

# City of Fort Lauderdale

City Hall  
100 N. Andrews Avenue  
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301  
[www.fortlauderdale.gov](http://www.fortlauderdale.gov)



## Meeting Minutes - APPROVED

Tuesday, March 5, 2013

6:00 PM

City Commission Chambers

## City Commission Regular Meeting

*FORT LAUDERDALE CITY COMMISSION*

*JOHN P. "JACK" SEILER Mayor - Commissioner*  
*BRUCE G. ROBERTS Vice Mayor - Commissioner - District I*  
*BOBBY B. DuBOSE Commissioner - District III*  
*ROMNEY ROGERS Commissioner - District IV*

*LEE R. FELDMAN, City Manager*  
*JOHN HERBST, City Auditor*  
*JONDA K. JOSEPH, City Clerk*  
*HARRY A. STEWART, City Attorney*

~~R-3 13-0104 APPOINTMENT OF CITY BOARD AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS - All vacancy information provided under Conference Item BD-2~~

~~The City Clerk announced the appointees/re-appointees who were the subjects of this resolution:~~

~~Community Appearance Board Regina Jackson (Commissioner DuBose)~~

~~Parks, Recreation and Beaches Board Larry L. Nielsen (Commissioner DuBose)~~

~~Utility Advisory Committee Don Larson (Commissioner Rogers)~~

~~Vice Mayor Roberts introduced the resolution which was read by title only.~~

~~ADOPTED~~

~~Aye: 4 Mayor Seiler, Vice Mayor Roberts, Commissioner DuBose and Commissioner Rogers~~

**PUBLIC HEARINGS**

**PH-1 13-0279** 1) FIRST READING OF ORDINANCE - LAND USE AMENDMENT - CHANGING DESIGNATION TO IRREGULAR RESIDENTIAL AND 2) RESOLUTION - recommending amending Broward County Land Use Plan - 37 single family residences and 4-acre park (former American Golfers Club golf course) - Case 12-T-12

Applicant: Coral Ridge Golf Course, Inc.  
From: Park-Open Space  
Location: East of North Federal Highway, north of NE 37 Drive and south of Commercial Boulevard

The Commission announced receipt of emails and letters pertaining to this matter, as well as with whom he had spoken with and/or site visits made concerning this matter. The following additional disclosures were made: Commissioner Rogers noted that he is a non-equity member of Coral Ridge Country Club (CRCC) for 12 years. Vice Mayor Roberts attended meetings of the Coral Ridge Country Club Estates Homeowners Association, Inc. (CRCC Estates), Coral Ridge Association Inc. (Coral Ridge), the Landings Residential Association (Landings), and Bay Colony HOA (Bay Colony) where presentations about the proposed item were made. Mayor Seiler indicated that he lives on the CRCC golf course, but does not hold membership. However, his parents are members. He and a minority interest holder in CRCC, Matthew E. Morrall, both have minority interest in a building on Andrews Avenue. Two of his children held summer jobs at CRCC, and he represented the former general manager in a lawsuit against CRCC in the 1990's. He has no pecuniary interest in CRCC or in business with any of the principles.

Mayor Seiler opened the floor for public comment.

Diane Dosantos, 4360 NE 22 Avenue, expressed support of the item. She resides on the former American Golfers Club golf course (AGC). It is a trade-off to allow a limited number of homes to be built, but that will keep other projects from coming in.

In response to Mayor Seiler, Vice Mayor Roberts recalled that CRCC Estates and Coral Ridge supported the item. The Landings and Bay Colony did not take a formal vote while he was present, but no opposing statements were made at either meeting.

Glenn Leonard, 1523 Middle River Drive, noted that CRCC has about 2,000 members, 85 full-time employees and 130 employees during season. All of CRCC's owners are local and support the community. He elaborated upon the owners' philanthropic uses for the course. He expressed support of the item. The 37 new homes will bring less traffic than the American Golfers Club golf course did. If the homes sell for \$2 million each, Fort Lauderdale would receive about \$320,000 in tax revenue.

David Villari, 2899 NE 26 Court, expressed support of the item. This will preserve the neighborhood's property values and quality of life by ensuring the financial viability of CRCC. Other positive outcomes would be increased tax revenue, job creation, a local economic stimulus, and a four-acre park for the community.

Ramola Motwani, 2600 Castilla Isle, expressed support of the item. The project's neighborhood compatibility has been considered, and surrounding businesses will benefit.

Edward Brown, 4313 NE 22 Avenue, expressed support of the item. This will provide needed construction jobs and positively impact local businesses. In order to compete with communities like Weston, Fort Lauderdale needs new construction family homes. The four-acre park will be a landmark for the community.

Ian Seitel, 2515 NE 47 Street, noted his experience as a 30-year Fort Lauderdale resident. He lives near the golf course and AGC has become an eyesore since it suffered hurricane destruction. The developers for the proposed project are local residents who care for this city. He did not think the City should purchase the property and turn it back into a golf course. He expressed support of the item which will increase property values.

Frank Ennis, 3200 NE 36 Street, opposed the item. He thought the original zoning was wise. Although the American Golfers golf course has become an eyesore and detriment to the community, he did not think it should be replaced with new homes because open space is more important for future generations. There is room for compromise. Being that the course is walkable, he urged the Commission, on the grounds of public health, to consider a more modest proposal that includes fewer homes and perhaps a nine-hole golf course.

Dianne Bunnell, 2649 NE 35 Street, expressed support of the item.

Peter King, 5560 Bayview Drive, expressed support of the item.

Andy Bertnolli, 3111 NE 45 Street, expressed support of the item. There are already over 350 acres of municipal golf courses in Pompano Beach, less than five miles away. The AGC course is half that size and would not produce the type of golf game played today. Coral Ridge already has a park, and another one besides the proposed passive park is unnecessary. The proposed 37 homes were reduced from over 60 which allows the largest percentage of the property to be open space.

Steve Mehallis, 4221 NE 25 Avenue, expressed support of the item. He elaborated upon the current owners' philanthropic uses for the course.

Jack Drury, 5711 NE 22 Terrace, expressed support of the item.

John O'Flaherty, 4811 NE 26 Avenue, noted he is a member of CRCC and a realtor. He estimated the proposed project would increase the property values of homes situated on the golf course. He elaborated upon the short-term positive economic impact of the proposed project. A thriving golf course may cause some home buyers to favor Fort Lauderdale over other Florida cities.

Jamie Tidwell, President of Coral Ridge Country Club Estates Homeowners Association, Inc., confirmed that Robert Lochrie made a presentation to the association on the proposed project in mid-January and a subsequent vote showed nine in support and two opposed with 1 abstention. Many residents with properties situated on AGC like himself have waited for an acceptable proposal. He urged the Commission to support the item.

Sam Yohanan, 3900 N. Ocean Drive, expressed support of the item.

John O'Brien, 4760 NE 28 Avenue, expressed support of the item.

Debby Sanderson, 4800 NE 20 Terrace, expressed support of the item.

Michael W. Melvin, 4206 NE 22 Avenue, expressed support of the item.

Art Seitz, 1905 North Atlantic Boulevard, opposed the item. He thought AGC is an asset in terms of green space and park land. The developers are paying the expenses on the proposed property, and he thought they would have already built this project if the County was willing to grant the zoning change. He recalled prior discussion about whether AGC could be acquired as a centennial park for the City if the zoning change was not granted. It may be possible to compromise and obtain an eight-acre park, rather than only four-acres. Developers often allow properties to become blighted in order to serve their benefit in negotiations. There is not enough green space in the city, and the proposed would be a detriment to future generations.

Frank Walker, 2426 NE 48 Lane, noted that the closing of AGC was not the owners' free and voluntary act, rather the course was destroyed by Hurricane Wilma. He reasoned that AGC was a private enterprise that provided a public service because it was a public course, and it should be considered that the owners are not seeking public funds to rebuild. The proposed project is a development opportunity for the area and the tax base component and park will be beneficial. He elaborated upon the qualifications and commitment of the owners, Phil Smith and Terry Stiles.

Tom McCormack, 4304 NE 23 Avenue, indicated that he lives on the CRCC golf course and originally opposed the item because it will be 275 feet from his home. However, he is now in support partly because of the decline in property values of homes situated on AGC. A petition of over fifty signatures in support was submitted and made part of the record at the Planning and Zoning Board meeting on January 16, 2013. Being that the proposed property is not for sale, he thought the cost would increase if the City were to move forward with a purchase, similar to the Hyde Park Market negotiations. He elaborated upon the developers' contributions to the community and the economic stimulus this project will provide.

Jim LaBate, 4300 NE 23 Avenue, expressed support of the item.

Frank Abdo, 4301 NE 23 Avenue, expressed support of the item.

Greg Wilson, 5771 Bayview Drive, expressed support of the item.

Joe and Kim Palazzolo, 3000 NE 44 Street, expressed support of the item.

Sharon O'Connor, 2609 NE 33 Street, indicated that she was president of Coral Ridge Country Club Estates Homeowners Association when this issue arose several years ago. At that time, a majority of board members and residents supported this project. She expressed support of the item, and noted her credentials as a local realtor. The proposed will substantially increase the value of all surrounding properties. CRCC has been a great neighbor to the community. Residents on the south side of Coral Ridge will benefit from the four-acre park. She urged the Commission to support this item.

Robert Walsh, 401 East Las Olas Boulevard, expressed support of the item.

Bob Helmholdt, 1248 Seminole Drive, thought the proposed project will make the city a better place to live, work, play, and raise a family. The developers are dedicated to improving the community. This project will make CRCC a jewel among southeast Florida country clubs, and enhance the aesthetics and property values of area homes. He urged the Commission to support this item.

Tim Hernandez, 2820 NE 40 Street, expressed support of the item. He noted that he is a board member of CRCC Estates which supports this item.

Robert Lochrie, representing the Applicant, thought the speakers have expressed the community's feelings about the proposed project. He clarified that the current land use was not designated until after the golf course was built. Further, the entire open space area is 203 acres, and the proposed land use amendment is for 21.8 acres. Hence 90 percent of the area will remain open space. All of the proposed land is private, and has never been public. But the proposed will provide the City four acres of public open space that never before existed at this location. The Applicant has begun discussions with City staff regarding the park which will be ongoing, and all related components will also be addressed. He submitted (56) letters of support that were made a part of the record.

Mr. Lochrie agreed with Vice Mayor Roberts that the green space not built upon will remain green space. Both the County and City rules prohibit counting private golf courses toward parks. The land is designated as commercial recreation use by the County, and the Applicant will change the designation of four acres to ensure it remains as park.

Vice Mayor Roberts pointed out that he inquired during the first 18 months of his first term about whether the proposed property would be for sale for the City to purchase, but the city manager at the time told him that it would not. Mayor Seiler clarified that the idea was to keep the land a golf course if the City had purchased it. He recalled canvassing the neighborhood around early 2009 and almost all of the property owners on AGC did not want a public park to replace the golf course. So, if the City were to ever purchase this property, it would have to be for a golf course use. He emphasized that the proposed park should be with daytime hours only, no lights, and not regional. Mr. Lochrie clarified that the offer is a four-acre passive park to serve the immediate neighborhood.

There being no other individuals wishing to speak on this matter, a **motion** was made by Vice Mayor Roberts and seconded by Commissioner DuBose to close the public hearing. Roll call showed: AYES: Commissioner Rogers, Vice Mayor Roberts, Commissioner DuBose, and Mayor Seiler. NAYS: None.

Vice Mayor Roberts noted that the proposed is a downscale of the project brought forward several years ago. Access was changed to Federal Highway, rather than through the neighborhood. There will be green space remaining. He emphasized that this is private property. He recognized the need for this change that will enhance the quality of life for those who reside along AGC. It will benefit the entire northeast portion of the city. He has not heard any negative comments after presentations were made to the homeowner associations. There is some opposition, but the majority are in favor.

Commissioner Rogers thought the proposed is a unique opportunity for a win-win. Although this land use change is from park-open space to irregular residential, the irregular residential is only ten percent of the entire site, and a four-acre park is included. He emphasized that this Commission has opened 15 new parks in the last four years. He mentioned the tax base increase that will be achieved. Commissioner DuBose agreed that this is a unique opportunity that includes public green space and new home construction. In closing, Mayor Seiler commended the Applicant for their transparency, and elaborated upon changes that have occurred during the process. The Applicant being local likely contributed to how this matter has been handled. It would not have been feasible to rebuild an 18-hole golf course on the site. He thanked the neighborhood and contributions of those with opposing viewpoints for making this a better project.

Vice Mayor Roberts introduced the ordinance which was read by title only.

**PASSED FIRST READING**

**Aye:** 4 - Mayor Seiler, Vice-Mayor Roberts, Commissioner DuBose and Commissioner Rogers

Vice Mayor Roberts introduced the resolution which was read by title only.

**ADOPTED**

**Aye:** 4 - Mayor Seiler, Vice-Mayor Roberts, Commissioner DuBose and Commissioner Rogers

~~**CIT-1 13-0394 ROBERT WALSH Commission District II Election March 12, 2013**~~

~~Mr. Walsh noted the upcoming District II election, discussed comments in the campaign and encouraged civility. He went on to comment on what he believed actions of the City Manager with respect to employee matters.~~

~~**PH-2 13-0280 QUASI JUDICIAL FIRST READING OF ORDINANCE REZONING TO PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE GORE BETZ PARK Case 15-Z-12**~~

~~Applicant: City of Fort Lauderdale  
From: Residential Single Family/Duplex Low Medium Density RD 15  
Location: Northwest corner of SW 9 Avenue and Orange Isle~~

~~Anyone wishing to speak must be sworn in. Commission will announce any site visits, communications or expert opinions received and make them part of the record.~~

~~Members of the Commission announced with whom he had spoken with and/or site visits made concerning this matter.~~

~~Mayor Seiler opened the floor for public comment.~~

~~Haylee Becker, City resident, suggested the City implement legislation that allows for public use of all publicly funded parks and recreation areas in the city without restriction. Homeless individuals should not be treated as "unpeople," and their constitutional right to use all public spaces should be recognized.~~