example, we look at the
25 Eiffel Tower in Paris. Whenever that was built, Parisians

1 were up in arms. They thought it was terrible. They
2 wanted it to be torn down. It was the worst thing that
3 was ever built in the city of Paris.

4 Today we look back over 100 years later, it's
5 now become the emblem of that city and an irreplaceable
6 historic resource.

7 So when we look at this architecture which
8 started with this home, or say in the early 1930s, we're
9 getting to the point where this is going to be turning a
10 hundred years old in many of our lifetimes, so I think
11 that if you allow this building to be demolished, it will
12 never be able to come back. This home will never come
13 back, so we have to look at that as an irreplaceable
14 historic resource.

15 The attorney for the homeowner tried to
16 compare this to city hall. I would not compare that to
17 this. I wouldn't compare city hall to the Chinese
18 Village.

19 I think that beauty is in the eye of the
20 beholder. We're not going to please everybody, we can't
21 please everybody, and that's a consideration that one has
22 to make when buying a home in Coral Gables.

23 It was stated in the real estate listing
24 that this home was potentially historic.

25 Comparing this to some other properties in

1 the Gables, you know at one time the Douglas entrance was
2 slated for demolition. There was a movement that was
3 started in the 1960s to save that. It was not viewed as
4 valuable at that time. Finally today I think people would
5 chain themselves to that building if it were to be torn
6 down,

7 The Biltmore was totally abandoned after
8 World War II, after it was a hospital. There wasn't the
9 use for it. The neighbors thought that if a hotel came
10 into that neighborhood, it would be the death of that
11 neighborhood, and personally, that's my, one of my
12 favorite areas of Coral Gables, if not the favorite.

13 The architect for, that was representing or
14 speaking against this made some mentions about some issues
15 with the setbacks with the property. I've never heard of
16 that impacting a historic designation in this city. I
17 don't see why that would be a new precedent starting now.

18 If the property were designated historic,
19 I've found that the staff will work with homeowners to
20 help them if they want to do an addition, and not only to
21 do an addition, but get a tax benefit from doing that.

22 To state this home is an anomaly or doesn't
23 fit, well, at the time that the Chinese Village was built,
24 think of if there was any other Chinese architecture in
25 Florida or on the east coast, how much of it there was and

1 what that must have looked like at the time.

2 So to say that George Merrick wasn't in favor
3 of this type of architecture being an anomaly within
4 another area or another district, I don't find that to be
5 consistent with the historic record.

6 Not every ranch is being brought to you. The
7 staff can review. There's an investigative report that's
8 going to be coming out about the amount of homes that have
9 been demolished, the amount of ranch homes.

10 This is a very important early example, and
11 really I view it as the next iteration of the Spanish
12 style in Coral Gables, and that's because whenever
13 Clifford May was interviewed, he stated that the first
14 ranch home that he designed, 1931 in California, his
15 family and his ancestors had lived on ranches in
16 California, and that he remembered that from his childhood
17 that he based this style off of that.

18 So whenever we look at this ranch
19 architecture, it's really a style that I think does blend
20 well with the Spanish style as stated by the architect
21 that originally developed this style in California,
22 another area that was originally colonized by the Spanish.

23 We talk about Coral Gables, City Beautiful or
24 the Coral Gables experience. Well, we have to be open
25 minded, forward thinking. We're not a city frozen in the

1 past.

2 I can't think how many times I've seen
3 different artwork going up in the city that I personally
4 don't think that it's that great, I don't know that I
5 would buy it, but I'm willing to look at it because other
6 people might see value in it.

7 The value of the home keeps being brought up.
8 That's not part of the designation. They keep going over
9 that time after time, and I ask you to just please be
10 consistent.

11 We do have other, the other ranch home that's
12 been designated, and I don't think that it's fair that if
13 -- you know, George Fink was an excellent architect. The
14 other home that was, the other ranch home that the staff
15 mentioned was designated was designed by George Fink.
16 Pancoast was right up there with him, very prominent local
17 architect, which just adds to the cache of the property.

18 It's not necessary, I don't think, for
19 designation, but it does add to the property.

20 Nobody has contested that this is a ranch
21 architecture style. In the staff report it clearly
22 mentions the criteria that are to be reviewed, and that is
23 one of them that is consistent with an architectural style
24 and we have proven that.

25 And for a home to be outstanding, my

1 understanding is it must be 50 years older or older to be
2 considered -- I'm sorry.

3 If a home is less than 50 years old, to be
4 designated, it must be outstanding, but if it is more than
5 50 years old, it does not have to be classified as
6 outstanding by an architectural historian, and this home
7 is clearly over 50 years old, so it should be held to the
8 standard of the age that it is.

9 And finally, I just have one question for the
10 legal department, if I may, about the just general
11 process, that as a board member on this board, if somebody
12 has an objection to ranch architecture being designated in
13 this city, are they allowed to impose that on this
14 designation, or do they have to follow the code that we
15 have currently?

16 MR. CEBALLOS: I would remind all board
17 members that to apply the criteria that is listed in the
18 code section as I reiterated earlier. 3-1103 provides all
19 the criteria for designation, and I had asked all the
20 board members whether they can be fair and impartial when
21 coming to that decision today, and they have all confirmed
22 that they can.

23 MR. GILLIS: Okay. So the opposition of
24 designating this home, as stated, it is ranch
25 architecture, they're not opposing that, and the code have

1 been listed by the staff and they've spent a lot of time
2 on this, and I would just ask for your consideration to
3 designate this so that it's not lost forever.

4 MR. EHRENHAFT: Okay. Mr. Gillis, when you
5 stepped up to the podium, I believe I forgot to ask you --

6 MR. GILLIS: Yes.

7 MR. EHRENHAFT: -- to state your name and
8 your address.

9 MR. GILLIS: Brett Gillis, 915 Ferdinand.

10 MR. EHRENHAFT: Thank you.

11 MS. ARMENTEROS: Good afternoon. My name is
12 Lourdes Armenteros. I live at 3405 Banos Court. I'm here
13 to talk about --

14 MR. EHRENHAFT: Can you speak more --
15 straighten your microphone and speak more directly. It's
16 hard to hear you. Thank you.

17 MS. ARMENTEROS: Okay. I'm a graduate
18 architect of the University of Miami class of 1985 and a
19 resident of Coral Gables for over 22 years.

20 In reference to the ranch house at 1208
21 Asturia Avenue, to begin, I believe that a home should be
22 designated historic before it is sold to a new owner, not
23 after the fact.

24 This designation may be a decisive factor in
25 the buying process and will pose certain challenges to the

1 future owners.

2 For years now I have seen new structures
3 going up in Coral Gables that do not represent what this
4 city was designed to be or do not follow the Merrick
5 dream, but some old designs do not either. For example,
6 this ranch house, just as any modern white concrete box,
7 does not really fit the vision of what Coral Gables was to
8 be.

9 Coral Gables has the flavors of Spanish,
10 Mediterranean, Venetian, Dutch, French, Deco. As you
11 drive in Coral Gables, you know you're not in Kansas
12 anymore. As we all know, everything changes, and this is
13 due to structures like the city hall, the De Soto
14 Fountain, the Biltmore Hotel, the Venetian Pool, the
15 tree-lined streets, the entrances like the one on Eighth
16 Street and Granada, not a simple ranch house.

17 I am surprised that this plain house, while
18 having a few details, is to be designated historic while
19 buildings like the old La Salle cleaners where Merrick
20 himself devised plans for Coral Gables was demolished.

21 I do not believe this house is worthy of
22 being a historic landmark. If so, then I hate to imagine
23 that the white square concrete boxes going up today will
24 some day also be designated as historic. Thank you.

25 MR. EHRENHAFT: Thank you. Okay. If there's

1 nobody else who wishes to speak, this will close the
2 public hearing portion of the case and --

3 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Mr. Chairman, can we take a
4 break?

5 MR. EHRENHAFT: Yes. I was going to say that
6 before we, before board discussion begins, I think we
7 should.

8 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Actually, Mr. Chairman,
9 before we close, there are a number of e-mails and letters
10 that we received.

11 MR. EHRENHAFT: Yes, exactly.

12 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Would you like to read
13 those into the record?

14 MS. KAUTZ: Yes. So we have received to date
15 54 letters in support of designation of this property. I
16 will not read all of them into the record just for
17 expediency's sake. They are included as part of the --

18 MR. EHRENHAFT: Could we --

19 MS. KAUTZ: I'm sorry.

20 MR. EHRENHAFT: -- retire for five minutes or
21 ten before we do that?

22 MS. KAUTZ: Yes. I was doing this as part of
23 the public hearing portion of this, but we can --

24 MR. GARCIA-PONS: We have to close the public
25 hearing. We just can't close the public hearing.

1 MR. EHRENHAFT: Exactly.

2 MS. KAUTZ: Okay.

3 MR. EHRENHAFT: Exactly.

4 MS. KAUTZ: Sure.

5 MR. EHRENHAFT: Right.

6 MR. GARCIA-PONS: We have to close it and
7 then reopen it.

8 Mr. Attorney, how do we, if we want to take a
9 break during the middle of a public hearing, how do we do
10 that?

11 MR. CEBALLOS: You can just request a brief
12 five-minute session.

13 MS. KAUTZ: Okay. Thank you

14 MR. EHRENHAFT: Okay. So we'll take a
15 five-minute recess, try to come back as close to between
16 6:15 and 6:20 as you can.

17 (Thereupon, a brief recess.)

18 MR. EHRENHAFT: Okay. We will, if it's all
19 right with you, Kara, we can resume?

20 MS. KAUTZ: Sure.

21 MR. EHRENHAFT: Okay.

22 MS. KAUTZ: Absolutely. So as I was saying,
23 we've had 54 letters of support in favor of this
24 application which is more than any, we've had for any
25 property ever, and I'm not going to read every single one.

1 They are considered part of the record at this point, but
2 I do want to draw your attention to a few of them that we
3 received.

4 The first is from the Florida Trust for
5 Historic Preservation, which is tasked and dedicated to
6 defending and celebrating the diverse heritage of the
7 state since 1978. I will read a small portion of this.

8 "Over the years, we have observed growing
9 public support and appreciation for styles of architecture
10 previously deemed insignificant, including mid-century and
11 brutalist style buildings, that have now reached the
12 50-year threshold of historic significance. Our built
13 environment tells the story of our history and our
14 culture, and these buildings are not an exception from
15 that rule but rather an important part in the fabric of
16 your city."

17 We received a support letter from Dade
18 Heritage Trust in support as well.

19 We received a letter from The Villagers,
20 which is one of the oldest preservation groups in the
21 city, started in 1976 to save the Douglas Entrance.
22 They're also in support.

23 The Historic Preservation Association of
24 Coral Gables which you all heard from today.

25 We received a letter from a resident on 501

1 Alcazar, a rabbi, who I just would like to read part of
2 his letter also as well because there he makes some good
3 points.

4 "One of the major dimensions of our
5 community's social and cultural strength is the coherent
6 architectural heritage that is a virtual textbook of the
7 evolution of the South Florida domestic styles. The
8 Spanish/Mediterranean Revival vocabulary that is the core
9 of this development did not remain stagnant and has
10 continued to influence and inspire subsequent design in
11 the city.

12 "As has been noted, despite the charm of the
13 earliest homes of the Merrick period, it became clear
14 early on that the traditional small room/small window
15 layout of the 1920s was ill suited to the Miami climate.

16 "After the 1926 hurricane, the next
17 generation of houses began to evolve toward the principles
18 Pancoast would incorporate into 19" -- "into 1208 Asturia,
19 an open, flowing, one story floor plan with large windows
20 and spaces open to the outdoors. He incorporated the
21 prevailing Deco/Moderne motifs in 1936.

22 "Certainly" -- "I join many neighbors in
23 urging the broader, continuing historic legacy of Coral
24 Gables be nurtured and preserved by saving 1208 Asturia as
25 an essential part of our community's dynamic architectural

1 heritage."

2 And there is also a letter of support from
3 the previous owners, the daughter of the previous owners
4 who was excited about the efforts to preserve the
5 property. She was not aware that it was intended to be
6 demolished.

7 Anyway, so there are again 50 plus letters in
8 addition to those that are being included as part of the
9 record. So in terms of, in terms of rebuttal, I do just
10 want to --

11 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Actually, sorry, there
12 is --

13 MS. KAUTZ: That's all right.

14 MR. GARCIA-PONS: -- through the chair, there
15 is a letter that we received on Friday that was mentioned
16 earlier. I would imagine -- would this be considered
17 public input?

18 I'm not sure how to characterize this because
19 I did not recognize who it came from and it's not on a
20 letterhead or it's not signed by anybody. I don't know
21 who the author, ownership or meaning of this letter is.

22 MR. CEBALLOS: I'm not aware of who drafted
23 that communication. It was sent on behalf of the mayor,
24 but I'm not sure if he drafted it. I don't believe he
25 did. I'm not aware who the drafter is.

1 MR. GARCIA-PONS: So we received the letter
2 from the city and we don't know who the author of it is?

3 MR. CEBALLOS: Currently, yes.

4 MR. GARCIA-PONS: I would like to have that
5 letter read into the record.

6 MS. KAUTZ: Okay.

7 MR. CEBALLOS: I will state that that letter
8 was not addressed to this particular item and I'm not sure
9 that reading the entire letter has any relevance to this
10 particular item. If you'd like to read the only section
11 that references this property, I think it may -- wouldn't
12 be -- wouldn't affect the record. I think it would
13 complete the record if you'd like.

14 MR. GARCIA-PONS: No. I would like the
15 entire letter read into the record.

16 MR. CEBALLOS: As you wish.

17 MS. KAUTZ: "This is a report on what has
18 become the troublesome issue of historic preservation and
19 Coral Gables. We are proud of being at the nation's
20 forefront on preserving our history, but things have gone
21 too far in my opinion.

22 "We have a few residents who are obsessed to
23 the process", "obsessed to the process of historic
24 designation, but we also have over 50,000 people that
25 care, but not obsessively, about this process and view how

1 it impedes commerce, real estate sales and transfers in
2 our City of Coral Gables as important as these are for our
3 progress.

4 "How historic designation is initiated:
5 Number One, Property owner requests designation.

6 "Number Two, Owner files a request to
7 demolish the building. If the property is 50 years or
8 older, the application automatically referred" -- "the
9 application automatically referred to historic staff to
10 determine whether property qualifies for historic
11 designation. If staff determines property is eligible for
12 designation, staff prepares recommendations for historic
13 board consideration. This means that any property built
14 before 1970 qualifies.

15 "Number Three, Any" -- "Any, regardless of
16 standing or claim to property can file a petition for
17 designation. Staff will review and determine whether
18 property qualifies. Staff presents its analysis and
19 recommendation to historic board. Yes, any property built
20 before 1970, repeat, 1970, and that anyone without any
21 claim or interest in the property can file for
22 designation. Some have even filed to have entire
23 neighborhoods designated without having any interest in
24 those properties.

25 "Observations: The consequences of

1 designation are severe, inability not only to demolish but
2 also to add or make changes to the property without
3 incurring delays or substantial expenses. We have a
4 current case where a prominent resident bought a ranch
5 style house without having the slightest suspicion that
6 the house had any historic significance, a ranch style
7 house like thousands in our city.

8 "Number One, Often someone buys a house
9 without knowing that the property cannot be demolished
10 without passing a historic designation analysis and
11 hearing. The owner later pleads with the board they had
12 no idea how their new purchase was subject to historic
13 review and designation. This has happened several times.

14 "Number Two, Most recently a ranch style
15 house was recommended for designation for being a ranch
16 style house. An article even appeared in the front page
17 of The Herald on the issue. One of the excuses was that
18 it had a great architect design the house. I invite you
19 to look at the staff report. The reason for designation
20 does not even mention the house's architect.

21 "Number Three, Because anyone can petition
22 for historic designation of any property, there have been
23 situations where the property owner is not provided
24 notice. Thus, the property owner does not appear before
25 the board or submit written comments. This has happened

1 only two meetings ago."

2 Continuing, "Staff informed the board at its
3 last meeting that due to the board's recent denial of a
4 staff recommendation for historic designation, the
5 commission is considering changes to the review process.

6 "At present, any decision of the board may be
7 reviewed by" -- "may be reviewed the full commission if an
8 aggrieved party files a timely request for review. An
9 aggrieved party is defined as the property owner or anyone
10 who lives within XX distance from the property and
11 received a mailed notice of the hearing where the board
12 acted on the petition. Why should neighbors be able to
13 appeal a decision of our expert board with qualified
14 members in various professions who take their duties
15 seriously?

16 "In a recent situation of a property in
17 Catalonia, the board was satisfied with the board's voting
18 to deny historic designation. The board voted five" -- it
19 says thirteen, but he may mean three. "Three of the five
20 were architects, so our professional staff did not appeal.
21 However, an aggrieved individual filed for review. It was
22 later determined the party seeking review was not an
23 aggrieved party as defined by city ordinance. The board's
24 decision stands and the property is now eligible to be
25 demolished.

1 "Historic staff with the support of an
2 outside group held meetings with some commissioners. This
3 meeting resulted in draft proposed amendments to the city
4 ordinance to provide for review of board actions by the
5 commission by:

6 "Number One, Staff shall seek review of any
7 board decision that is not consistent with staff
8 designation recommendation. In this case staff did agree
9 to abide with the five to three decision.

10 "Number Two, Grant standing to Dade Heritage
11 Trust to seek any such review. Why should we give a third
12 party, as expert as that third party may be, any say on
13 appeals to our a board decisions, decisions by our expert
14 board appointed by us commissioners?"

15 And then there's a next section that says,
16 "Concern with draft review process:

17 "Number One, The existing review process
18 based on rights of aggrieved parties to seek review has
19 worked well for years. Is there really a need to change
20 this process because of one situation where the board
21 acted by a vote of five to three to deny a staff
22 recommendation? There is no pattern that the existing
23 review standard process is not working properly. We have
24 done this to please very few obsessed members of the
25 public who view the designation process so seriously

1 affecting the properties involved that some have not even
2 sought to designate their own qualifying properties.

3 "In effect, the proposed board changes assume
4 and will result in the role of the Historic Preservation
5 Board will be to rubber-stamp staff recommendations. Why
6 bother with a board?

7 "Number Three, The ultimate result of these
8 changes and of the appeals by third non-Coral Gables
9 parties will be that the commission will end up serving as
10 the Historic Preservation Board, and that only the
11 commission could second-guess staff recommendations. Does
12 the commission have the time and experience in these
13 matters to assume the role of Historic Preservation Board?
14 Why does the city need to cede any review rights to Dade
15 Heritage Trust?

16 "In conclusion, we are going overboard to
17 satisfy a few very committed residents to the detriment of
18 our own real estate industry and the city, and at the end,
19 our own historic preservation integrity will be impaired.
20 Overkill kills."

21 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Thank you.

22 MR. EHRENHAFT: And Kara, I think you should
23 also then put into the record the information on the cover
24 because that was the attachment, so.

25 MS. KAUTZ: It was, it was just, the

1 information on the cover I believe was only that it was
2 being sent on behalf of the mayor.

3 MR. EHRENHAFT: It's sent from Luzarraga,
4 Beba, Beba Luzarraga who is the assistant to the mayor.

5 MS. KAUTZ: Yes.

6 MR. EHRENHAFT: And it says, "Good afternoon.
7 The attached information is being sent to you on behalf of
8 Mayor Valdes-Fauli. Thank you."

9 MS. KAUTZ: Okay. Thank you.

10 MR. EHRENHAFT: That was the cover that
11 accompanied it.

12 MS. KAUTZ: I don't have that with me.

13 MR. EHRENHAFT: Thank you.

14 MR. GARCIA-PONS: And staff, at the beginning
15 you mentioned there were two sections of this report --

16 MS. KAUTZ: Yes.

17 MR. GARCIA-PONS: -- that you corrected or
18 edited, or I forget --

19 MS. KAUTZ: Yes.

20 MR. GARCIA-PONS: -- made clarifications to.

21 MS. KAUTZ: Yes. Do you want me to do it
22 again?

23 MR. GARCIA-PONS: No. I just wanted to
24 restate that this is the letter that we talked about at
25 the beginning of the meeting. It was read into the

1 record.

2 MS. KAUTZ: Yes. Thank you.

3 MR. GARCIA-PONS: There were two corrections
4 that staff made on the elements that they mentioned
5 earlier in the meeting.

6 MS. KAUTZ: Thank you. So just a few items
7 that I would like to touch on. Again, the economic issues
8 at hand are not under consideration.

9 MR. CEBALLOS: Pardon my interruption.

10 MS. KAUTZ: Yes.

11 MR. CEBALLOS: Is the public hearing now
12 closed?

13 MR. EHRENHAFT: Okay. The public -- we'll
14 close the public hearing at this point, yes.

15 MS. KAUTZ: Okay. So again --

16 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Wait.

17 MR. EHRENHAFT: Mr. Garcia-Serra?

18 MR. GARCIA-SERRA: Well, the one note, I do
19 have a letter from a neighbor I'd like to read in too, but
20 I'll just make that part of my rebuttal.

21 MS. KAUTZ: I'm sorry. You handed it up to
22 them, correct? Okay.

23 MR. RODRIGUEZ: If he's interested in
24 rebuttal, are we closing the hearing, the public portion
25 of the hearing?

1 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Then we don't have to hear
2 from him again.

3 MR. CEBALLOS: The public hearing portion is
4 I believe being closed.

5 MR. RODRIGUEZ: He wants to do a rebuttal.

6 MR. CEBALLOS: But he can do a rebuttal as
7 part of the time that he had allocated and requested to
8 reserve, a few minutes for rebuttal.

9 MR. EHRENHAFT: Okay, all right, okay, all
10 right. So we will close the public hearing at this point.

11 MS. KAUTZ: Okay. The economic issues that
12 were discussed, the condition of the house is not under
13 consideration at this point. You've gotten no expert
14 testimony on either of those things. You are just to
15 focus on the criteria listed in the zoning code.

16 Again, what is being built there is not a
17 consideration for you all to have. You are to focus on
18 the existing house.

19 So as a department, we're charged with
20 telling the story of the city which is the ongoing story
21 of the city which is not a stagnant story.

22 The city started out Mediterranean. This
23 home was built 11 years later when the winds and the tides
24 had already started to shift away from the Mediterranean.

25 This is a very early example of a ranch house

1 which is being confused with later connotations of being,
2 you know, the cookie-cutter ranch house. This is not
3 that.

4 This is pre-World War, not post-World War
5 when the the majority of the ranch houses were actually
6 constructed and when our city had a major building boom,
7 and those are the majority of the houses that are referred
8 to as, you know, the ranch style in the city that are
9 prolific.

10 This is very early 1936, pre-war, one of the
11 first, very innovative, adapted to the 1930s style that
12 Pancoast was experimenting with in Miami Beach.

13 He specifically was cited for that when he
14 was elected by a fellow -- as a fellow of the AIA, and his
15 citation for the honor reads, "He was one of the first
16 South Florida architects to get away from the Spanish
17 influence."

18 So this house has a purpose. It served his
19 purpose. It was purposeful. He did not want to do a
20 Mediterranean house. He wanted to move away from that,
21 and this house clearly, clearly shows that.

22 If we did Asturia as a historic district,
23 which we have been meaning to and trying to do for years,
24 this house would be absolutely a contributing structure.
25 We would just not tell the story of the Mediterranean

1 houses on Asturia. We tell the entire story of what
2 happens on a street, and this is a very important part of
3 that story.

4 Again, I'm sorry that the owner is in this
5 position. There is due diligence. We get calls and
6 e-mails from realtors all the time. We go speak to
7 realtor groups, talking about our process that has been in
8 place since 2014 (sic), over 15 years.

9 This is -- this happens the right way more
10 often than not, and it was listed in the real estate
11 listing that this was potentially a historical, a
12 historically significant building. At that point, I feel
13 like we should have been reached out to at that point and
14 not waited until they're ready to file a demo permit.

15 And again, this does not set a precedent
16 within the city. We do not bring everything to you. We
17 will not bring everything to you. We bring things that we
18 feel are important to the city and tells a story about the
19 city, and this house does.

20 We review houses, structures, anything we
21 receive for significance determination on a case-by-case
22 basis, so to compare this to the Biltmore or to the city
23 hall is not really appropriate.

24 We are focusing on this house and its place
25 in Coral Gables history. It tells a story. You want to

1 add anything?

2 MR. EHRENHAFT: Thank you.

3 MR. GARCIA-SERRA: Mr. Chair, I'll provide a
4 rebuttal. It will be brief, of course. I know it's been
5 a long evening.

6 MR. EHRENHAFT: Thank you.

7 MR. GARCIA-SERRA: And I apologize for that,
8 but the rights involved here, of course, are very, very
9 important rights to my client.

10 Throughout the public comment, you heard
11 comments to the effect of this was groundbreaking, this
12 was the mold. The facts just don't support that.

13 The ranch style existed way before this. It
14 was developed by somebody else in another part of the
15 country. When this building was built, it's not like it
16 immediately led to that style being incorporated to a
17 great degree here in Coral Gables or anywhere else for
18 that matter.

19 It took many, many more years for this style
20 to start catching on, and the reason it was catching on
21 more than anything was really because of economic factors
22 and not because of the fact that this one house
23 particularly was designed or developed here at this
24 location.

25 A lot of the comments were also sort of just

1 catch-alls: If it's old, it should be saved, it should be
2 designated. Well, we know that's not the case. There
3 would be no role for this board if that was the case. We
4 would just look at the original year of construction. If
5 it met a certain year, okay, then we designate it
6 historic, but it takes a lot more than that. There really
7 has to be historic value, historic significance here.

8 Another statement was it was designed by a
9 great architect, anything that's done by a great architect
10 should be great and should be designated historic.

11 Not the case. There's plenty of examples out
12 there of architects where great architects didn't
13 necessarily design a building, every single building to
14 the level of a historic landmark.

15 We're not looking to attack the ranch style
16 here. Two other homes in Coral Gables are designated
17 historic are in the ranch style, one by Alfred Browning
18 Parker, the other one by George Fink. Each of them stand
19 on their own as an example of another derivative style of
20 ranch style architecture which they themselves developed
21 and gives rise to that historic significance. Not the
22 case here.

23 A statement was made, maybe people might not
24 like it right now, but we look back at it in 100 years
25 like now we look back at the Eiffel Tower and we realize

1 what a great gem that is.

2 Is that really the case? Do any of us really
3 think, looking at this home right now, that in 100 years
4 we'll say, "What a shame that that wasn't preserved," if
5 it's not preserved? I don't think, you know, I don't
6 think that's -- I don't think anybody can look at the
7 existing structure as it is today and take that position.

8 Indeed, this historic preservation function
9 is preserving the story of Coral Gables. Is this really
10 the story of Coral Gables?

11 One of the more striking comments that was
12 received was apparently there's a letter of support for
13 the designation submitted by the previous owner. If this
14 was such a jewel, if this was such a great historic
15 landmark that should have been preserved at all costs and
16 that owner agrees with that, well, then why didn't the
17 owner get up at that point in time and knock on the door
18 of historic preservation and say, "Hey, I've got a house
19 here we need to designate historic"? That didn't happen.
20 Ask yourselves potential motivations as to why that didn't
21 happen.

22 This city has a tremendous reputation for
23 historic preservation. It's one of the leaders in
24 historic preservation in the country and it's done an
25 admirable job of it, but it's been an admirable job and

1 it's been done well because they've always been guided by
2 historic substance: Is it worthy? Does it rise to that
3 level of historic designation? Again, I just don't think
4 that's been achieved here.

5 Staff has done an admirable job, a lot of
6 research, a lot of looking at all the details to try to
7 support their argument, but at the end of the day, what
8 they're saying it should be, that core part of the story
9 of Coral Gables that we cannot identify without that
10 building still being in existence, I do not think it meets
11 that threshold, and I don't think reasonably legally
12 anybody could conclude that it does meet that threshold.

13 I ask for you to please resolve this
14 situation in as amicable a manner as possible. I think
15 we've been very civil. We respect everybody here, but we
16 need to have the right result here, which is for this
17 property not to be designated historic. Thank you very
18 much.

19 MR. EHRENHAFT: Thank you.

20 MR. GARCIA-SERRA: One letter, the one last
21 letter I was going to read into the record, this is from
22 Mr. Juan Manuel Quintana who owns and resides at 1209
23 Asturia Avenue directly across the street.

24 "Dear Honorable Chairman and Members of the
25 Board, I am writing to express my opposition to the city's

1 Historical Resources Department's proposal to declare the
2 ranch house located at 1208 Asturia Avenue as a historic
3 landmark. I cannot attend the hearing on January 15th,
4 but I wish for my letter to be made part of the record.

5 "In 2002, I purchased the property located at
6 1209 Asturia Avenue and constructed a new home on the
7 property in 2006.

8 "I was disappointed to learn that a young
9 couple's dreams of similarly building their new home on my
10 street are being shattered by the city's attempt to have
11 the ranch home at 1218 (sic) Asturia historically
12 designated.

13 "In all the years that I have lived directly
14 across the street from 1208 Asturia, I have never thought
15 that the ranch house had anything of architectural or
16 historic significance, and my mind has not changed by the
17 reasons that city staff has cited for historic landmark
18 designation.

19 "Accordingly, I am opposed to the historic
20 designation of the building located at 1208 Asturia, and I
21 ask that you do what is fair and right and vote to deny
22 this proposed landmark" -- "historic landmark
23 designation."

24 It's already been submitted to the clerk and
25 to you for the record. Thank you.

1 MR. EHRENHAFT: Thank you. Okay, all right.

2 The Chair will entertain discussion from the board.

3 MR. FULLERTON: I'd like to ask staff
4 briefly, you mentioned that this is not a district?

5 MS. KAUTZ: Currently it's not.

6 MR. FULLERTON: Isn't Castile a district?

7 MS. KAUTZ: Yes.

8 MR. FULLERTON: I thought this one was also.
9 Also I think that -- well, I was going to say something
10 about the buyer should have been told that this could have
11 been, and the person rightfully to tell them would be the
12 real estate broker who knows Coral Gables after selling
13 several hundred properties in Coral Gables, from what I've
14 heard.

15 MR. EHRENHAFT: I believe the presentation
16 included the information from the advertisement of the
17 property --

18 MR. FULLERTON: Which?

19 MR. EHRENHAFT: -- prior to the sale
20 explicitly saying in the advertising of the property that
21 it may well --

22 MR. FULLERTON: Have mentioned that.

23 MR. EHRENHAFT: -- qualify for historic
24 preservation.

25 MR. FULLERTON: Okay. The other thing I say,

1 this is not to me -- I think we've named it ranch style.

2 Somebody came up with that idea.

3 I don't know if it really qualifies as a
4 ranch style home at all. It's a new typology which
5 Pancoast brought to Coral Gables, and it's a typology
6 which breaks away from the Mediterranean Revival
7 foundation of the city and aids in launching a new chapter
8 of Coral Gables architectural history.

9 For that alone, I think it has merit. 84
10 years, pre-war, so I don't think -- I think we're getting
11 wrapped up in names which may or may not apply, so if this
12 is just another house that was built which launches the
13 ranch style thing all over the world, it has value for
14 that alone.

15 I've been in that house more than a year ago.
16 I didn't notice it being dilapidated or in need of serious
17 repair at all. I apologize if I'm saying something that
18 isn't true now, but it wasn't a year ago.

19 Also, our staff has done a magnificent job of
20 studying and writing a report on this building, and for
21 her, for them to be called kind of almost insultingly
22 "staffers," that rankles me a little bit. I think they
23 did a beautiful job here. It's been well researched,
24 beautifully written, and I think it tells a great story.

25 This is -- Mr. Gillis I think brought up the

1 fact that this is, shows the story of progress and change
2 in preservation, and it represents a non-renewable
3 resource which we'll never get back if it's knocked down.

4 And I think -- I worked for Russell Pancoast
5 also back in the early '60s, '60s. I knew him personally,
6 and I worked there for a short time, but it was over a
7 year, and I knew all the Pancoast, Ferendino, Grafton,
8 Spillis, Candela, all those people very well. I was
9 practicing here in Coral Gables for 52 years. I learned a
10 lot about Russell and Lester and the rest of the Pancoast
11 family.

12 This building is part of the history of and
13 foundation of our identity here in Coral Gables, so I
14 think it's more than just a crappy ranch style home as
15 some people have referred, not those words, but.

16 So for those reasons I feel that we have been
17 presented a very well-written presentation about the
18 reasons that this should be designated, and so with that,
19 I'll give it back to you.

20 MR. EHRENHAFT: Thank you.

21 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Mr. Chairman?

22 MR. EHRENHAFT: Yes, sir.

23 MR. RODRIGUEZ: I'd just like to ask counsel,
24 we had a problem, we had a situation maybe two years ago
25 -- I think several members are still here -- where someone

1 bought a property with a representation from the realtor
2 that it could be knocked down and bought it pursuant to
3 that representation and then found out that that was not
4 the case.

5 As a result of that, we asked that if there
6 is a way of notifying in the property records with the
7 county, a legend that indicates that a property which is
8 more than 50 years old may be subject to this process, and
9 I think the city attorney at the time drafted language
10 that was supposed to be attached to the record of each
11 property. Do you know the status of that?

12 MR. CEBALLOS: I'm not aware of any such
13 document. At the end of the day, most properties in the
14 City of Coral Gables, when they're being put up for sale
15 and they are sold, it never touches the city, meaning the
16 city is not involved.

17 MR. RODRIGUEZ: No. The city was going to
18 place this in the county records, the property records.

19 MR. CEBALLOS: I understand, but there's no
20 mechanism for us to do that that I'm currently aware of.
21 Once again, the only time --

22 MR. RODRIGUEZ: There was, there was language
23 which was developed and read to us that was supposed to be
24 a response to that problem.

25 MR. CEBALLOS: I can look into it and update

1 the board at the next meeting.

2 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Yeah.

3 MR. EHRENHAFT: Okay. Does anybody else have
4 comment?

5 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Well, I have another comment.

6 MR. EHRENHAFT: Yes.

7 MR. RODRIGUEZ: I would be very inclined to
8 agree to the designation if the reason for the designation
9 were that it's an outstanding work of a prominent engineer
10 or builder, which is within the purview of our, or our
11 Article Three.

12 I am concerned, however, with the
13 precedential value, and I'm told that there are other
14 ranch houses that have been designated.

15 I would prefer that this issue, as described
16 in the staff documents, that it be presented to the full
17 commission for a decision of whether or not as a matter of
18 policy we will go that route. I mean, there are hundreds,
19 perhaps thousands of houses built before 1970. Many of
20 them are ranch houses, you can see them walking around
21 Coral Gables, that may come before us, and that's my
22 concern.

23 MS. KAUTZ: Right, but not every house that
24 -- not every ranch house, not every 1960s house, not every
25 1970s house, just because they're starting to meet, will

1 be brought before you. That's sort of the point of our
2 job.

3 We -- our job is to apply the criteria to
4 significance determinations that we receive.

5 MR. RODRIGUEZ: And I appreciate that you do
6 that. However, this, the way this document is written,
7 there is a listing on Page Ten of all the characteristics,
8 defining characteristics of the ranch house, and there's
9 ten pages of discussions of ranch houses in this
10 document --

11 MS. KAUTZ: Yes.

12 MR. RODRIGUEZ: -- and hardly any discussion
13 of the architect, which in my mind is the important
14 element here.

15 MS. KAUTZ: My personal opinion is that as
16 professional staff of the historic department, that we, we
17 review things that as they come up, as they become
18 eligible, as they -- and again, just because a house has
19 those criteria or had them at one point, has the property
20 been altered? How significantly has it been altered? Who
21 is the architect?

22 I mean, there are many different factors that
23 we consider before we bring anything forward, and to have
24 the commission dictate policy on what time frame or what
25 style we can and can't designate I think is a bit of a

1 problem.

2 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Well, I would prefer that
3 they discuss that and not us, and I think we can, we can
4 designate this house based on the criteria provided in
5 that it is an outstanding work of a prominent architect,
6 bypassing the other issues that we've been discussing
7 here.

8 MR. FULLERTON: Added to the other issues.

9 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Pardon?

10 MR. FULLERTON: Or added to the other issues.

11 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Or added to. In other words,
12 anchor our designation in large part on the fact that this
13 is designed by Russell Pancoast and constructed pursuant
14 to his instructions, and tie -- so but we don't -- we're
15 not setting a precedent for every other ranch house on the
16 street further on.

17 MR. CEBALLOS: I would like to clarify
18 something just because maybe I'm misunderstanding it.

19 Just because the staff is bringing forward
20 Historical Section Four, Architectural Significance One
21 and Two, does not mean that you cannot review and apply
22 all of the other standards in 3-1102. You are not limited
23 by staff's review.

24 MS. KAUTZ: Yes.

25 MR. CEBALLOS: That is just what staff has

1 put forward, but the entire section is well within your
2 purview.

3 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Or we can also only designate
4 pursuant to B Three.

5 MR. CEBALLOS: As you wish.

6 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Correct.

7 MR. RODRIGUEZ: And that would be my
8 druthers.

9 MR. EHRENHAFT: But I would comment then that
10 if one were to insist on it only being an outstanding work
11 by a renowned architect, then that's flying in the face of
12 the rules and regulations, the guidance that has been
13 subsumed from the national standards.

14 MR. RODRIGUEZ: It's part of the ordinance.

15 MR. EHRENHAFT: And it's part nationwide --

16 MR. RODRIGUEZ: It's part of the ordinance.
17 We only have to designate one element.

18 MR. EHRENHAFT: Exactly.

19 MR. RODRIGUEZ: And that is one element.

20 MR. EHRENHAFT: And they have, they have, I
21 would submit that they have put forward that it meets
22 Three. If they did not not include the one that you say
23 you would prefer --

24 MR. RODRIGUEZ: It's not what I would prefer.
25 I said what I think would properly designate this

1 property. I'm not convinced for the other two elements.

2 MS. KAUTZ: Again, our argument was that
3 because of Pancoast's design philosophy and his innovative
4 style, he informs the other three criteria. I mean,
5 those, the other three criteria would not have as strong
6 of a case if it were another architect.

7 MR. RODRIGUEZ: That's not stated, that's not
8 stated in your recommendations. The last page of your
9 recommendations doesn't even mention his name.

10 MS. KAUTZ: Okay.

11 MR. RODRIGUEZ: I mean, that's the entire
12 page which you recommend our approach is silent, Page
13 Number 23.

14 MS. KAUTZ: Yes.

15 MR. RODRIGUEZ: It's totally silent.

16 MS. KAUTZ: Because it's based on the
17 criteria that we applied.

18 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Mr. Chair?

19 MR. EHRENHAFT: Yes.

20 MR. GARCIA-PONS: So the attorney, the city
21 attorney just mentioned that when we take our vote, we can
22 vote and state the criteria under which we're voting yay
23 or nay.

24 It doesn't have to be these three. It could
25 be any of the criteria that we feel meets the criteria, so

1 we're not limited to these three in any way, shape or
2 form. We're limited to the section of all the criteria,
3 and we get to choose how we vote. We get to pick the
4 criteria that we would like to designate it under as part
5 of our vote.

6 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Okay. I would not feel
7 comfortable with the criteria put forward in the
8 recommendation. I would only feel comfortable with B
9 Three.

10 MR. GARCIA-PONS: And we individually can
11 choose the criteria that we think is important. We don't
12 have to agree with these three. We can pick a fourth one.

13 MR. SARDINAS: I think we have to have a vote
14 of five members who agree on the designation.

15 MR. GARCIA-PONS: But not on any single
16 criteria.

17 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Is that correct?

18 MR. GARCIA-PONS: We can each choose
19 different criteria.

20 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Is that correct?

21 MR. CEBALLOS: That's correct. You're voting
22 on the designation. Assuming that there's a motion for
23 designation, you would be voting on that. It wouldn't be
24 on one particular criteria or not. It would just be on
25 the desire to either designate or not designate.

1 MR. RODRIGUEZ: How would this then be
2 reviewed if it goes up for review?

3 MR. CEBALLOS: If this is appealed to the
4 city commission, it would be an appeal on the record. It
5 would not be de novo, meaning that the record from here,
6 all the documentation, the recordings, the transcript
7 would be provided to the commission and the commission
8 would review it and they would make the determination on
9 that record.

10 MR. DURANA: I mean, I've got a question.
11 What separates this ranch house from the other ranch
12 houses, like across?

13 MS. KAUTZ: We spent 45 minutes discussing
14 that.

15 MR. DURANA: I know, but it's just like --

16 MS. KAUTZ: Because it is an early example,
17 1936, one of the earliest examples that we have of this
18 type designed by a prominent architect who introduced Art
19 Deco and Art Moderne, Art Moderne to the city and set a
20 precedent, for better or for worse, of moving away from
21 Mediterranean Revival style architecture.

22 MR. DURANA: I mean, if someone was, if that
23 lot was empty right now and someone was trying to build
24 that style house, would you guys allow a historic for
25 that, for how it affects that neighborhood and the

1 existing houses around it?

2 MR. FULLERTON: Unless it's a district, it
3 wouldn't come to you.

4 MS. KAUTZ: It doesn't come to us.

5 MR. DURANA: You can't, for instance, you
6 can't do a metal roof in that neighborhood.

7 MR. FULLERTON: No. That's a code.

8 MS. KAUTZ: That's a code thing. You can't
9 do it anywhere.

10 MR. FULLERTON: That's a code.

11 MR. DURANA: Yeah. Well, in South Gables.

12 MR. RODRIGUEZ: If I may, I think what you'd
13 like to ask is that if this were a historic district,
14 would you allow that house to be built in a zone that's
15 already designated as an historic street?

16 MR. FULLERTON: That house, or --

17 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Or any ranch house.

18 MR. FULLERTON: -- ranch style house?

19 MS. KAUTZ: We've already stated that if
20 Asturia was a historic district, then it would be a
21 contributing resource within the district.

22 MR. RODRIGUEZ: No, but he's saying if it
23 were an empty lot --

24 MS. KAUTZ: Yes.

25 MR. RODRIGUEZ: -- and it was in a historic

1 district and they came to you to build this type of house
2 in what is already designated a historic district, but
3 there's an empty lot, would you authorize this type of
4 construction?

5 MS. KAUTZ: I would ultimately say yes
6 because it is a one story, unobtrusive -- it sits well on
7 the block. It doesn't complete with the rest of the, you
8 know, neighboring houses.

9 That's what we -- when a district is
10 designated, which I think we're getting a little off
11 field, but when a district is designated and new infill
12 construction is planned, we look not necessarily at its
13 individual architecture per se, but how it impacts the
14 rest of the historic district, and I don't feel that this
15 house as it sits now negatively impacts anything around
16 it.

17 MR. FULLERTON: And it would go to the
18 architects board --

19 MS. KAUTZ: Of course.

20 MR. FULLERTON: -- for approval.

21 MS. KAUTZ: Of course, so it's -- you know.

22 MR. EHRENHAFT: Okay. Any further
23 discussion? Okay. That being said, Chair will entertain
24 a motion.

25 MR. FULLERTON: Okay. I move approval of the

1 designation.

2 MR. EHRENHAFT: Is there a second?

3 MR. MENENDEZ: Second.

4 MR. FULLERTON: I mean, if you want to add
5 the thing about the, about the architect, go ahead.

6 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Well, what I would like to do
7 if I can, if I agree with the designation, it will be
8 subject only to the -- it would be only under the
9 condition that my vote is tied to the fact that it is a
10 prominent, it is an outstanding work of a prominent
11 architect.

12 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Right, and Mr. Rodriguez,
13 it's his vote.

14 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Pardon?

15 MR. GARCIA-PONS: It's his vote. He can vote
16 -- individually we can vote on whatever criteria we
17 choose.

18 MR. CEBALLOS: That's correct.

19 MR. GARCIA-PONS: It doesn't have to be a
20 group vote.

21 MR. CEBALLOS: That's correct.

22 MR. FULLERTON: So then would it need
23 another --

24 MR. CEBALLOS: No.

25 MR. GARCIA-PONS: No.

1 MR. CEBALLOS: The motion is sufficient.

2 MR. FULLERTON: Okay.

3 MR. EHRENHAFT: If his becomes an affirmative
4 vote and there are other affirmative votes, it would join
5 them. If there were -- it depends on how many votes there
6 are, whether there's enough to reach the threshold of
7 five. Otherwise, it fails. Okay.

8 MR. MENENDEZ: It's four.

9 MR. EHRENHAFT: Five?

10 MR. EHRENHAFT: It has to be five.

11 MR. MENENDEZ: Yeah.

12 MR. EHRENHAFT: So then you would, with that
13 caveat --

14 MR. GARCIA-PONS: But is there a second?

15 MR. MENENDEZ: Yes.

16 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Okay.

17 MR. EHRENHAFT: And then -- but you
18 questioned whether him, as if it were --

19 MR. RODRIGUEZ: My only concern is I don't
20 know how this is going to look if they decide to review
21 this, take this to the commission to review, how this
22 vote --

23 MR. MENENDEZ: No.

24 MR. RODRIGUEZ: -- is going to read. I think
25 it's rather odd.

1 MR. FULLERTON: Yes, and it's likely that
2 these gentlemen would go to the commission and appeal it
3 anyway, so maybe it's a good idea that we insert that into
4 the record

5 MS. KAUTZ: They will have the record of this
6 meeting to review.

7 MR. EHRENHAFT: I mean, if there is a motion
8 and the motion is to approve and you add your vote to
9 that, but you've added your caveat, that's within -- it's
10 confined to --

11 MR. CEBALLOS: All of the criteria --

12 MR. EHRENHAFT: -- your affirmative vote.

13 MR. CEBALLOS: -- all of the criteria that's
14 been discussed and is being recorded at the moment is all
15 part of the record.

16 MR. EHRENHAFT: Right.

17 MR. CEBALLOS: So anyone that wants to know
18 how each individual member voted and what characteristics
19 and what they discussed will all be part of the record.

20 MR. EHRENHAFT: Okay, all right, okay. Well,
21 then may we call the roll?

22 MS. KAUTZ: Sure. Mr. Durana?

23 MR. DURANA: No.

24 MS. KAUTZ: Mr. Fullerton?

25 MR. FULLERTON: Yes.

1 MS. KAUTZ: Mr. Garcia-Pons?
2 MR. GARCIA-PONS: No.
3 MS. KAUTZ: Mr. Ehrenhaft?
4 MR. EHRENHAFT: Yes.
5 MS. KAUTZ: Mr. Menendez?
6 MR. MENENDEZ: Yes.
7 MS. KAUTZ: Mr. Sardinas?
8 MR. SARDINAS: No.
9 MS. KAUTZ: Mr. Rodriguez?
10 MR. RODRIGUEZ: I'm going to change my vote
11 to no.
12 MR. EHRENHAFT: Okay.
13 MS. KAUTZ: Motion fails.
14 MR. EHRENHAFT: Motion fails. I mean --
15 yeah.
16 MR. CEBALLOS: The motion fails meaning that
17 the board has not taken an action.
18 MR. EHRENHAFT: Right.
19 MS. KAUTZ: Correct.
20 MR. CEBALLOS: I need somebody to make a
21 motion in the negative.
22 MR. SARDINAS: I motion to not designate it
23 historic.
24 MR. EHRENHAFT: Is there a second?
25 MR. GARCIA-PONS: I'll second.

1 MR. EHRENHAFT: Okay. Call the roll.
2 MS. KAUTZ: Mr. Durana?
3 MR. DURANA: Yes.
4 MR. EHRENHAFT: Wait.
5 MR. MENENDEZ: What are we voting on now?
6 MS. KAUTZ: To not designate.
7 MR. MENENDEZ: To not designate?
8 MS. KAUTZ: To not designate. Mr. Durana?
9 MR. DURANA: I'm sorry, what?
10 MS. KAUTZ: To not designate on your motion.
11 MR. DURANA: Correct, to not designate.
12 MS. KAUTZ: Mr. Fullerton?
13 MR. FULLERTON: No.
14 MS. KAUTZ: Mr. Garcia-Pons?
15 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Yes.
16 MS. KAUTZ: Mr. Ehrenhaft?
17 MR. EHRENHAFT: No.
18 MS. KAUTZ: Mr. Menendez?
19 MR. MENENDEZ: No.
20 MS. KAUTZ: Mr. Sardinas?
21 MR. SARDINAS: Yes.
22 MS. KAUTZ: Mr. Rodriguez?
23 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Yes.
24 MS. KAUTZ: So it's hung. There is -- you
25 have one more member who is absent today. It will have to

1 be continued to the next meeting.

2 MR. SARDINAS: Why?

3 MR. FULLERTON: Oh, my God.

4 MS. KAUTZ: Because there's no vote.

5 MR. GARCIA-PONS: We don't have five.

6 MS. GUIN: You need five.

7 MS. KAUTZ: You need five.

8 MR. CEBALLOS: The board needs five
9 affirmative votes to pass a motion.

10 MS. KAUTZ: You need five votes to pass a
11 motion, so it gets continued to the next meeting
12 automatically.

13 MR. EHRENHAFT: Okay. Thank you. All right.
14 We'll proceed to the next, next property on the agenda.
15 This is a special certificate of appropriateness, public
16 -- just a moment. Public hearing on Case File COA (SP)
17 2019-019, located at 7601 Old Cutler Road. Sorry.

18 It's an application, this application for
19 issuance of special certificate of appropriateness is for
20 the property at 7601 Old Cutler Road, local historic
21 landmark. A lengthy legal description is on file in the
22 Historical Resources and Cultural Arts department.

23 The application requests design approval for
24 the construction of a two-story detached garage and gazebo
25 with cabana bath.

1 Variances have also been requested from
2 Article Four, Section 4-101 (D) (5a) and (5b), Article
3 Five, Section 5-101 (B) and (D), and Appendix A, Section
4 A-13 of the Coral Gables zoning code for the placement of
5 the auxiliary structure.

6 MS. KAUTZ: Thank you. Put the Power Point
7 up, please. Location map of the subject property, just
8 south of the Cocoplum, Cartagena Circle plaza. This was
9 -- that was it. Okay.

10 It was designated in 2008 as a local historic
11 landmark. The residence was permitted in 1926. It is a,
12 sort of a classical adaptation of a Mediterranean Revival.

13 As you mentioned a second ago, the applicant
14 is requesting design approval for the construction of a
15 two-story detached garage structure and a gazebo with a
16 cabana bath. The only work proposed for the existing
17 residence are new sort of southeasterly, new steps on the
18 southeasterly facade -- I'm sorry, northeast facade of the
19 existing residence.

20 I'll let the architect, who waited so
21 patiently, come and discuss, and then we can go through
22 the variances and that description and the staff comments.

23 MR. EHRENHAFT: Okay. May I interrupt before
24 you proceed? I failed to ask if board members have any ex
25 parte communications, site visits or other statements

1 relating to the case to disclose.

2 MR. RODRIGUEZ: No.

3 MR. MENENDEZ: No.

4 MR. EHRENHAFT: None? Okay. Thank you.

5 MR. GARCIA-PONS: To the Chair --

6 MR. EHRENHAFT: Yes.

7 MR. GARCIA-PONS: -- before the architect
8 begins, can I ask a simple question and see if we could
9 move through this? Does the applicant agree with the
10 city's staff conditions?

11 MR. BRAVO: Yes.

12 MR. GARCIA-PONS: I'd like to make a motion
13 to approve the project if I can do that.

14 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Second, I second the motion.

15 MR. EHRENHAFT: Okay.

16 MS. KAUTZ: This always happens. If you wait
17 long enough, they'll just approve it all.

18 MR. BRAVO: They get tired.

19 MS. KAUTZ: I'm telling you. I do need to,
20 though, justify our variances for you and explain what
21 they are.

22 MR. EHRENHAFT: And with motions, the motions
23 have to be separate. We have to do the variances first --

24 MS. KAUTZ: Yes, but let me explain --

25 MR. EHRENHAFT: -- and then -- okay.

1 MS. KAUTZ: Let me explain what they are
2 really fast.

3 So the first, one, two, three, four, first
4 four, Articles -- Article 4, Section 4-101 (D) (5a) and
5 (b), and Article, Section 5-101 (B) and (C), all have to
6 do with the same thing, which is not allowing an accessory
7 building, in this case the detached garage structure, to
8 be closer to the street, which is in this case both Old
9 Cutler and Santurce Avenue, than the main building.

10 Because the existing historic residence is
11 placed so far back on the existing lot, there's no rear
12 yard to put a garage anywhere else. So that's the one.

13 And then the other one has to do with the
14 gazebo to be set back 25 feet from Ridge Road. It's a
15 site specific within the zoning code that doesn't really
16 exist anywhere else. Normally a rear set-back is ten
17 feet.

18 In this case, they're requiring it to be 25
19 as if it were front facing Ridge Road.

20 In this case, a house that is two doors to
21 the south was built in 1999 with that site specific in
22 place, and their gazebo is at 25 feet from Ridge Road, so
23 we have no problem matching that set-back.

24 MR. GARCIA-PONS: So I'd like to make a
25 motion to approve the application with the staff's

1 conditions or recommendations.

2 MR. RODRIGUEZ: I'll second the motion.

3 MR. EHRENHAFT: Okay.

4 MS. KAUTZ: I'm sorry. That's me.

5 Mr. Durana?

6 MR. DURANA: Yes.

7 MS. KAUTZ: Mr. Fullerton?

8 MR. FULLERTON: Yes.

9 MS. KAUTZ: Mr. Garcia-Pons?

10 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Yes.

11 MS. KAUTZ: Mr. Ehrenhaft?

12 MR. EHRENHAFT: Yes.

13 MS. KAUTZ: Mr. Menendez?

14 MR. MENENDEZ: Yes.

15 MS. KAUTZ: Mr. Sardinas?

16 MR. SARDINAS: Yes.

17 MS. KAUTZ: Mr. Rodriguez?

18 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Yes.

19 MS. KAUTZ: Okay, and so now, if you want to
20 be speedy about this and make my life easier, if one of
21 you wants to make the motion for all of the variances and
22 one of you wants to second it, if there's no objection to
23 any of the variances, then I can write one resolution.

24 MR. GARCIA-PONS: I would like to make a
25 favor -- I'd like to make a motion in favor of all of the

1 variances.

2 MS. KAUTZ: Okay.

3 MR. MENENDEZ: And I will second all of the
4 variances.

5 MR. RODRIGUEZ: No one is rushing out of
6 here.

7 MS. KAUTZ: I know. Okay.

8 MR. EHRENHAFT: Can you call the roll,
9 please?

10 MS. KAUTZ: Yes. Mr. Durana?

11 MR. DURANA: Yes.

12 MS. KAUTZ: Mr. Fullerton?

13 MR. FULLERTON: Yes.

14 MS. KAUTZ: Mr. Garcia-Pons?

15 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Yes.

16 MS. KAUTZ: Mr. Ehrenhaft?

17 MR. EHRENHAFT: Yes.

18 MS. KAUTZ: Mr. Menendez?

19 MR. MENENDEZ: Yes.

20 MS. KAUTZ: Mr. Sardinas?

21 MR. SARDINAS: Yes.

22 MS. KAUTZ: Mr. Rodriguez?

23 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Yes.

24 THE COURT REPORTER: Can you state your name
25 for the record?

1 MS. KAUTZ: Oh, yes. I'm sorry.

2 MR. BRAVO: Yes. Pedro Bravo with Bravo
3 Architecture, 250 Catalonia Avenue.

4 MS. KAUTZ: Who I will warn not to get used
5 to this, just saying.

6 MR. BRAVO: Thank you all, appreciate it.

7 MR. EHRENHAFT: Okay. We can run through the
8 rest, but for discussion items, any board items, city
9 commission items, or city project updates?

10 MR. FULLERTON: Nice job, Pedro, nice job.

11 MS. KAUTZ: No. Referred to in the letter,
12 the amendments to the zoning code regarding standing and
13 the appeal process that was going to be changed went to
14 planning and zoning for read, and it goes back to the
15 commission on second read at some point in the future.
16 I'm not sure if it's at the next meeting or not, so I will
17 report back about that.

18 MR. EHRENHAFT: Okay, and no other discussion
19 items. Any old business? New?

20 MR. GARCIA-PONS: I do have one request, and
21 maybe we can get some information from staff. I know we
22 did talk about this prior as to giving due access to the
23 public to speak to the board, but I would like for the
24 chair to entertain --

25 MR. EHRENHAFT: Yes.

1 MR. GARCIA-PONS: -- the idea of limiting the
2 amount of time per speaker.

3 MR. RODRIGUEZ: I would agree.

4 MR. EHRENHAFT: I agree. I thought of doing
5 that.

6 MR. GARCIA-PONS: So if we can please verify
7 with staff --

8 MR. EHRENHAFT: Yes.

9 MR. GARCIA-PONS: -- how to do that because I
10 know we have lights, et cetera.

11 MR. RODRIGUEZ: The commission routinely
12 limits to fives minutes.

13 MS. KAUTZ: Yes. We can do that too.

14 MR. EHRENHAFT: We'll do that here.

15 MR. FULLERTON: Mr. Volsky kind of is able to
16 go as long as he wants to because he owns the city. I
17 mean, he's been here forever and he talks -- I think
18 eventually there might be a bonze plaque out in front of
19 his house that says he slept there.

20 MR. EHRENHAFT: Okay. So if there's no more
21 business, I'll entertain a motion to adjourn.

22 MR. FULLERTON: I have a question.

23 MR. EHRENHAFT: Okay.

24 MR. FULLERTON: What does in receivership
25 mean for a house that's been abandoned, and can I get --

1 MS. KAUTZ: Yes.

2 MR. FULLERTON: Where is our legal --

3 MS. KAUTZ: Gus stepped out for a moment. I
4 can tell you -- okay, so I can't tell you very well. It
5 means that someone takes over the property and is going to
6 complete the work.

7 MR. FULLERTON: Is somebody going to take it
8 over?

9 MS. KAUTZ: Well, today, it went to code
10 board, and I wish Gus were here to speak to this, it went
11 to code board this morning, and my understanding of how
12 this worked -- and I can send you all an e-mail as an
13 update. He's talking about the property on 1013 Castile
14 which is adjacent to his property that's been a
15 construction site for --

16 MR. FULLERTON: It's been like that for five
17 or six years.

18 MS. KAUTZ: Yes. So when it went to code
19 board, the intent, I believe, and my understanding is and
20 all the legalese is that they're trying to get the
21 property foreclosed upon so the mortgagee can finish the
22 work.

23 MR. FULLERTON: So is somebody coming in,
24 step in to buy the property, or?

25 MS. KAUTZ: No. I believe, I believe the

1 mortgagee is requesting foreclosure on the property so
2 that they can do work themselves, so the bank.

3 MR. FULLERTON: Who is the mortgagee? The
4 bank, you mean?

5 MS. KAUTZ: The bank, uh-huh. That's my
6 understand of 1013 Castile. Can we provide them an
7 update?

8 MR. FULLERTON: In receivership.

9 MR. CEBALLOS: I'm sorry, I have no update
10 for 1013 Castile.

11 MS. KAUTZ: I know. It went to code board
12 this morning so I just need -- can I get an update from
13 Cristina probably?

14 MR. CEBALLOS: Cristina is the attorney for
15 code board.

16 MS. KAUTZ: Okay. I can get --

17 MR. CEBALLOS: And I apologize, I had to step
18 out.

19 MS. KAUTZ: No, no.

20 MR. CEBALLOS: It's just the previous item,
21 nobody anticipated that particular result, and it created
22 more questions for me, so we're looking into it.

23 MS. KAUTZ: I can have her draft a little
24 synopsis of what's happening for you.

25 MR. FULLERTON: That would be great, that

1 would great. Thank you.

2 MS. KAUTZ: Thank you all for your patience
3 and your consideration of that item. I know it was long,
4 and I appreciate your thoughtfulness.

5 MR. EHRENHAFT: Okay. Motion to adjourn?

6 MR. FULLERTON: So moved.

7 MR. EHRENHAFT: Second.

8 MR. GARCIA-PONS: Second.

9 MR. EHRENHAFT: All in favor?

10 THE BOARD MEMBERS: Aye (collectively).

11 MR. EHRENHAFT: Okay. Thank you.

12 MS. KAUTZ: Happy New Year.

13 (Thereupon, proceedings were concluded at 7:10 p.m.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

STATE OF FLORIDA)

COUNTY OF DADE)

I, DOREEN M. STRAUSS, do here by certify that
the foregoing pages, numbered from 1 to including 146,
represent a true and accurate transcription of the record
of the proceedings in the above-mentioned matter.

WITNESS my hand in the City of Miami this 5th
day of February, 2020.

Doreen Strauss

Doreen M. Strauss

