

**PLANNING AND ZONING BOARD
CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE
CITY HALL COMMISSION CHAMBERS – 1ST FLOOR
100 NORTH ANDREWS AVENUE
FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 20, 2013 – 6:30 P.M.**

Cumulative

Board Members	Attendance	June 2012-May 2013	
		Present	Absent
Patrick McTigue, Chair	P	9	1
Leo Hansen, Vice Chair	P	9	1
Brad Cohen	P	7	0
Stephanie Desir-Jean	A	8	2
Michael Ferber	P	8	2
James McCulla	P	9	1
Michelle Tuggle	P	10	0
Tom Welch	A	8	2
Peter Witschen (arr. 7:12)	P	8	2

It was noted that a quorum was present at the meeting.

Staff

Ella Parker, Urban Design and Planning Manager
D'Wayne Spence, Assistant City Attorney
Anthony Fajardo, Urban Design and Development
David Harrow, Urban Design and Development
Tom Lodge, Urban Design and Development
Yvonne Redding, Urban Design and Development
Tom White, Public Works
Brigitte Chiappetta, Recording Secretary, Prototype, Inc.

Communications to City Commission

None.

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	<u>Case Number</u>	<u>Applicant</u>
1.	21R13**	Ninth Street Investments, LLC
2.	40R13*	Broward Center for the Performing Arts
3.	1Z13** *	City of Fort Lauderdale / Townsend Park
4.	70R12**	Vintro Fort Lauderdale, LLC / Vintro Hotel
5.	76R12**	Archdiocese of Miami / St. Jerome's Catholic Church and School
6.	Communication to the City Commission	

is subject to Site Plan Level 3 permitting. Staff recommends approval of the request.

Disclosures were made by the Board members.

There being no questions from the Board at this time, Chair McTigue opened the public hearing. As there were no members of the public wishing to speak on this item, Chair McTigue closed the public hearing and brought the discussion back to the Board.

Motion made by Ms. Tuggle, seconded by Mr. Ferber, to approve. In a roll call vote, the **motion** passed 6-0.

4.	<u>Vintro Fort Lauderdale LLC. / Vintro Hotel</u>	Thomas Lodge	70R12
Request: **	Site Plan Review / 69 unit hotel in the ABA zoning district		
Legal Description:	Lots 16 and 17 of Block 6, of LAUDER DEL MAR, according to the plat thereof as recorded in Plat Book 7, Page 30, of the Public Records of Broward County, Florida.		
General Location:	3029 Alhambra Street		
District:	2		

Disclosures were made, and any members of the public wishing to speak on this item were sworn in.

Scott Backman, representing the Applicant, showed a PowerPoint presentation to the Board. He explained that the Vintro Hotel is a boutique hotel seeking to expand into the Fort Lauderdale Beach area as well as other locations along the eastern seaboard.

The property is located within the ABA zoning district and the Central Regional Activity Center (RAC). The maximum height permitted in ABA is 200 ft.; Mr. Backman noted that the proposed height of the project would be 164 ft. The ABA zoning district is intended to promote "high-quality resort destination uses," such as boutique and resort hotels, which Mr. Backman said are encouraged throughout the area. He noted that this zoning designation requires compliance with beach development standards as well as ABA requirements.

He continued that as a permitted use within the ABA district, the project is automatically subject to Site Plan Level 4 review. Setback regulations along the beach, and within the ABA district, are required to be half the height of the

building, unless that building is determined to be a development of significant impact. If this determination is made, it is permissible for a project to meet the minimum standards of a 20 ft. front and rear setback and 10 ft. side setbacks. The building's height of 164 ft. would be 18 ft., or 35%, lower than the maximum allowed.

The entire project requires 53 parking spaces, 47 of which are required by the hotel use itself. The Applicant is providing 48 spaces within the building, with the remaining five spaces paid for by a fee in lieu, which is allowed in the beach area. This has been agreed upon by the Applicant and Transportation and Mobility Staff.

Mr. Backman concluded that the permissible floor area ratio (FAR) for the property is 4%; however, within the ABA district, up to a maximum of a 20% bonus is allowed if certain criteria and guidelines are met. The Applicant is requesting the allowable bonus of 5%, which is allowed if five of nine architectural design standards are met. He observed that a 5% FAR is equivalent to approximately 2500 sq. ft. within the building in addition to the permitted 4%.

He showed slides of the building's elevations, explaining how the project meets the five criteria that would allow them the 5% FAR. The criteria are as follows:

1. A distinctive design that reflects positively on the overall character of the City: this includes a planned streetscape area along Alhambra Street, as well as vertical moderation, use of balconies, and open-air spaces.
2. Architecture that reflects sensitivity to the history and culture of south Florida: "Miami Modern" design has been incorporated into the project. Design elements include colors, cantilevered roofs, floating planes, concrete eyebrows, and glass walls.
3. Use of the natural colors and composition of south Florida: Mr. Backman noted the tropical colors associated with Miami Modern design.
4. Employing an architectural design that represents a deviation from sameness: this includes substantial changes in articulation, as well as an overall project that will fit into the look of the beach area while also standing out as a unique structure.
5. Building orientation that relieves the monotony of building massing and scale along A1A: Mr. Backman showed an east-west section of the building and its various components in compliance with this requirement.

Because the project is located on the beach, its design must also comply with the Central Beach Development and Permitting Approval requirements, which are listed in ULDR Chapter 47. The project must comply with the City's Revitalization Plan, which was adopted in the 1990s and affect height, articulation, and incorporation of a pedestrian streetscape. Mr. Backman noted that streetscape components include benches, a water feature, and an outdoor café. The building

has also been moved an additional 10 ft. back from the street in order to provide more public open space.

The Revitalization Plan also requires active ground floors and pedestrian areas for both hotel guests and pedestrians using the beach. Public parking is available in the area and may be increased by the City in the future. The fenestration requirement provides open areas along the frontage of the project. Trash and storage areas are entirely enclosed within the ground floor of the building.

Screening requirements are in place for the parking area and rooftop equipment, and the Applicant has worked with City Staff to ensure the project provides appropriate landscaping, street trees, and green space around the building. Only one sign is proposed for the project, which will be located at the pedestrian level behind the water feature. Mr. Backman showed slides displaying renderings of these features.

He noted that it had been initially difficult to overcome issues related to valet operations and loading facilities, as all loading and trash removal is required to occur in the building itself. After discussions with City Staff, the height of the building's first floor was increased to ensure there is sufficient room for trash removal and loading/unloading vehicles.

Mr. Backman observed that the majority of high-rise buildings in the area reach a height of 110 ft.-240 ft. He pointed out that the building's height is near the middle of this range, and showed aerial views of the existing buildings in the area. He concluded that multiple planning documents, including the Beach Revitalization Plan, the Beach Master Plan, and ABA zoning criteria, contribute to making the Fort Lauderdale beach a world-class destination resort, featuring both large resort hotels and smaller boutique hotels on the beach.

Mr. Cohen requested more detail regarding delivery and trash removal. Molly Hughes, traffic consultant for the project, advised that the hotel will use a parking system that is new to the City, and the Applicant had wished to ensure there were no conflicts with this system. Regarding the ingress and egress of trucks, she explained that the building's original elevation did not permit entrance of a full-sized truck; the garage was redesigned to accommodate a maximum truck height of "just over 13 feet." In addition, the width of each driveway lane within the garage is 10 ft.

The proposal is for inbound vehicles to continuously use the inbound lane, while trucks would enter from the west and back into the outbound lane, which they could occupy during unloading. Because the hotel plans to use valet service only, valets will be made aware of the hotel's delivery schedule, and guests will be advised that they may not exit the garage during this time unless prior arrangements have been made. If these arrangements are made, the guests'

cars will be placed on the ground floor, which will allow them to exit the garage using the inbound lane. Ms. Hughes concluded that using lanes differently is one benefit of using a valet-only parking garage.

Mr. Cohen asked if trucks would be "staging on the street" while waiting to enter the building. Ms. Hughes said the trucks would back into the driveway from the west, which she described as a single maneuver rather than a staging process.

Vice Chair Hansen asked how emergency vehicles, such as an ambulance, or a large tractor-trailer would enter the building, as backing would be difficult. Ms. Hughes replied that ambulances and other emergency vehicles would not have to be accommodated in this manner, as the entire area would be cleared in the event of an emergency.

Vice Chair Hansen offered the example of two deliveries occurring at the same time, asking what would be done in this event. Ms. Hughes said there would be sufficient room for more than one vehicle in the outbound lane. She stated that a vehicle could back into the building, using the full 20 ft. width of the two lanes, and turn into the outgoing lane. Vice Chair Hansen explained that in the absence of a turning radius, a truck would have to "pull into the other lane on Alhambra," which would block traffic during the maneuver. Ms. Hughes said this was not the conclusion reached by the Applicant or Staff.

Mr. Lodge stated that the proposal was for a 13-storey hotel consisting of 69 units, a 500 sq. ft. bar/lounge, and a 2000 sq. ft. restaurant. The building would include two levels of parking on the first and second floors, a pool, and the restaurant and hotel units. Per ULDR Section 47-12.2, the ABA district encourages high-quality destination resort uses, including hotel developments of up to 200 ft. in height, provided that criteria for the ABA district, Central Beach, neighborhood compatibility, and adequacy requirements are met. The side and rear yard setbacks have minimum requirements unless otherwise approved as a development of significant impact.

The Applicant is also requesting a 5% increase in FAR. ULDR Section 47-12.5.B.6 states that if a developer wishes to deviate from the maximum requirements of the ABA district in either height or FAR, the developer may submit the development's design for a rating according to the design and compatibility community scale. Surrounding zoning districts are either ABA or A1A Beachfront Area; buildings surrounding the site reach between two and 16 stories.

The proposed development is consistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan within the Central RAC land use category. Staff recommends approval of the project, subject to the conditions listed in the Staff Report, which are as follows:

1. The Applicant shall pay the one-time parking facility fee for the five offsite parking spaces secured via the City's pay in lieu program, as per ULDR Section 47-12.7, at the time of the issuance of a certificate of occupancy.
2. The Applicant shall execute a valet parking agreement for 100% of the project's parking.
3. The Applicant shall adopt and incorporate Transportation Demand Management Programs in place, satisfactory to the approval of the City's Transportation and Mobility Department and Engineering Division.
4. The final streetscape design, including on-street parking along Alhambra Street, shall be finalized prior to the placement of the Item on the City Commission Agenda.
5. A letter from the Broward County Historical Commission suggests that any ground-level activity on the project, including disturbances which may occur during site preparation, demolition, and construction, be monitored by a qualified professional and conform to the Florida Division of Historical Resources' cultural resource management standards.

Mr. Witschen asked how the proposed project was determined to be compatible at its location, pointing out that if buildings of its size were replicated on the same block, it would not be a positive change for the area. Ms. Parker said there are buildings of similar height within the ABA zoning district, although they are not located on the same block. The ABA district is intended to accommodate resort/destination uses.

She added that Staff has worked with the Applicant to scale down the building and bring it into compliance with the Beach Master Plan and the Redevelopment Plan, which led to the assessment that it is an appropriate use. Mr. Witschen commented that if the Application is approved, he would find it difficult to find subsequent similar developments incompatible.

Mr. McCulla requested clarification of Staff condition #3. Mr. Lodge explained that this means measures to encourage more individuals to use alternative forms of transportation. Ms. Parker said these measures are intended to relieve some of the parking demand in the area, such as bringing guests to the hotel via taxi or shuttle.

Mr. McCulla pointed out that the site is considered to be adequately parked with the addition of the five spaces paid for through the pay in lieu program. Ms. Hughes stated that the Applicant has voluntarily agreed to participate in the Transportation Demand Management Program and its established activities that are known to reduce traffic and parking demand.

She continued that the Applicant feels the hotel can take the following five voluntary steps on an ongoing basis to help reduce traffic:

1. Employees are underwritten to ride transit, as there is a bus stop near the site;
2. Employees are encouraged, with financial support, to ride bicycles if they live within a commutable distance;
3. Bar and restaurant patrons coming from elsewhere can participate in a program that will provide them with a discount on their bill if they took their bicycle rather than driving to the facility;
4. The hotel will coordinate an ongoing ride sharing/ride pairing system, so all employees will know if other employees live sufficiently close to participate in a carpool;
5. Employees will not be reimbursed for parking off-site.

Ms. Hughes concluded that while these steps do not directly address deliveries to the hotel, they will reduce the number of vehicles in the driveway. They are expected to reduce the parking demand during peak hours by 10 spaces, and to reduce traffic by 30%-40%. She added that boutique hotels also benefit from a higher percentage of guest arrival by taxi. The above conditions were voluntarily proposed by the hotel and will be mandatory.

Vice Chair Hansen asked how long it would take a valet to retrieve the farthest car from the second floor of the parking garage. He added that another concern was the stacking of cars in the event that valets must retrieve multiple cars at the same time. Ms. Hughes replied that there will be five standard parking spaces at the north end of the driveway, which will be used to remove vehicles from the travel lanes and move patrons into the lobby. At this point, valets will place the cars, one at a time, in a car elevator to take them to the second floor. This process can be completed within 131 seconds. A study at similar hotels showed an "even arrival of vehicles," even during peak hours.

Vice Chair Hansen asked how many valets will be on the premises. Ms. Hughes said there would be at least three valets at any given time.

Vice Chair Hansen referred to page A301 from the Board members' information packets, noting that a typical garbage collection truck lifts bins overhead. Ms. Hughes said a different type of collection vehicle would be sent to this location; Staff had required the Applicant to provide a letter from a vendor stating that they can service the building with its proposed design.

Ms. Tuggle asked if the Central Beach Alliance (CBA) had been involved in the process of planning the hotel. Mr. Backman replied that the Applicant had held a series of meetings with the CBA, presenting the project to the general membership on November 8, 2012 and again during the second week of March 2013. He stated that at the March meeting, the CBA had voted unanimously to oppose the project. Ms. Tuggle asked what objections the surrounding neighborhood had to the project. Mr. Backman said the community's comments

had not been acceptable to the Applicant, as they had felt a two- or three-storey building was more compatible with the surrounding area. Other concerns had included parking issues on Alhambra Street and a perception that existing buildings in the area had historical significance. He concluded that the Applicant's meetings with the community had not resulted in the two parties' finding any middle ground for agreement.

There being no further questions from the Board at this time, Chair McTigue opened the public hearing.

Steve Wernick, attorney representing the owner of the Casablanca Café, explained that his client's property lies to the east of the proposed project. He stated that his client objected to the notice posted on the property, which lists the Application as undergoing Site Plan Level 3 review when he believed it should actually state Site Plan Level 4.

He continued that for Site Plan Level 4 review, the Board is asked to determine whether the project demonstrates neighborhood compatibility with the adjacent neighborhood and preserves its character and integrity. He asserted that the 13-storey project, while permitted in the ABA zoning district, is out of scale with the contiguous properties, and the proposed Miami Modern architecture is not commonly found in the area. He stated that no evidence of neighborhood compatibility was demonstrated in either the Application or the accompanying Staff Report.

Mr. Wernick continued that his client had scheduled a meeting with Mr. Backman and the Applicant some months ago; however, this meeting was canceled because the Applicant could not attend.

He concluded that the setbacks proposed for the project represented an 88% reduction in size from the standard setbacks of half the building's height. With regard to parking and stacking, Mr. Wernick continued that no traffic study has been submitted for the project. His client was also concerned with the stacking of vehicles. He advised that the Applicant was providing only 48 of the 53 required parking spaces, and was not taking the property's restaurant into account when determining the parking requirement.

With respect to the historic nature of the area, Mr. Wernick said the State of Florida has considered the existing structure on the site as a "potential historic building." The City's Central Beach Survey, conducted in 2009, also identified the building as a potentially historic structure. The ULDR states that when a structure has been identified as having historical significance by any entity within the state, the Applicant is responsible for submitting the information to the City with the development permit application. The Applicant's submission included a statement that the property has not been identified as having historic

significance. He felt this significance should be taken into consideration by the Board, and possibly by the City's Historic Preservation Board.

Mr. McCulla requested clarification of whether or not Mr. Wernick's client had met with the Applicant. Mr. Wernick replied that his client had met with Mr. Backman, the Applicant's representative. He characterized this as "not really a meeting," as the Applicant did not attend.

Mr. McCulla asked if changing the notice signs from Site Plan Level 3 to Site Plan Level 4 would have affected Mr. Wernick's presence at the meeting or any action on his client's part. Mr. Wernick said he would still have attended the meeting in any case. Mr. McCulla pointed out that according to Code, a scrivener's error in the notice does not invalidate a hearing. He added that the client's property was more affected than others in the area by the project's designation as a project of significant impact, as this potentially entitles the property to be much closer to the Casablanca Café than it might be otherwise.

Mr. Wernick said a major reason his client opposed the project was based on operational concerns, such as stacking, loading, and the number of parking spaces; he suggested if the project was based on a larger parcel of land, these concerns might be alleviated. Mr. McCulla observed that this would have also resulted in a much larger building.

Mr. Wernick said his client has received some of the information included in the Applicant's presentation to the Board, and reiterated that no traffic study had been required for the project: any such studies had been internal. He asked if the restaurant to be located on the property was taken into consideration with regard to traffic and parking. Ms. Parker said the City's Engineering Division had determined no such study was required, and had taken the restaurant into account when making this decision.

Mr. Wernick said the on-site restaurant was not counted in the Staff Report. Vice Chair Hansen observed that the Report's parking calculation states this is not applicable because it is a small restaurant within the hotel.

Mr. Cohen requested clarification of the site's potentially historic status. Mr. Wernick explained that the building is not located in a historic district of the City and has not been officially designated as a historic structure by the National Trust; however, he noted that "there have been reports prepared based on the age and architectural significance of the building." He felt this information should have been disclosed by the Applicant. Mr. Wernick clarified that the report he had seen on this topic was dated 1988, with no subsequent historic designation, although the City has discussed this issue in recent weeks.

Ms. Tuggle requested information on the location of the restaurant. Mr. Backman said it will be located at the penthouse level and will be operated under the common ownership of the hotel and lobby bar. Ms. Tuggle asked if it would be possible for a private party to rent the restaurant for an event, such as a wedding. Mr. Backman said while this might be possible, the restaurant is only 2000 sq. ft. in total, with approximately 40 tables. Ms. Tuggle observed that there is also an outdoor terrace associated with the restaurant.

Ken Sheard, private citizen, stated that he is the property manager and a resident of the nearby Seasons condominium. He commented that the parking proposed at the ground level would be very close to the condominium's pool area, and asked if studies have been done with regard to the noise generated by garbage trucks, as he felt this would affect condominium residents. He said he did not feel the proposed plan for parking and deliveries was practical, nor was the idea that a tractor-trailer could back into the parking facility to unload. He showed a photo of traffic on Alhambra Street as seen from the Seasons, stating that cars will be backed up onto A1A. He also pointed out that both the hotel and the restaurant will have service providers making deliveries to the premises.

Mr. Cohen asked if the Applicant had made a presentation to the Seasons. Mr. Sheard said they had not.

Holly Bona, private citizen, said she resides on Seville Street at a seven-unit apartment complex adjacent to the project. She advised that the 10 ft. easement sought by the Applicant would allow the proposed building to infringe on this property. She pointed out that while the Seasons is also a high-rise building in the area, it appears to be a small building on a large lot when its setbacks to adjacent properties are taken into consideration. The subject property, however, would be a large building on a small lot due to its requested setbacks.

Ms. Bona said it was also her professional opinion as a real estate agent that the apartment complex would suffer a devaluation of approximately 20% due to the loss of privacy and sunlight and the increased noise.

Ron Mintz, private citizen, said the property was located in a heavily used pedestrian area and would be "too much" for the neighborhood due to safety concerns. He also felt some of the Applicant's proposals for the property, such as encouraging alternate forms of transportation by hotel guests, were ludicrous.

Nivea Cordova Berios, private citizen, stated that the size comparison between the project and the Seasons condominium was not accurate, as the Seasons has 23,500 sq. ft. She added that her neighbors were shocked that the project would be considered in a part of the City that already experiences heavy delivery traffic and blocked lanes. She advised that it is already difficult for area residents to

sleep due to the noise generated by delivery vehicles, and parking in the area is already a problem.

Eric Bona, private citizen, advised that he owns a property abutting the project. He asserted that other buildings in the area have setbacks that minimize their impact on neighboring properties, and are one- or two-storey buildings at the setback level; the proposed building, however, is "too big for the lot." He felt many of his tenants would move out when construction began, as they would be unwilling to tolerate the noise.

Mark Van Dorn, private citizen, said he represented several residents who felt the project would decrease property value, including "the overall value of Fort Lauderdale," and would increase risk and act as a detriment to the beach. He expressed concern regarding the noise generated by the car lift. He felt that the noise, dust, and congestion associated with construction of the building, which could have a harmful effect on the health of neighboring residents.

Steve Glassman, representing the Broward Trust for Historic Preservation, distributed copies of information that was sent to Staff and the Board members. He advised that he had contacted Staff some months ago regarding the historic issues associated with the site, as projects located in proximity to historic resources must go before the Historic Preservation Board for comment and review. He felt this information should have been presented to the Board.

He continued that a single-family home, constructed in 1925, currently sits on the 100x125 ft. lot. The property was once the winter home of a former United States Senator and has historic significance. Mr. Glassman pointed out that the Historic Preservation Board has asked the City Commission to allow them to comment on and review the project, and has requested an application for historic designation for both the Casablanca Café and the Casa Alhambra.

Mr. Glassman added that while the proposed building is attractive, it was not appropriate for the site, which was too small for the building's size. He asserted that the surrounding area is very busy, with pedestrian and vehicular traffic both day and night, and could not accommodate the project as it has been proposed. While he respected the need for tourism on the beach, he did not feel the proposed project could be considered responsible development. He asserted that it was untrue that the Central Beach Alliance made no attempt to meet the Applicant halfway.

Mr. Cohen noted that the allegations of historic significance had not been made since 1988, and asked if this issue had resurfaced in response to the project. Mr. Glassman responded that in 1988, paperwork had been filed with the Florida Master Site regarding the buildings; in 2008, the City had conducted a Central Beach Resource Survey, which included the two structures. At present, it is now

up to an individual or group to file paperwork with the City seeking a historic designation for the buildings. He explained that his intent was to make the Board aware that the properties are located on historic surveys. Mr. Cohen pointed out that the property owner could have paid the necessary fee to have the buildings designated as historic properties. Mr. Glassman said he felt the appropriate City Department should have informed the Board of the historic potential of the site.

Dave Townsend, manager of the Casablanca Café, said he is often at the restaurant at night and characterized the street as dangerous. He felt the Applicant's plan to increase the sidewalk was similarly unsafe, as many cars drive too fast through the area. He added that the Café is not allowed to offer valet service, and expressed concern that valet parking at the hotel would result in a line of cars. He advised that he has not met with the Applicant thus far.

Mike Jackson, private citizen, said the project would be a positive influence on the Downtown area, as the hotel would encourage tourism. He added that the subject parcel was sufficiently large to contain the hotel, and encouraged the Board to approve the Application.

Dan Lindblade, President and CEO of the Greater Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce, asserted that the project would help bring jobs into the area and further decrease Broward County's unemployment rate. He noted that there have been 38 consecutive months of growth in the tourism industry, which he attributed to the redevelopment of the beach area and the construction of attractive hotels. He stated that the Chamber will continue to work with local neighborhoods to address noise, traffic, and parking issues, and is committed to reaching a solution.

Mr. Witschen asked how many jobs would be created directly by the hotel, excluding construction jobs. Mr. Lindblade estimated that under 50 jobs would be created, most of which are in the service sector.

Gloria Heller, private citizen and resident of the Seasons condominium, stated that she was not aware of anyone who had been contacted to meet with the Applicant. She pointed out that the Applicant had not discussed plans for exhaust fans or kitchen-related equipment, and that her balcony would be roughly 20 ft. from the edge of the subject property, resulting in a loss of both privacy and property value. She added that the hotel would attract a transient clientele, and that while the Casablanca Café and Casa Alhambra did not have historic designations, they were of historic value to the City.

Abby Loughlin, private citizen, stated that the project is wrong for the site on which it is proposed, and did not feel ABA was appropriate zoning for the parcel. She noted that other properties of similar size to the proposed hotel were built on combined parcels.

Erika Klee, private citizen and resident of the Seasons, said it was not reasonable to expect delivery trucks to operate in the manner described by the Applicant. She noted that the Applicant had not addressed the impact of exhaust from vehicles in the garage on neighboring properties.

Mark Badger, private citizen, said he was in agreement with the project, as the redevelopment of the beach has discouraged spring break traffic and raised tax revenues and property values.

Charles King, private citizen, stated that while he does not reside on the beach, he is a property owner in that area. He asserted that the allegations of historic significance did not seem accurate, and advised that the beach was an economic resource that the City should use. He felt that compatibility with the zoning district was more important than compatibility with nearby buildings.

Matthew De Felice stated that while he is the chair of the Historic Preservation Board, he was not representing that entity at tonight's meeting. He explained that the City's Comprehensive Plan defines historic resources as "any property that is identified on the Florida Master Site File." The Comprehensive Plan's Historic Preservation Element also has a policy that all proposed effects on historic resources must be reported to the Historic Preservation Board for review and comment. He concluded that this is a separate process than declaring the property a historic resource.

Ray Tucker, owner of the adjacent property to the west of the subject parcel, said no one had contacted him with regard to plans for the site. He expressed concern for his business at the Alhambra Hotel during the construction phase of the project, as the subject site is in close proximity to the Alhambra's pool. He added that it was not realistic to expect hotel guests to make appointments to remove their cars from a garage. He noted that his property, which is the same size as the subject parcel, has a two-storey, 10-unit building on it, and advised that he could easily develop his property in the same manner as the Applicant if the Application is approved.

Vice Chair Hansen suggested that Mr. Tucker and the individuals speaking in opposition to the project come together to seek rezoning of the area if they felt it was incompatible with the surrounding neighborhood.

Mr. Ferber asked Mr. Tucker if the parking located on his property required cars to back out into the public right-of-way. Mr. Tucker confirmed this.

Fred Carlson, representing the Beach Breezes Association, requested more information on the pay in lieu program as it related to additional parking spaces. Ms. Parker explained that the Applicant would pay into a fund for the

development of future parking spaces. Mr. Carlson asserted that this and other arrangements the Applicant proposed to mitigate the need for parking were "bizarre." He noted that the Applicant's plan to increase the frontage of the proposed building would result in further narrowing the traffic lanes on Alhambra Street, which could affect deliveries to the Casablanca Café.

Mr. Cohen asked how the Beach Breezes Association had voted on the project. Mr. Carlson replied that no vote had been taken.

The Board took a brief recess from 8:51 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Karen Turner, member of the Central Beach Alliance's Board of Directors, stated that she would like to give her speaking time to CBA President John Weaver. Elizabeth King, private citizen, said she would like to do this as well. Attorney Spence advised that any additional time provided to speakers was at the discretion of the Board, as representatives of organizations were already provided with five minutes rather than three. It was determined that the Board would make this decision at the end of the speaker's allotted five minutes.

John Weaver, President of the Central Beach Alliance, advised that while the CBA has given its approval to several existing developments on the beach, the membership had voted 193-0 against the Application. He observed that the issues are whether or not the proposed hotel is a project of significant impact, and if so, whether it is compatible with the neighborhood.

Mr. Weaver stated that while the project's impact appeared to be significant, he did not feel the impact would be positive. He pointed out that placing a tall building next to an existing residential development would affect the residences' property value, and added that the lot is not sufficiently large to contain enough parking for the hotel. He did not feel that having delivery trucks unload in the valet parking area was reasonable. He concluded that the CBA had sought to reach a compromise with the Applicant, but had been rebuffed.

Mr. Witschen asked Mr. Weaver to explain why, according to Code, the project was not compatible with the surrounding neighborhood. Mr. Weaver replied that "neighborhood compatibility" was a subjective term. He cited the example of a similar project to which the CBA had objected, as it was very close to a residential building; that project had ultimately been denied at the City Commission level. Mr. Witschen asked how the Application could be changed to make the project compatible with the surrounding neighborhood. Mr. Weaver said its height would need to be significantly lowered due to the size and location of the lot.

George Kousoulas, representing Vintro Hotels, stated he would like to clarify some of the assertions made by adjacent property owners. He stated that the

development team had met in October 2012 with the owner of a hotel to the west of the subject property; they had also met with the owner of a hotel to the north of the Casablanca Café to discuss the size of the project and the Applicant's plans for it. The project's attorney had met with representatives of the Casablanca Café, who had raised specific concerns regarding loading and electrical issues.

Mr. Kousoulas concluded that he had met twice with the CBA, including an open house that invited several members of the community as well as City officials.

Robert Poprawski, owner of the Ocean Holiday Motel, advised that he had met with the Applicant to discuss parking issues, as well as the shadow studies performed by the Applicant's team. He pointed out that his own building would be shadowed by the Vintro throughout much of the afternoon, as would other nearby buildings. He did not feel the Applicant's parking plans could accommodate hotel guests or additional traffic generated by the on-site restaurant.

Jim Novak, President of the Alhambra, said it was not reasonable to suggest hotel guests might travel by bicycle from the airport to the hotel. He did not feel there would be many potential guests who would take the bus from the airport as well. He concluded that it was not common sense to expect the Applicant's plans for traffic and parking to be effective, and noted that car elevators would create a great deal of noise.

Mr. McCulla clarified that the Applicant had not suggested guests would take bicycles or buses from the airport to the hotel: the assertion had been that restaurant and bar customers might use these travel options.

As there were no other members of the public wishing to speak on this Item, Chair McTigue closed the public hearing and brought the discussion back to the Board.

Mr. Backman commented that there may have been some confusion with regard to the Application, or a lack of opportunity for the Board to understand the substantial analysis performed by the Applicant regarding all the issues raised by the Board and the public. He stated that with the exception of the proposed increase in FAR, the hotel is fully permissible in the ABA zoning district and meets the requirements and standards dictated by that district. With regard to neighborhood compatibility, he advised that there are multiple high-rise buildings within the immediate vicinity of the project.

Mr. Witschen remarked that the project appeared to be "a big box on a small site;" he was also concerned regarding the building's ability to be serviced by vendors, and did not feel the plans for its ground level contributed to the pedestrian experience on the beach, as it did not offer amenities. He concluded

that the requested FAR of 5% did not seem achievable according to the ULDR criteria for design capability listed in Section 6B.

Mr. McCulla observed that with the possible exception of the FAR ratio, he felt the Applicant has met all the necessary criteria for zoning, as well as the criteria for their requested variances. He felt the proposed plans for parking and deliveries were innovative, while the objections to the project referred to existing problems faced by other businesses.

Ms. Parker reiterated the five criteria for a FAR variance, which included distinctive design, architectural character, color and composition, architectural deviation from sameness, and building orientation that relieves monotony from massing and scale. She pointed out that the building's floor plate is roughly 3500 sq. ft., as compared to a potential maximum of 16,000 sq. ft.

Mr. Witschen said he did not agree with the criteria referring to architectural character or distinctive design, as he did not see the design as reflective of the Miami Modern style. He felt the criteria were subjective, and added that if he felt the criteria for a FAR variance were met, he could vote in favor of the project despite his other concerns.

Vice Chair Hansen stated that the most objectionable proposal was access to the site, including parking and loading. He pointed out that the width of the driveway was 18.8 ft., which was substantially less than the minimum standard of 24 ft. He agreed with the assertions that the project was too large for its site, and did not believe the valet parking plan would work.

Mr. Ferber remarked that while he would like to see the Fort Lauderdale beach restored to an earlier built environment, this was not the purview of the Board: instead they were tasked with determining the facts and applying existing law. He did not feel his or other individuals' personal bias could be applied to the Application.

Mr. Cohen said while the building's design was innovative, he had several concerns about the Application, including the FAR. He advised that his interpretation of Code was similar to Mr. Witschen's with regard to this ratio.

Mr. McCulla asked at what point Staff had felt the Application met all necessary criteria. Ms. Parker replied that Staff had gone through several versions of the plans with the Applicant to reach an acceptable conclusion. Mr. McCulla said he felt the difference of opinion regarding the FAR was based on personal opinion, and he felt it would be an injustice to the Applicant to deny the project on this basis.

Motion made by Mr. Witschen, seconded by Mr. Cohen, to deny the project. In a roll call vote, the **motion** passed 4-3 (Mr. Ferber, Mr. McCulla, and Ms. Tuggle dissenting).

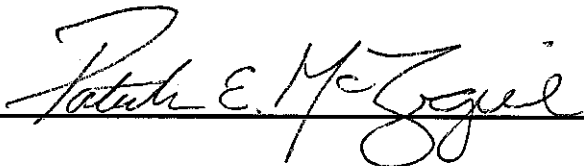
Ms. Tuggle requested clarification of the **motion**. Attorney Spence explained that while the City Commission is the ultimate arbiter of the Application, the Board would recommend that the City Commission deny the project.

6. Communication to the City Commission


Mr. Witschen stated that the Board might suggest the City Commission reconsider the appropriateness of ABA zoning for the subject location of the beach, or perhaps revisit what is appropriate for certain parcel sizes. He explained that this could save future applicants time and money before their projects come before the Board. Vice Chair Hansen pointed out that applications submit site plans at the Development Review Committee (DRC) level. Mr. Witschen withdrew his recommendation for a communication to the Commission.

7. For the Good of the City

None.



Chair



Prototype

There being no further business to come before the Board at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

[Minutes prepared by K. McGuire, Prototype, Inc.]