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Meeting Minutes

Galleria Mall Town Hall

**Tuesday, October 28, 2025
6:00 PM**

CORAL RIDGE YACHT CLUB
2800 Yacht Club Boulevard

FORT LAUDERDALE CITY COMMISSION

DEAN J. TRANTALIS Mayor

JOHN C. HERBST Vice Mayor - Commissioner - District 1

STEVEN GLASSMAN Commissioner - District 2

PAM BEASLEY-PITTMAN Commissioner - District 3

BEN SORENSEN Commissioner - District 4

RICHELLE WILLIAMS, City Manager

DAVID R. SOLOMAN, City Clerk

D'WAYNE M. SPENCE, Interim City Attorney

PATRICK REILLY, City Auditor

CALL TO ORDER:

Mayor Trantalis called the Townhall Meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

COMMISSION MEMBERS' PRESENT:

Mayor Dean J. Trantalis and Vice Mayor John C. Herbst

ALSO PRESENT:

Anthony Fajardo, Development Services Department Director

OLD/NEW BUSINESS:

Mayor Trantalis explained that the purpose of the Town Hall meeting is to inform the community about the proposed mixed-use development at the Galleria being pursued under the Live Local Act (LLA), to gather community input and represent the first step in an ongoing process that will include future meetings with the developer. The primary purpose of LLA projects is to provide affordable housing and are only subject to staff administrative-level review and approval, which limits the Commission's ability to require additional project modifications. Mayor Trantalis said this proposed LLA is one of the largest in Broward County and shared his perspective on various aspects of the proposed development. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Mayor Trantalis recognized Anthony Fajardo, Development Services Department Director. Mr. Fajardo gave a presentation entitled *Mayor's Town Hall: Galleria Mall & the Florida Live Local Act*.

A copy of the presentation has been attached to these Meeting Minutes.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question, Mr. Fajardo explained aspects of neighborhood compatibility aimed at reducing negative impacts of projects on the surrounding community and improving compatibility with surrounding neighborhoods and cited examples. Mr. Fajardo said that under the LLA, the Commission cannot regulate project height or unit count.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' questions regarding other aspects of the LLA, Mr. Fajardo explained that the forty percent (40%) affordability requirement applies to the number of residential units, not residential square footage, and remarked on related details.

Mayor Trantalis noted that if affordability is measured solely by unit count, a developer could meet the requirement by making most or all affordable units very small. Mr. Fajardo said that under the LLA, there is no restriction on unit size for affordable housing units, and that any such limitation would have to come from the City's zoning or development regulations. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Mr. Fajardo explained that the Galleria site contains multiple zoning districts with different requirements that do not apply uniformly across the entire site. Staff is awaiting an opinion from the Office of the City Attorney (CAO) related to RMH-60 zoning on a portion of the site that would impact the project's mixed-use composition for a hotel component. Mayor Trantalis noted that this is a pivotal issue because it will directly determine the overall size and intensity of the proposed project. Mr. Fajardo explained related details and noted that additional information regarding the LLA is available on the City's website.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question regarding the project's impact on traffic, Mr. Fajardo said those impacts cannot be used to deny an LLA project administratively, but traffic impacts must be analyzed

under the Comprehensive Plan and other applicable regulations, which could result in requiring improved signalization, turning movements, or lanes, particularly where Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) facilities are involved. The feasibility and scope of traffic mitigation would depend on a traffic impact study.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question, Mr. Fajardo confirmed that the LLA project must comply with all infrastructure and capacity requirements. Following a Public Works analysis, the developer would be responsible for the required upgrades.

Mayor Trantalis discussed neighborhood compatibility and clarified that neighborhood compatibility determinations are based on building heights within a one (1) mile radius of the proposed LLA project, citing an example. Mayor Trantalis remarked on the relationship between the project's retail and residential space. Mr. Fajardo noted the need to research the ratio of retail space to residential space. Further comment and discussion ensued.

In response to a question from a member of the public regarding the height of the Sage building, Mr. Fajardo confirmed it is three hundred feet (300') and is in a residential zoning district. He reiterated that related height determinations are based on buildings within a one (1) mile radius. Vice Mayor Herbst noted that the Sage was permitted by conditional use applicable in that zoning district.

In response to a question from a member of the public who resides at Sunrise Tower regarding whether the City has any leverage with the developer to address current stormwater flooding issues, Mayor Trantalis explained that the development could not compound the current stormwater flooding and provided related information and options.

In response to a question from a member of the public regarding why the City did not opt out of the LLA, Mr. Fajardo responded that opting out was not an option. Further comment and discussion ensued. Vice Mayor Herbst clarified that the only option available to municipalities was to decline an LLA's property tax exemption for middle-income rental units.

In response to a question from a member of the public who inquired about LLA projects applying for variances, Mr. Fajardo explained that LLA applies to a project's height, density, floor area ratio (FAR), and parking requirements. Variances are approved through the Board of Adjustment process rather than through the LLA administrative review process. Mr. Fajardo noted that the City has not yet received an LLA project requesting variances. If such a variance request were made, the City would need to consult legal counsel to determine how to handle the variance process in coordination with the LLA administrative review requirements.

In response to a question from a member of the public regarding whether a developer agreement would be applicable to an LLA project, Mr. Fajardo said there is no clear precedent or guidance at this point regarding how developer agreements interact with LLA projects and would require input from legal counsel to determine whether entering into a developer agreement would alter or affect the standard approval process for LLA projects.

In response to a question from a member of the public regarding the rental unit price point for the proposed project, Mayor Trantalis explained that this is a preliminary discussion and that information will be determined later.

In response to a question from a member of the public regarding parking restrictions, Mr. Fajardo explained that certain development standards, such as parking, are subject to an automatic reduction of approximately fifteen percent (15%) when a project meets statutory criteria, including proximity to public

transportation.

In response to a question from a member of the public regarding whether lessons could be drawn from previous Galleria proposals that did not go forward, Mayor Trantalis said that those proposals were submitted before the LLA's enactment. At that time, the City was operating under its existing zoning regulations, which gave the Commission greater discretion over what could be developed, and explained related community input and developer negotiations. Mr. Fajardo stated that the LLA fundamentally changed the regulatory framework.

In response to a question from a member of the public who referenced a prior development where there were shadow impacts over the Intracoastal Waterway and whether shadow impacts could similarly be used as a criterion for residential projects under the current LLA proposal, Mr. Fajardo clarified that with LLA projects, the City does not have discretion over building height when statutory criteria are met. The City can encourage design adjustments but cannot require a reduction in height unless the developer voluntarily agrees. He said that the Office of the City Attorney confirmed there is no ability to opt out of the LLA statute. Further comment and discussion ensued regarding prior project proposals for the Galleria site.

In response to a question from a member of the public regarding what development standards remain under the City's control when reviewing an LLA project, Mr. Fajardo confirmed that setbacks are not preempted by the LLA and reiterated that the LLA dictates height, density, FAR, and parking. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Mr. Fajardo explained that the administrative review process is where the City exercises their authority over an LLA. During this process, staff will conduct a page-by-page review of the application to identify any areas that do not comply with the City's zoning requirements. For aspects not preempted by LLA, such as setbacks or proximity to property lines, the City will enforce its own regulations and will not approve any proposal that violates the code.

Mr. Fajardo noted that there have been changes in how the School Board of Broward County (School Board) calculates density and student impact and confirmed that the City's administrative review includes coordination with the School Board. If a project increases student demand, the applicant is responsible for addressing those impacts, including any required fees or mitigation measures, in coordination with the School Board.

A member of the public who works at a nearby school discussed the expected disruptions caused by the proposed LLA project's construction. Mayor Trantalis acknowledged those concerns and stated the City will aggressively focus on compliance with every requirement and make every effort to pare down the project to be compatible with the needs of the community. Further comment and discussion ensued regarding traffic issues resulting from construction.

Mayor Trantalis confirmed the need to work with the developer to ensure the community's needs are met and explained details regarding affordable housing. Further comment and discussion ensued regarding controlling density. Mayor Trantalis confirmed staff's mandate to make the project compatible with the neighborhood.

A resident expressed concerns about the site being rezoned to a Special Entertainment District (SED). Mayor Trantalis clarified that SEDs are governed by a separate section of the City's Code of Ordinances and are not part of the ULDR or the LLA.

In response to a question from a member of the public, Mayor Trantalis confirmed that the LLA preempts City home rule and shared his perspective.

In response to a question from a member of the public regarding whether the City is considering challenging the LLA, Mayor Trantalis said that the Commission has not discussed that topic. Mayor Trantalis confirmed that the City is currently part of a multi-city legal effort related to State Senate Bill 180, which preempts municipalities from downzoning and allows only increases in zoning. Further comment and discussion ensued. Mayor Trantalis discussed the need to redevelop the Galleria Mall site and confirmed the goal of reaching a compromise with the developer.

In response to a question from a member of the public's concerns regarding crime and homelessness in the area before moving forward with additional residential development, Mayor Trantalis agreed that public safety and homelessness must be addressed.

In response to a question from a member of the public regarding this project's towers being constructed on top of the existing Galleria Mall structure and related concerns regarding structural integrity, Mayor Trantalis confirmed that the project is still in early stages and emphasized that no structurally unsound construction would be permitted. Further comment and discussion ensued.

In response to a question from a member of the public regarding how to delay the project, Mayor Trantalis cautioned against advocating for inaction at the site. The resident clarified that they were not opposed to redevelopment in principle but objected to the scale and intensity of the current proposal and expounded on their perspective. Further comment and discussion ensued. Mayor Trantalis acknowledged concerns but emphasized the need for a constructive discussion of feasible redevelopment options.

Mayor Trantalis reiterated that this Town Hall meeting represents the first step in shaping the future of the proposed Galleria Mall redevelopment and hearing community concerns and priorities, which will be communicated to the developer. Mayor Trantalis said the City's goal is to work with the developer to achieve a proposal that better aligns with the community's vision to the extent permitted under applicable laws and to determine what adjustments may be possible in the best interest of the community.

Vice Mayor Herbst reviewed details of prior development proposals for the site, discussed the Galleria Mall's current negative financial situation, and noted that the mall model is not viable today. Further comment and discussion ensued regarding the property owners' desire to sell and remarked on an alternative development model that includes a residential component and similar developments in South Florida.

In response to a question from a member of the public regarding greenspace on the proposed site and its planned workforce housing, Mayor Trantalis explained aspects of the project targeting middle-class workforce housing, cited related details, and explained how to accommodate all income levels. Mr. Fajardo clarified that open space requirements are not preempted by the LLA and must comply with existing open space standards.

A member of the public noted the project's design aesthetics and asked about a related review. Mayor Trantalis confirmed that efforts would be made to encourage improvements in building aesthetics.

In response to a question from a member of the public regarding how affordable housing units would be distributed within the proposed development, Mayor Trantalis said that information is not known at this time. Further comment and discussion ensued.

In response to a question from a member of the public, Mayor Trantalis confirmed he does not support the proposed project as presented. Further comment and discussion ensued regarding the State legislature's enactment of the LLA. Mayor Trantalis suggested that community members contact their State House Representative, Chip LaMarca, and request that the LLA be refined.

In response to a question from a member of the public regarding the positive aspects of the proposed LLA project development and condominium conversion timelines, Mayor Trantalis shared his perspective on the need to redevelop the Galleria Mall, discussed the LLA's impact on condominium conversions, and provided information on affordable workforce housing units.

In response to a question from a member of the public regarding widening Bayview Drive to four (4) lanes, should this project go forward, Mayor Trantalis said that would not occur.

In response to a question from a member of the public regarding the proposed project's architect, Mayor Trantalis confirmed staff would provide that information.

Mayor Trantalis expressed his anticipation that the required traffic impact study would affect the project. Further comment and discussion ensued regarding the LLA project and other nearby approved projects and their traffic impacts on the area. Mayor Trantalis noted that staff will address those factors in their review of this proposed LLA project.

Vice Mayor Herbst explained that FDOT has been planning traffic improvements in the Sunrise Boulevard/Gateway area for several years, independent of the proposed Galleria redevelopment project.

Vice Mayor Herbst emphasized that the project design is conceptual at this point, elaborated on his perspective, and confirmed his expectation of productive negotiations with the developer.

Mayor Trantalis adjourned the Townhall Meeting at 7:27 p.m.