

Zoning Code Rewrite (Part 2)

Public Comments - Verbatim (Updated 04 01 05 thru 06 01 05)

	Date	Name & Address	Email Address	Verbatim Comments
1.	05 18 05	Gay Bondurant, Vice-Chair Coral Gables Historic Preservation Board 446 Alcazar Avenue Coral Gables, FL 33134	janebond@comcast.net	<p>Dear Members of the Planning & Zoning Board and Mr. Riel: Due to a conflict with a preliminary session of the Florida Trust for Historic Preservation Conference which is meeting this week in Coral Gables, I will be unable to attend your meeting this evening. However, for the record I wish to weigh in on the side of quality of life for the citizens and reputation of the "City Beautiful" on the issue of <u>oversized homes</u> in our older neighborhoods. Please, listen to and read the comments of the citizens who feel sold out by our code. Our code, which allows developers to swallow up the ambiance of our historic city by placing large "plastic replicas" and outsized NuvoMed structures next to the genuine jewels of the city. You have gained extensive expertise in dealing with the new Mediterranean Ordinance and the Code Re-write. I know you have the creative ability and knowledge to address this very thorny and vital issue and generate winning solutions for our city. Your recommendations to the Commission must address not only limiting lot coverage but the impact on the surrounding neighbors and neighborhoods. The interim measures which go before the Commission this month are a start but certainly not the final word. We look to you to for major guidance as this issue work through the system.</p> <p>Thank you for the time and effort you give to this community.</p>
2.	05 17 05	Richard Namon	rn@miamimiami.com	<p>Dear Code Rewrite Board: Unfortunately, due to long standing prior commitments for Wednesday evenings (dinner with my 98 year old aunt), I am unable to attend most of your meetings.</p> <p>If the current proposed residential ground cover code changes are adopted, it would be appropriate for the Code Rewrite Board to correct an obvious error in the current proposed code changes. Any increases in ground coverage should follow the same approval process that is proposed for some ground coverage increases. That is:</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; margin: 10px 0;"> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Such residence shall be reviewed and approved by the City Commission after a public hearing before the Planning and Zoning Board and after the residence has been first recommended for approval by the Board of Architects as a conditional use. </div> <p>Otherwise, the Board of Architects will be approving what are now Planning and Zoning Board decisions that require public hearings. It would seem inappropriate for the Board of Architects to decide ground coverage changes based on its opinion, and not include neighbor input. The Board of Architects is not elected, and its opinions are not subject to Planning and Zoning Board review or that of any other City department. In addition the Board of Architects mode of function is more subjective than objective. As the composition of that board changes what is acceptable</p>

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				<p>and unacceptable also changes. Zoning issues are too important to be left to subjective decision. It is relevant to consider many architect volunteer board members work for builders and developers. Decisions of the board members should not relate to their clients in any way. Otherwise, there may be an appearance of impropriety.</p> <p>There are alternative measures that will stop the building of monster homes on small lots. One is to increase side and front setbacks on taller homes. The proposed code changes do not necessarily accomplish this. Developers are against larger setbacks for taller homes. This approach can and has been applied to commercial properties. In fact, where it is used in our current commercial code, developers appear to have succeeded in having removed the required larger setbacks for taller buildings in the Code Rewrite! If the code required larger setbacks for taller homes, then it might be put back in the Code Rewrite for commercial properties. Based on Coral Gables history, developers do not want it there. Yet, setback requirements in the City of Miami Brickell High Rise Area have resulted in aesthetically pleasing very tall buildings. I believe that area of Miami is used in more magazine, video and movie photography than the Coral Gables "Mediterranean" commercial building area. The Miami individual and unique architecture has a more universal visual appeal.</p> <p>For these reasons, it is suggested the Code Review Board consider including height related setbacks for all structures in the new code. It is not only good for very tall buildings, but smaller structures as well. It controls massing of structures in a way that makes them separate and apart. It prevents the "cement canyon" effect.</p> <p>Richard Namon Coral Gables</p>
3.	05 16 05	Daniel Fryer & Mamta Chaudhry-Fryer 640 Majorca Avenue Coral Gables, FL 33134 (305) 443-1759	danielfryer@hotmail.com	<p>Dear Don, Maria, Ralph, Bill, and Chip, "Coral Gables at a Crossroads" represents our response as residents to the problem of oversized homes in our city. It's a long document because we wanted to be comprehensive, and an issue of this magnitude deserves no less.</p> <p>Unfortunately, we will be out of town for the May 24th Commission meeting but we request you to include this in your deliberations and enter it into the official record.</p> <p>We look forward to discussing these recommendations with you once you have had a chance to read them. Mamta and Daniel</p> <p><u>Attachment:</u> May 15, 2005</p>

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				<p>Mayor Slesnick, Vice-Mayor Anderson, Commissioner Cabrera, Commissioner Kerdyk, and Commissioner Withers:</p> <p>Coral Gables is at a crossroads. Either we can preserve the city that has been the envy of communities around the country for close to a century, or we can succumb to developmental pressures and change it forever. We applaud you for having the political will and the vision to confront this challenge.</p> <p>At the April 26th commission meeting, you passed at first reading an ordinance that has interim measures to scale back the size of single-family homes. The proposed ordinance reduces the Floor Area Ratio of single-family homes by 5%, from the current 48% to 43%. However, the entire reduction can be gained back by choosing from a wide array of design incentives. This does not solve the problem of oversized homes in Coral Gables.</p> <p>Why should better design measures be a giveaway and not a requirement? Is our zoning code meant to provide quality of life to the residents, or maximum profit to developers and speculators?</p> <p><u>In fact, at the American Planning Association's annual meeting in California in March 2005, sessions devoted to preserving the character of unique communities like Monterey and Carmel-by-the Sea emphasized that regulations restricting cubic volume (width, height and depth)--rather than square footage or FAR--are more effective in reducing massing and ensuring neighborhood compatibility.</u></p>

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				<p>THE PROBLEM</p> <p>The problem of oversized homes is two-fold: The way they change the character of the neighborhood and the quality-of-life issues they raise for neighboring residents by taking away their rights to sunshine, breeze and privacy. Consider how this new house does both:</p>  <p>[In the illustrations we use, we are not in anyway disparaging or criticizing anyone's home. We love our house, and recognize that others feel the same way about their house. This is not about personal tastes, it's about the impact these homes have on neighbors and the neighborhood.]</p> <p>Here is a relatively new house that--while big--fits in seamlessly with the surrounding houses, largely on account of its greater setbacks:</p>

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			 <p data-bbox="871 1062 1501 1089">Here is a new house that sticks out like a sore thumb:</p>

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			 <p data-bbox="871 1062 2011 1182">We have spoken to planning and building officials both within the City of Coral Gables, and in other South Florida municipalities dealing with the same issues, and the strong consensus is that design is only <u>one</u> component in solving this problem; in addition, increased setbacks, decreased height and decreased volume must also be taken into account.</p> <p data-bbox="871 1214 2011 1365">The design measures offered as incentives in the proposed interim ordinance may make the new homes look better from the street, but they do not address the impact these large homes have on neighbors and the neighborhood. Design requirements are good <u>in and of themselves</u>, because they preserve the character of the neighborhoods, but in the proposed ordinance they have been offered as incentives to gain back size.</p>

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				<p>INCENTIVES</p> <p>Two questions:</p> <p>Why the incentives? Generally, cities give incentives when they are trying to lure people to live or work there. Is that really the problem we have in Coral Gables—too <u>few</u> developers want to build here?</p> <p>If incentives, why these incentives? If size is the very problem we're trying to address, why do the incentives have to be in terms of square footage? It's like rewarding yourself for losing a few pounds with extra helpings of ice-cream. The city already offers incentives for historical preservation in the form of tax breaks. It would be helpful to consider something analogous for new construction.</p> <p>PUBLIC INPUT</p> <p>This discussion deals exclusively with the size of single family homes, which is a residential rather than a commercial issue. Therefore, when we talk of public input from property owners, <u>we should distinguish between residents who own their property and live on it, and developers who own the property they want to build on but will never live on it.</u></p> <p>THE BERLIN WALL</p> <p><i>The Miami Herald</i> editorial (4/30/05) describing the proposed interim measures said, "No one should be forced to live next to, as one resident put it, 'the Berlin Wall.'"</p> <p><u>But the design measures do not solve this problem. The bottom line is that by choosing a few of the design incentives, a person can still build a 34' high wall, with a 5' side and rear setback, and a 46% Floor Area Ratio (FAR); or a 29' high wall, with a 5' side and rear setback and a 48% FAR.</u></p> <p>The Florida Building code states that with a 3-10 foot setback, only 20% of the wall can have openings, which means effectively 80% of what the neighbor looks out on is a blank wall.</p>

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			<p>The "Berlin Wall" problem has three major causes: setbacks too close to property lines, height of up to 34 feet, and limited control on volume or cubic footage.</p> <p>1. SETBACKS</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 30%;">Municipality</th> <th style="width: 30%;">Minimum Side Set Back</th> <th style="width: 30%;">Minimum Rear Set Back</th> <th style="width: 10%;"></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Miami Beach</td> <td style="text-align: center;">7.5'</td> <td style="text-align: center;">20'</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Miami Shores</td> <td style="text-align: center;">10'</td> <td style="text-align: center;">15'</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Key Biscayne</td> <td style="text-align: center;">7.5'</td> <td style="text-align: center;">25' (can be staggered to 15')</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="color: red;">Coral Gables</td> <td style="text-align: center; color: red;">5'</td> <td style="text-align: center; color: red;">5'</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Although the interim measures propose increasing the side and rear setbacks to 7.5 feet, again these can be pushed back to 5 feet by incorporating design elements.</p> <p>2. HEIGHT</p> <p>The smaller older homes are getting squeezed from all sides. The new homes are out of scale with the existing houses and are changing the character of the block, the street, the neighborhood.</p>	Municipality	Minimum Side Set Back	Minimum Rear Set Back		Miami Beach	7.5'	20'		Miami Shores	10'	15'		Key Biscayne	7.5'	25' (can be staggered to 15')		Coral Gables	5'	5'	
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			 <p data-bbox="869 846 1014 873">3. VOLUME</p> <p data-bbox="869 911 1940 997">Although the house below is nominally two floors, the volume contributes to its massive appearance. A lack of regulations on cubic volume--as opposed to square footage, or FAR --allows such looming structures.</p>

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			 <p data-bbox="869 870 2007 987">Current code states: "In those cases where the average floor to the bottom of the structural member of roof support height exceeds fifteen (15) feet clear without intermediate structural floor members, then that area shall be counted twice in the maximum floor area factor computation." This is much too lax, and should be at 10' instead of 15'.</p> <p data-bbox="869 1024 1041 1049">LOOPHOLES</p> <p data-bbox="869 1086 2007 1143">Because interior courtyards, breezeways and roof terraces are not counted, a substantial portion of this house is getting a free ride.</p>

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				 <p data-bbox="871 873 1921 930">Additionally, these uncounted spaces allow the house to sprawl all the way across the lot, pushing it up to 5 feet on the side and 5 feet at the rear.</p>

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				 <p data-bbox="871 1062 2016 1118">Almost all its open spaces are enclosed within, which is unfair to neighbors, who have to live next to a wall-to-wall house.</p> <p data-bbox="871 1183 1016 1209">MODELING</p> <p data-bbox="871 1247 1995 1424">Would these design measures have solved the problems with this house and others like it that are part of the oversized homes discussion? City staff needs to model what type and size of homes the incentives would allow; modeling the various options would allow a determination of possible designs and outcomes. But modeling individual homes will not give us the full picture. We need to visually appraise these houses not in isolation, but in relation to their surroundings—taking into account the neighboring houses and the character of the neighborhood.</p>

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			<p data-bbox="869 293 2011 505">Modeling these design measures can also help prevent unwanted consequences. The proposed interim measures encourage the second story to be 40% of the first story. This measure is supposed to help with massing, but creates its own problems by <u>forcing</u> a larger footprint, because in order to maximize square footage, the first floor will be pushed out to the minimum setback. Since it doesn't specify how the 40% is to be spread, the neighbors on <u>one</u> side and the rear could still have the 34-foot wall. And it also contributes to the unfortunate effect of making the house look as if it is wearing a hat.</p> <div data-bbox="869 534 1583 1070" data-label="Image"> </div> <p data-bbox="1608 630 1976 683">The measures might result in a house that looks like this . . .</p> <div data-bbox="1312 901 2028 1433" data-label="Image"> </div> <p data-bbox="869 1268 1272 1354">But they would discourage homes that look like this 1920's historic house . . .</p>

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			<p>In fact some of the most appealing older homes are built as two full stories, reducing the actual footprint. Increasing the setbacks for two-story houses would help alleviate the problem.</p> <p>LANDSCAPING</p> <p>We are pleased with the 5% increase in landscaped area in the proposed interim ordinance, requiring at least 40% landscaping. However, the ordinance needs to specify that this is permeable area, and does not include pools, pavers, fountains, reflecting ponds, elevated landscape areas, interior courtyards, planter boxes, etc.</p> <p>How will this be enforced? Currently we require 35% landscaping. How does this new house meet that?</p> 

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				<p>RECOMMENDATIONS:</p> <p>After in-depth discussion with city staff, including Dennis Smith, Assistant Director of Building and Zoning, and Eric Riel, Director of Planning, as well as planning and building officials at Miami Beach, Key Biscayne and Miami Shores, we feel that the zoning code re-write of single-family homes must take the following under serious consideration.</p> <p>Objective criteria</p> <p>These recommendations do not take away property rights, because this in no way down-zones the property: single family residential is still its highest and best use.</p> <p>The zoning code rewrite must spell out building and zoning requirements in black and white. Leaving so much open to subjective interpretation and allowing a catchall for the very subjective “superior design” category will inevitably lead to problems. Who decides?</p> <p>When the bottom line is money, developers will try to build the largest house they can, to sell it for maximum profit. Subjective design criteria and incentives simply make them jump through a few low hoops to continue building massive houses. Our aim is to protect the character of the neighborhoods these houses threaten to change forever.</p> <p>The city also needs objective, <u>consistent</u> and clearly defined criteria to withstand judicial review. Vague and open-ended criteria can be challenged in court and possibly invalidated.</p> <p>We recommend that the following be non-negotiable:</p> <p>Neighborhood specific requirements</p> <p>The purpose is to preserve the character of existing neighborhoods. The zoning code should require neighborhood compatibility and contextual appropriateness both as to design and size, taking into account not only how the new construction will fit into the front of both sides of the street, but also the sides and back. Many communities require a 360° review of residences and so should we.</p> <p>Make it more difficult to demolish structurally sound houses. Coral Gables should not turn into a bulldoze-and-build subdivision.</p>

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				<p>To allow for more input and response from affected neighbors, require notification to the equivalent of an entire block on both sides of the street and on the rear street. For instance, if a block has 10 houses, you would notify 5 houses on either side of the construction, 10 houses across from it and 10 houses immediately behind it.</p> <p>Setbacks</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Increased side and rear setbacks For single-story homes, require minimum side setbacks of 7.5' and a minimum rear setback of 20' For two-story homes, require minimum side setback of 10', and a minimum rear setback of 25'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set back the garage at least 5' from the front, instead of the proposed 18 inches <p>Height</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">New construction or renovations cannot put existing neighbors in the shade, or dump storm water run-off on their neighbors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • limit height to two stories and 26 feet • the finished first floor slab can be no higher than FEMA's minimum flood plain elevation • auxiliary buildings should be no more than one story • qualifying cottages should be restricted to one story <p>Volume</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write strict, neighborhood specific volume controls into the zoning code. • If average floor to "bottom of structural member of roof support" height exceeds 10 feet, then that area shall be counted twice in the maximum floor area factor computation. <p>Eliminate loopholes</p> <p>Count at 100% terraces, breezeways, screened porches, interior courtyards, carports and garages, and second-story balconies. These all cover the lot, so they should count.</p>

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				<p>VariANCES</p> <p><u>Grant no variances, period.</u></p> <p>In the course of our research for the above recommendations, this was one of the most compelling statements we came across:</p> <p>“The zoning ordinance is the one planning-related document that clearly identifies the values of a community and the importance that citizens place on the environment.”</p> <p>We are talking now not only about size and aesthetics, but the very character and fiber of our city.</p> <p>Thank you. Sincerely, Daniel Fryer Mamta Chaudhry-Fryer 640 Majorca Avenue Coral Gables, FL 33134 (305) 443-1759</p>
4.	05 12 05	Georgina C. Serio, CIC Senior Managing Director Frank Crystal & Co. of Florida, Inc. 2 Alhambra Plaza #102 Coral Gables, FI 33134 305.421.0900 office 305.421.0999 fax 305.608.3335 cell	seriog@FCRYSTAL.COM	<p>For the record, I am not in favor of the size limitation amendment.</p> <p>Thank you, Georgina C. Serio, CIC</p>
5.	05 12 05	Fay Aronson Foglia 595 Solano Prado Coral Gables, FL (305) 667-6172		<p>Dear Mayor Slesnick</p> <p>My name is Fay Aronson Foglia and I have lived in Coral Gables for over fifty years. My late husband, Albert Aronson, and his company, Property Construction Company built many homes in the Gables from 1948 until 1975. He developed and built two thirds of the homes in Old Cutler Bay. He was also a member and often chairman of the Building and Zoning Board for ten years.</p>

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				<p>I am deeply concerned about the issue of the McMansions that are being built all over the area. When my husband was building in Coral Gables he always had to adhere to the strict building codes that our city required. It was difficult to paint a house just any color or build over an entire lot. As a result Old Cutler Bay maintained a low profile and a beautiful atmosphere.</p> <p>I invite you to come to my house and see what I now have to look at every day. The home directly across the water from me is the entire lot. The home directly across the water from me is painted a deep rust color and it is enormous and takes up almost the entire lot. There are so many huge homes in here now that Old Cutler Bay has lost it's original beauty and atmosphere.</p> <p>I am sorry that I will not be able to attend the meeting on Tuesday when this issue will be discussed. Therefore, I am sending this letter to you to inform you of my opinion. I look forward to your visit. Sincerely, Fay Aronson Foglia</p>
6.	05 10 05	John Villamil-Morel 715 Santurce Ave. Coral Gables, FL	JVillamil@bellsouth.net	<p>Dear Mayor Slesnick: My wife and I bought a year ago a 1950's ranch style house on 715 Santurce Avenue (situated between Mindello Street and Erwin Road), which sits on a 10,000 square feet lot. We soon expect to expand and update our home, but we will respect the original ranch style concept.</p> <p>I am very concerned about the proliferation of the so called "monster houses" throughout Coral Gables. While the "monster houses" problem in South Gables is not as pervasive as in North Gables, we have them here too! One good example is what was constructed at 7820 Mindello Street (close to Davis Road). That "monster house" sitting on 11,800 square feet is unharmonious with the rest of the houses in the neighborhood. The house was a planned development and now is for sale.</p> <p>I support any reasonable measures that our city takes to control the "monster houses". We are depending on you. Thank you, Sincerely, John Villamil</p>
7.	05 09 05	Les Space	Lespacio@cs.com	<p>Mr. Mayor, Mr. Vice Mayor and Commissioners, My purpose for writing is to provide you with input on two topics.</p> <p>First, the parking lot at the Youth Center is being utilized by people as an all day free parking lot or staging lot where they come leave their cars and ride off with someone else. Many days this</p>

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				<p>leaves the lot full for patrons of the Youth Center. Please put up signs and for a while police it to change the habit patterns.</p> <p>Secondly, regarding oversize houses. It is absolutely imperative anyone making a decision about the size of a house and how it affects the surrounding houses and neighborhood make a personal visual inspection of the area prior to making any decision. Please don't let anyone try to convince you this can be done with a set of plans at a desk. It is impossible to understand the nuances of a neighborhood from a desk. Even when going and inspecting, it's difficult as the sun changes position from season to season thus changing the light and shade aspect of a building. Additionally everytime another structure goes up it's one less area for water to be absorbed by the earth thus forcing flooding and run-off to other properties. To make a point, look at the Granada Golf Course after a large rain.. It becomes a lake as the surrounding areas have been covered by hard surface so the water runs off to a lower area.</p> <p>As always, thank you for your concern for the city and thank you for your accessibility. Sincerely, Les Space</p>
8.	04 25 05	Irene Oh	ireneoh@mail.as.miami.edu	<p>Dear Commission members:</p> <p>I write to you as a new resident and homeowner in Coral Gables. My fiancée and I chose to buy a home in Coral Gables, as opposed to other parts of Miami, because we fell in love with the unique mixture of mature trees, lovely homes, and urban amenities within a historical neighborhood. We love how we can walk along the tree-lined streets and appreciate the lovely gardens in front of the homes in our neighborhood. The charm of these homes lies in the aesthetic quality and spacing of the street, sidewalk, trees, yard, and then house, nestled among the green. The distance of the home from the sidewalk is best when it achieves both a sense of privacy and display. Homes too close to the sidewalk make the neighborly stroll uncomfortable—both for the passerby and the resident. The sense of privacy is totally lost when there is not enough space between the home and the sidewalk. I imagine that this sense of privacy is also lost when homes are built too close to each other. When homes are so close that you can see or hear what your neighbors are doing or saying or when you can hear their telephone ring, not enough space exists between the two buildings.</p> <p>The height of homes also poses some aesthetic problems. Tall homes (30 ft. plus), especially when placed too close to the sidewalk, loom over the street and may perhaps even exceed the height of nearby trees. When buildings are taller than trees in residential areas, the value of the trees declines. The neighborhood starts to look more and more like a business area, where the trees are dwarfed by concrete.</p>

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				<p>Do we really want to live in a neighborhood that is more concrete than green? Where nightly strolls become uncomfortable because we feel like we are invading people's homes? A neighborhood where, when we look up to appreciate the canopy of green, we see a concrete block building in the background instead of sky?</p> <p>I think that Coral Gables leaders should encourage building codes that make taking strolls through the neighborhood enjoyable and safe because they help to build a sense of community. James and I have met so many of our neighbors during evening and weekend walks. Construction that inhibits this form of informal community building should not be allowed in Coral Gables.</p> <p>Coral Gables ought to maintain its distinctiveness by sticking to aesthetic ideals that really consider the proportion of green, trees, and yard ...</p>
9.	04 25 05	Howard Landau 839 Catalonia Avenue Coral Gables, FL 33134	hlandau@comcast.net	<p>Dear Commisioner Cabrera: Dear Mayor Slesnick: Thank you for scheduling the meeting this Tuesday regarding the issue of oversized home building in our community. I am writing to you again to express my concern about our commission's response to this.</p> <p>Based upon the information I have gathered it appears that among the proposals discussed by the powers that be is a mere acquiescence to the financial and political efforts by architects, builders and developers. I am specifically referring to the proposal that allows a home to be maxed out based upon basic design changes after there would be an initial reduction of 5% of the building size. I suggest this is absurd.</p> <p>The beauty of our city is that all homes do not look or look alike. However, they all conform to a design, size and style that are appealing to look at, live in, and, allow us to be comfortable distances from our neighbors and roads. Therefore, the new or re-construction of homes must bear in mind the needs and perspective of neighbors and their homes.</p> <p>For example, placing a vast two story home in place of a one story structure impedes on the privacy, view, and air space beauty of fellow neighbors in one story homes surrounding it. Consider the lack of privacy issues that now arise for homes in this area. A private patio can become subject to a public viewing by a second story neighbor. A lovely landscaped area may wither and die as it becomes devoid of proper sunlight due to the shade of a 34 foot high mass of concrete block next door. This is not right.</p> <p>There are parts of our community where oversized homes are celebrated and welcome.</p>

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				<p>Cocoplum, Granada Boulevard, the perimeter of Granada Golf Course, and, Santa Maria are examples. We should allow continued building in those areas. I suspect that these areas were contemplated as appropriate areas of our city for this type of home. Oversized homes should not be built in areas of the City where there are not existing homes that already stand out like sore thumbs in relation to their neighbors. For example, the much discussed residence on Cortez and Alhambra in comparison to its 2 story neighboring residence on Minorca looks like a before and after ad for steroids, if I may borrow a newsworthy simile. It is an architecturally lovely struc...</p>
10.	04 25 06	Rebecca Conner, Eunice Smith, & Jane Reynolds 539 Cadagua Avenue, Coral Gables, FL 33146- 1710 Tel.: 305.666.6094	Mmerc539@aol.com	<p>We are asking you, as our elected representatives, to preserve the character, charm, and scale of Coral Gables. These features are what make our city unique and they are under assault by the oversized homes being built without concern for the proportion of the lots or the character of specific neighborhoods. Until the deliberate and well-thought-out zoning code re-write is completed, it would be counterproductive if there was a rush to build the very houses that are a problem and would be affected by the new code.</p> <p>Specifically, we are asking you to approve the following in your interim and long-term solutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> C require new and remodeled homes to be no larger or more massive than the existing norm for the immediate neighborhood and surrounding streets; C increase the minimum allowable setbacks; C decrease the maximum allowable height; C decrease the maximum allowable size, <u>both</u> square footage and cubic footage (volume); C provide the Board of Architects with strict objective guidelines, rather than flexibility in interpreting the code; this addresses the problem of architects who serve on the board and who also design or build homes in Coral Gables, or have business interests with those who do; C restrict the variance process so that it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to obtain a variance to the code; C make it harder to demolish existing homes, and require notification to neighbors; <p>We feel that residents -- not speculators and developers -- should determine the direction of our city. Property values have <u>always</u> gone up in the Gables. It's not because of the recent trend toward large houses stacked close together, but precisely because our city offers architecture of harmonious proportions, street trees, and backyards to provide breathing space, sunlight, and privacy. Once you overbuild a neighborhood, it is changed forever. If the problem of oversized homes is not corrected, it will also change for the worse the residential quality of life that defines Coral Gables.</p> <p>Thank you for your understanding, Rebecca Conner (30 year Coral Gables resident) Eunice Smith (69 year Coral Gables resident)</p>

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Public Comments - Verbatim (Updated 04 01 05 thru 06 01 05)

	Date	Name & Address	Email Address	Verbatim Comments
				Jane Reynolds (43 year Coral Gables resident) 539 Cadagua Avenue, Coral Gables, FL 33146-1710 Tel.: 305.666.6094
11.	04 25 05	Sylvia and Phil McCabe 725 Catalonia Avenue Coral Gables, FL 33134	macadoogie@hotmail.com	<p>We are asking you, as our elected representatives, to preserve the character, charm, and scale of Coral Gables. These features are what make our city unique and they are under assault by the oversized homes being built without concern for the proportion of the lots or the character of specific neighborhoods. Until the deliberate and well-thought-out zoning code re-write is completed, it would be counterproductive if there was a rush to build the very houses that are a problem and would be affected by the new code.</p> <p>Specifically, we are asking you to approve the following in your interim and long-term solutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> require new and remodeled homes to be no larger or more massive than the existing norm for the immediate neighborhood and surrounding streets; increase the minimum allowable setbacks; decrease the maximum allowable height; decrease the maximum allowable size, both square footage and cubic footage (volume); provide the Board of Architects with strict objective guidelines, rather than flexibility in interpreting the code; this addresses the problem of architects who serve on the board and who also design or build homes in Coral Gables, or have business interests with those who do; restrict the variance process so that it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to obtain a variance to the code; make it harder to demolish existing homes, and require notification to neighbors; <p>We feel that residents -- not speculators and developers -- should determine the direction of our city. Property values have always gone up in the Gables. It's not because of the recent trend toward large houses stacked close together, but precisely because our city offers architecture of harmonious proportions, street trees, and backyards to provide breathing space, sunlight, and privacy. Once you overbuild a neighborhood, it is changed forever. If the problem of oversized homes is not corrected, it will also change for the worse the residential quality of life that defines Coral Gables.</p> <p>Thank you.</p>

Zoning Code Rewrite (Part 2)

Public Comments - Verbatim (Updated 04 01 05 thru 06 01 05)

	Date	Name & Address	Email Address	Verbatim Comments
				Sylvia and Phil McCabe 725 Catalonia Avenue Coral Gables, Fl. 33134
12.	04 25 05	Howard Landau 839 Catalonia Avenue Coral Gables, FL 33134	hlandau@comcast.net	<p>Dear Mayor Slesnick: Thank you for scheduling the meeting this Tuesday regarding the issue of oversized home building in our community. I am writing to you again to express my concern about our commission's response to this.</p> <p>Based upon the information I have gathered it appears that among the proposals discussed by the powers that be is a mere acquiescence to the financial and political efforts by architects, builders and developers. I am specifically referring to the proposal that allows a home to be maxed out based upon basic design changes after there would be an initial reduction of 5% of the building size. I suggest this is absurd.</p> <p>The beauty of our city is that all homes do not look or look alike. However, they all conform to a design, size and style that are appealing to look at, live in, and, allow us to be comfortable distances from our neighbors and roads. Therefore, the new or re-construction of homes must bear in mind the needs and perspective of neighbors and their homes.</p> <p>For example, placing a vast two story home in place of a one story structure impedes on the privacy, view, and air space beauty of fellow neighbors in one story homes surrounding it. Consider the lack of privacy issues that now arise for homes in this area. A private patio can become subject to a public viewing by a second story neighbor. A lovely landscaped area may wither and die as it becomes devoid of proper sunlight due to the shade of a 34 foot high mass of concrete block next door. This is not right.</p> <p>There are parts of our community where oversized homes are celebrated and welcome. Cocoplum, Granada Boulevard, the perimeter of Granada Golf Course, and, Santa Maria are examples. We should allow continued building in those areas. I suspect that these areas were contemplated as appropriate areas of our city for this type of home. Oversized homes should not be built in areas of the City where there are not existing homes that already stand out like sore thumbs in relation to their neighbors. For example, the much discussed residence on Cortez and Alhambra in comparison to its 2 story neighboring residence on Minorca looks like a before and after ad for steroids, if I may borrow a newsworthy simile. It is an architecturally lovely structure; however, it is out of place.</p> <p>I am hopeful that you and the Commission support stringent restrictions and even a moratorium on the building of oversized homes. The architects, builders and developers may rant, scream,</p>

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Public Comments - Verbatim (Updated 04 01 05 thru 06 01 05)

	Date	Name & Address	Email Address	Verbatim Comments
				threaten to sue, and whine. Let them. Their interest in lining their pockets with gold is in direct conflict with the needs of a community that calls i...
13.	04 25 05	Rebecca Restoy-Lao 609 Majorca Avenue Coral Gables, FL 33134 305 446-8205	Traderdivine@aol.com	<p>We are asking you, as our elected representatives, to preserve the character, charm, and scale of Coral Gables. These features are what make our city unique and they are under assault by the oversized homes being built without concern for the proportion of the lots or the character of specific neighborhoods. Until the deliberate and well-thought-out zoning code rewrite is completed, it would be counterproductive if there was a rush to build the very houses that are a problem and would be affected by the new code.</p> <p>Specifically, we are asking you to approve the following in your interim and long-term solutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> C require new and remodeled homes to be no larger or more massive than the existing norm for the immediate neighborhood and surrounding streets; C increase the minimum allowable setbacks; C decrease the maximum allowable height; C decrease the maximum allowable size, both square footage and cubic footage (volume); C provide the Board of Architects with strict objective guidelines, rather than flexibility in interpreting the code; this addresses the problem of architects who serve on the board and who also design or build homes in Coral Gables, or have business interests with those who do; C restrict the variance process so that it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to obtain a variance to the code; C make it harder to demolish existing homes, and require notification to neighbors; <p>We feel that residents -- not speculators and developers -- should determine the direction of our city. Property values have always gone up in the Gables. It's not because of the recent trend toward large houses stacked close together, but precisely because our city offers architecture of harmonious proportions, street trees, and backyards to provide breathing space, sunlight, and privacy. Once you overbuild a neighborhood, it is changed forever. If the problem of oversized homes is not corrected, it will also change for the worse the residential quality of life that defines Coral Gables.</p> <p>Thank you. Rebecca Restoy-Lao 609 Majorca Avenue Coral Gables, FL 33134 305 446-8205</p>

Zoning Code Rewrite (Part 2)

Public Comments - Verbatim (Updated 04 01 05 thru 06 01 05)

	Date	Name & Address	Email Address	Verbatim Comments
14.	04 22 05	Kathleen Maguire 608 Majorca Avenue Coral Gables, Florida 33134 305 461 5595	Traderdivine@aol.com	<p>I moved from New York after visiting Coral Gables. I fell in complete and utter love with the charm, character, and quaintness the town exuded. I lived in Staten Island where not only were many of the homes massive and ostentatious they also were so close to each other they offered residents no privacy whatsoever. I was impressed when house hunting in the Gables that each home seemed to offer a bit of sanctuary from the world. Each block in the Gables has its own charm offering architecture from different periods of development in its history. Now we are seeing such a change in Coral Gables. It seems a trend to overlook the history and the thought George Merrick gave when he planned out our town. The Gables has always been known for having strict zoning laws and that has been a feature that kept property values high. We are asking you, as our elected representatives, to preserve the character, charm, and scale of Coral Gables. These features are what make our city unique and they are under assault by the oversized homes being built without concern for the proportion of the lots or the character of specific neighborhoods. Until the deliberate and well-thought-out zoning code re-write is completed, it would be counterproductive if there was a rush to build the very houses that are a problem and would be affected by the new code.</p> <p>Specifically, we are asking you to approve the following in your interim and long-term solutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> C require new and remodeled homes to be no larger or more massive than the existing norm for the immediate neighborhood and surrounding streets; C increase the minimum allowable setbacks; C decrease the maximum allowable height; C decrease the maximum allowable size, <u>both</u> square footage and cubic footage (volume); C provide the Board of Architects with strict objective guidelines, rather than flexibility in interpreting the code; this addresses the problem of architects who serve on the board and who also design or build homes in Coral Gables, or have business interests with those who do; C restrict the variance process so that it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to obtain a variance to the code; C make it harder to demolish existing homes, and require notification to neighbors; <p>We feel that residents -- not speculators and developers -- should determine the direction of our city. Property values have <u>always</u> gone up in the Gables. It's not because of the recent trend toward large houses stacked close together, but precisely because our city offers architecture of harmonious proportions, street trees, and backyards to provide breathing space, sunlight, and privacy. Once you overbuild a neighborhood, it is changed forever. If the problem of oversized homes is not corrected, it will also change for the worse the residential quality of life that defines Coral Gables.</p> <p>Thank you.</p>

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	Date	Name & Address	Email Address	Verbatim Comments
				<p>Kathleen Maguire 608 Majorca Avenue Coral Gables, Florida 33134 305 461 5595</p>
15.	04 21 05	<p>Felix Pardo 421 Cadima Avenue Coral Gables, FL 33134</p>	fpardo@fpadesign.com	<p>Re: The Zoning Code re-write draft as amended to this date Dear Mayor and City Commissioners: The existing Zoning Code has historically served the City of Coral Gables beautifully, and that is after all why Coral Gables is the City Beautiful. Having used the Zoning Code as a Registered Architect for many years, I have reviewed the re-write and offer some observations and concerns.</p> <p>In the proposed Commercial Limited District, which represents a large portion of the existing commercial property, the permitted floor area ratio is being reduced from 3.0 to 1.0. This is a substantial taking of property rights from many commercial property owners who will undoubtedly sue the City for taking their property rights without compensation. In Article 3 Development review, Divisions 17 and 18 Protection of Landowner's Rights; Relief from Inordinate Burdens, and Vested Rights Determinations, are provisions for relief to property owners who have had their development rights taken away from them by the City. The residential property owners in the single family and apartment zoning districts understand the importance of the commercial tax base to the City and do not want to see it damaged. The residents of the City deserve responsible compatible development in the commercial areas of the City with greater buffer zones between commercial and residential uses. The new Zoning Code fails to do so.</p> <p>There are many issues in the Zoning Code re-write that the City's consultant or the Planning Department staff have not adequately explained to the public such as the provisions that will allow the Board of Architects and a City Staff member to approve what are called Minor Conditional Uses. Staff would be allowed to permit uses such as churches, schools, senior living facilities, and medical clinics immediately next to single-family residences.</p> <p>In order to understand this process, please see the Conditional Use provisions in Article 3 Development Review and then review the Permitted Minor Conditional Uses in the Commercial Limited District provision of the proposed Zoning Code. The Zoning Code re-write is supposed to make the new Zoning Code easier to use, but if you do not go back and forth from one section to another you can not and do not understand the scope of the changes being proposed. The creation of a Code Development Official in the Planning Department is dangerous and a contradiction of any checks and balances.</p> <p>In Article 3 Development Review, Division 12 Abandonment and Vacation of Non-fee Interests is</p>

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				<p>literally a road map or plan for developers to follow when they want to vacate City Streets and Alleys. The inclusion of these provisions in the Zoning Code provides developers a how-to game plan on public street and alley vacations. There are no such provisions in the current Zoning Code that would lead a developer to think they can do so.</p> <p>The anti-lot splitting has been eliminated from the proposed Zoning Code. Therefore, lot splitting is permitted.</p> <p>Under the current Zoning Code the permitted floor area is 48% for a 5,000 square foot lot plus an additional 35% for the next 2,500 square feet or 3,275 square feet. The permitted floor area ratio for smaller single-family lots has been increased up to 48% on a 7,500 square foot lot or 3,600 square feet. This is a 325 square foot increase in the permitted size of a single-family residence on a 7,500 square foot lot and this is simple math, quite easy to figure out. If the City is trying to tackle the monster home issue, why increase the permitted floor area for single-family residences, particularly on smaller lots?</p> <p>The single most important legal issue that affects all property owners in the City, is that if the new zoning code <i>is</i> adopted, all of the residences, duplexes, apartment, and commercial buildings will be non-conforming with/to the new Zoning Code. As property owners we could not rebuild our homes as they are today if we became the victims of a fire or hurricane or other property-destroying disaster. This has a dramatic affect on our property values as owners of homes in the City, and will also affect the property value of commercial and apartment properties in the City should there be a major natural disaster such as a hurricane that will shift the City's escalating tax rates to the single-family homeowner.</p> <p>As elected officials the following question must be asked:</p> <p>In real dollars how much more (already at approximately \$200,000 plus in-house costs) will the Zoning Code re-write cost and are you willing to spend our tax dollars to see it completed?</p> <p>Will the reduction in commercial property owner property rights have an affect on the residential tax base of the City and if not, why?</p> <p>Why would you support a proposed Zoning Code that would allow the Board of Architects and City staff to approve obnoxious conditional uses next to single-family residences?</p> <p>Why would you support a proposed Zoning Code that provides developers with a process that allows them to vacate public streets and alleys easily?</p>

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				<p>Why have the lot splitting provisions been deleted from the proposed Zoning Code?</p> <p>Why is the permitted floor area for single-family residences being increased?</p> <p>What will be the affect on property values in the City with so many structures becoming non-conforming with the proposed Zoning Code provisions?</p> <p>Do you find the proposed Zoning Code easier to read and understand than the existing Zoning Code and if so why?</p> <p>Why is the existing Zoning Code being abandoned, instead of being re-organized, updated and clarified where necessary?</p> <p>Why didn't the Planning Department negotiate a contract with the consultant for a single fee that would cover the cost of the complete Zoning Code re-write?</p> <p>Why does the City's fully staffed and expanded Planning Department need the assistance of a consultant to review and re-write the Comprehensive Plan?</p> <p>How is real concurrency addressed? Does the zoning code work in a vacuum?</p> <p>These questions are very important because, as we have already seen, our quality of life is directly affected by any and all future development. Compatible development is the issue.</p> <p>Thank you for your service to the citizens of the City and thank you in advance for your answers to these important questions.</p> <p>Sincerely, Felix Pardo, AIA, ASID, CSI</p>
16.	04 20 05	Al Acosta Riviera Neighborhood Association		<p>Riviera Neighborhood Association Comments by A.J. Acosta, P.E. Executive Director</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Our President, Mrs. Joyce Newman was here at the last meeting. She described the area our organization covers, which I can refresh for you. 2. She talked about the Charette we conducted April 1 and 2 in conjunction with the U of M School of Architecture Urban Design Section under the leadership of Professor Richard Shepard, which represents a very substantial cost in money, time and effort to our organization.

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				<p>3. We can now say that all input has been given by the participating residents and business owners to the U of M.</p> <p>4. We are now looking at having the final report ready in the week of April 25.</p> <p>5. Our aspirations are to be able to have the City accept the report and then work with us towards implementation in a manner that is acceptable to all involved.</p> <p>6. Very briefly, these are just some of the areas the report will focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Due to peculiarities of our area, it is most important that there be Concurrency between the Master Land Use Plan and the Zoning Plan. b. Preservation of alleys, and no closure of streets to allow for developments c. We need a better notification system to property owners. Do the shape and peculiarities, our approximately 230 residential owners are not always aware of pending development or zoning or variance requests. Then 1,000 ft. notice often fails us. See the illustration. d. The Mahi waterway is a very special area, especially towards the US 1 end, that needs special attention, due to it having a section that restricts boat access part of the year. This area is one among only 19 such areas in the state (refer to the hand out showing the manatee no-intrusion area). It is also the area where new development has been identified as up-coming and where a marina exists for which the City has found legal incongruities (refer to the City Attorney letter of April 30, 2004). We will be supporting the City in its findings and ask that any development that includes marina-type facilities go through the established process for the justification of marinas, including a public hearing and adoption by City Ordinance. e. We also ask that the City consider establishing standards that define development or construction anywhere along any of the many waterways in Coral Gables to prevent commercial operations that may impact the waterways. (Attachments were included with letter.)
17.	04 20 05	Elfriede Zundell 920 Paradiso Ave. Coral Gables, FI 33146	elfriedez9@msn.com	<p>Dear Mayor Slesnick:</p> <p>As a long time resident, a former member of the Historic Preservation Board, and Beautification Committee, I ask that you and the elected Commissioners do everything to preserve the character and the scale of the existing neighborhoods.</p> <p>Several years ago, a developer bought a fifty foot lot that lay between our house and our neighbor's. The then Commission & various Boards did not allow a two-story house to be squeezed into the lot. We were grateful and eventually bought the lot, divided it between our neighbors and ourselves.</p> <p>This time, a new problem has arisen. On our street a house was razed. Soon a new structure will be build - we hope that it will <u>not</u> be of a different architectural style or massive proportion unbecoming our otherwise congenial neighborhood. Already, three blocks on Orduna Drive, the</p>

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				<p>framework of a new house suggests a huge house of massive proportions taking up nearly an entire block.</p> <p>I am hoping that you approve the following in the interim and long-term solutions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Require new and remodeled homes to be no larger or more massive than the existing largest homes in the immediate neighborhood and surrounding area 2. Decrease the maximum allowable height and increase the minimum allowable setbacks. 3. Decrease the maximum allowable size by square footage and cubic footage. (volume) 4. Provide the Board of Architects with strict objective guidelines in interpreting the code. 5. Restrict the variance process to allow only those variances, which show hardship. 6. Require notification to neighbors when a house is being demolished in the neighborhood. <p>Coral Gables is one of the most beautiful suburbs in the U.S. It is unique in its architecture, its charm, its scale and its green lawns. Let's keep it this way for many years to come!</p> <p>Thank you. Elfriede Zundell 920 Paradiso Ave. Coral Gables, FL 33146</p>
18.	04 19 05	Douglas Mine 910 Capri St. Coral Gables	dgmine@aol.com	<p>Esteemed vice-mayor, I've worked and resided in Coral Gables since May 1998. I and my wife Nicoletta and our three boys love the community. One of the main reasons we love it is the delightful sense of harmonious proportion it has maintained over the course of eight decades, a balance and beauty that is being threatened by construction of houses too big for their lots. These homes are the architectural equivalent of Hummers. They are ungainly and unsightly and, built hard up against the property line, leave little or no room for the landscaping - the interplay and mingling of our region's wonderful flora - that make a stroll through any Coral Gables neighborhood a delight.</p> <p>So I respectfully request that you do your part to prevent their proliferation. These abodes belong somewhere else, on much bigger lots. If we wanted to live within the flick of a watermelon seed of our neighbor and have no yard to tend, we would have opted for a townhouse in the first place.</p> <p>Sincerely, Douglas Mine 910 Capri St. Coral Gables</p>
19.	04 19 05	Paola Tavarelli 1433 Mantua Avenue	paolatav@bellsouth.net	<p>Dear Mayor Slesnick, We are asking you, as our elected representative, to preserve the character, charm, and scale of Coral Gables. These features are what make our city unique and they are under assault by the</p>

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Public Comments - Verbatim (Updated 04 01 05 thru 06 01 05)

	Date	Name & Address	Email Address	Verbatim Comments
		Coral Gables, 3314		<p>oversized homes being built without concern for the proportion of the lots or the character of specific neighborhoods. Until the deliberate and well-thought-out zoning code re-write is completed, it would be counterproductive if there was a rush to build the very houses that are a problem and would be affected by the new code.</p> <p>Specifically, we are asking you to approve the following in your interim and long-term solutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> C require new and remodeled homes to be no larger or more massive than the existing norm for the immediate neighborhood and surrounding streets; C increase the minimum allowable setbacks; C decrease the maximum allowable height; C decrease the maximum allowable size, <u>both</u> square footage and cubic footage (volume); C provide the Board of Architects with strict objective guidelines, rather than flexibility in interpreting the code; this addresses the problem of architects who serve on the board and who also design or build homes in Coral Gables, or have business interests with those who do; C restrict the variance process so that it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to obtain a variance to the code; C make it harder to demolish existing homes, and require notification to neighbors; <p>We feel that residents -- not speculators and developers -- should determine the direction of our city. Property values have <u>always</u> gone up in the Gables. It's not because of the recent trend toward large houses stacked close together, but precisely because our city offers architecture of harmonious proportions, street trees, and backyards to provide breathing space, sunlight, and privacy. Once you overbuild a neighborhood, it is changed forever. If the problem of oversized homes is not corrected, it will also change for the worse the residential quality of life that defines Coral Gables.</p> <p>Thank you. Paola Tavarelli 1433 Mantua Avenue Coral Gables, 3314</p>
20.		Yigany "Gigi" Alvarez 1515 Pizarro Street Coral Gables, Florida 33134	saa_g@bellsouth.net	<p>Dear Mayor Slesnick and Coral Gables Commissioners:</p> <p>As a concerned resident I am asking you, as our elected representatives, to preserve the character, charm, and scale of Coral Gables. These features are what make our city unique and they are under assault by the oversized homes being built without concern for the proportion of the lots or the character of specific neighborhoods. Until the deliberate and well-thought-out zoning code re-write is completed, it would be counterproductive if there was a rush to build the very houses that are a problem and would be affected by the new code.</p>

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				<p>Specifically, we are asking you to approve the following in your interim and long-term solutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • require new and remodeled homes to be no larger or more massive than the existing norm for the immediate neighborhood and surrounding streets; • increase the minimum allowable setbacks; • decrease the maximum allowable height; • decrease the maximum allowable size, both square footage and cubic footage (volume); • provide the Board of Architects with strict objective guidelines, rather than flexibility in interpreting the code; this addresses the problem of architects who serve on the board and who also design or build homes in Coral Gables, or have business interests with those who do; • restrict the variance process so that it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to obtain a variance to the code; • make it harder to demolish existing homes, and require notification to neighbors; <p>I feel that residents -- not speculators and developers -- should determine the direction of our city. Property values have always gone up in the Gables. It's not because of the recent trend toward large houses stacked close together, but precisely because our city offers architecture of harmonious proportions, street trees, and backyards to provide breathing space, sunlight, and privacy. Once you overbuild a neighborhood, it is changed forever. If the problem of oversized homes is not corrected, it will also change for the worse the residential quality of life that defines Coral Gables.</p> <p>Thank you. Yigany "Gigi" Alvarez 1515 Pizarro Street Coral Gables, Florida 33134</p>
21.	04 19 05	Maria Bures 1208 Obispo Avenue Coral Gables, FL 33134 (305) 461-3982	maria@pigeonprod.com	<p>Honorable Mayor & Commissioners:</p> <p>We are asking you, as our elected representatives, to preserve the character, charm, and scale of Coral Gables. These features are what make our city unique and they are under assault by the oversized homes being built without concern for the proportion of the lots or the character of specific neighborhoods. Until the deliberate and well-thought-out zoning code re-write is completed, it would be counterproductive if there was a rush to build the very houses that are a problem and would be affected by the new code.</p> <p>Specifically, we are asking you to approve the following in your interim and long-term solutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • require new and remodeled homes to be no larger or more massive than the existing norm for the immediate neighborhood and surrounding streets; • increase the minimum allowable setbacks;

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				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • decrease the maximum allowable height; • decrease the maximum allowable size, both square footage and cubic footage (volume); • provide the Board of Architects with strict objective guidelines, rather than flexibility in interpreting the code; this addresses the problem of architects who serve on the board and who also design or build homes in Coral Gables, or have business interests with those who do; • restrict the variance process so that it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to obtain a variance to the code; • make it harder to demolish existing homes, and require notification to neighbors; <p>We feel that residents -- not speculators and developers -- should determine the direction of our city. Property values have always gone up in the Gables. It's not because of the recent trend toward large houses stacked close together, but precisely because our city offers architecture of harmonious proportions, street trees, and backyards to provide breathing space, sunlight, and privacy. Once you overbuild a neighborhood, it is changed forever. If the problem of oversized homes is not corrected, it will also change for the worse the residential quality of life that defines Coral Gables.</p> <p>As a life-long resident of the city, I urge you to maintain the qualities that have made us proud to be residents of the City Beautiful.</p> <p>Thanks in advance for your time and dedication. Warmest regards, Maria Bures 1208 Obispo Avenue Coral Gables, FL 33134 (305) 461-3982</p>
22.	04 19 05	Beatrice and Francois Screve 1617 Medina Avenue Coral Gables, FL 33134	Beatrice@screve.com	<p>We are asking you, as our elected representatives, to preserve the character, charm, and scale of Coral Gables. These features are what make our city unique and they are under assault by the oversized homes being built without concern for the proportion of the lots or the character of specific neighborhoods. Until the deliberate and well-thought-out zoning code re-write is completed, it would be counterproductive if there was a rush to build the very houses that are a problem and would be affected by the new code.</p> <p>Specifically, we are asking you to approve the following in your interim and long-term solutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> C require new and remodeled homes to be no larger or more massive than the existing norm for the immediate neighborhood and surrounding streets; C increase the minimum allowable setbacks;

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Public Comments - Verbatim (Updated 04 01 05 thru 06 01 05)

	Date	Name & Address	Email Address	Verbatim Comments
				<p>C decrease the maximum allowable height;</p> <p>C decrease the maximum allowable size, <u>both</u> square footage and cubic footage (volume);</p> <p>C provide the Board of Architects with strict objective guidelines, rather than flexibility in interpreting the code; this addresses the problem of architects who serve on the board and who also design or build homes in Coral Gables, or have business interests with those who do;</p> <p>C restrict the variance process so that it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to obtain a variance to the code;</p> <p>C make it harder to demolish existing homes, and require notification to neighbors;</p> <p>We feel that residents -- not speculators and developers -- should determine the direction of our city. Property values have <u>always</u> gone up in the Gables. It's not because of the recent trend toward large houses stacked close together, but precisely because our city offers architecture of harmonious proportions, street trees, and backyards to provide breathing space, sunlight, and privacy. Once you overbuild a neighborhood, it is changed forever. If the problem of oversized homes is not corrected, it will also change for the worse the residential quality of life that defines Coral Gables.</p> <p>Thank you. Best regards, Beatrice and Francois Screve 1617 Medina Avenue Coral Gables FL 33134</p>
23.	04 18 05	<p>Judith K. Williams 808 Valencia Avenue Coral Gables 33134</p> <p>Judith K. Williams, Ph.D. President Williams, Stern & Associates 3050 Biscayne Blvd. Suite 307 Miami FL 33137 Tel: 305-573-4002 Fax: 305-573-4007</p>	<p>jwilliams@wsahealth.com</p> <p>www.wsahealth.com</p>	<p>Mr. Mayor, Commissioners:</p> <p>I have lived in the Gables for 17 years. I am asking you, as the community's elected representatives, to preserve the character, charm, and scale of Coral Gables. While we acknowledge that times change, Coral Gables has maintained its charm even through the banal architecture of the 50s and 70s through lawns and greenery (and many of these have been charmingly updated).</p> <p>Many special features make our city unique; they are under assault by the oversized homes being built without concern for the proportion and character of the immediate neighborhoods. "Mediterranean" design per se does not equal charm or quality when it overwhelms the neighborhood. Until the deliberate and well-thought-out zoning code re-write is completed, it would be counterproductive if there was a rush to build the very houses that are a problem and would be affected by the new code.</p> <p>Specifically, I ask you to approve the following in your interim and long-term solutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · require new and remodeled homes to be no larger or more massive than the existing

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				<p>norm for the immediate neighborhood and surrounding streets;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · increase the minimum allowable setbacks; · decrease the maximum allowable height; · decrease the maximum allowable size, <u>both</u> square footage and cubic footage (volume); · provide the Board of Architects with strict objective guidelines, rather than flexibility in interpreting the code; this addresses the problem of architects who serve on the board and who also design or build homes in Coral Gables, or have business interests with those who do; · restrict the variance process so that it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to obtain a variance to the code; · make it harder to demolish existing homes, and require notification to neighbors; <p>Residents and planners -- not speculators and developers -- should determine the direction of our city. Property values have <i>always</i> gone up in the Gables. It's not because of the recent trend toward large houses stacked close together, but precisely because our city offers architecture of harmonious proportions, street trees, and backyards to provide breathing space, sunlight, and privacy. Once you overbuild a neighborhood, it is changed forever. If the problem of oversized homes is not corrected, it will also change for the worse the residential quality of life that defines Coral Gables.</p> <p>Thank you. Judith K. Williams 808 Valencia Avenue Coral Gables 33134 Judith K. Williams, Ph.D. President Williams, Stern & Associates 3050 Biscayne Blvd. Suite 307 Miami FL 33137 Tel: 305-573-4002 Fax: 305-573-4007 jwilliams@wsahealth.com www.wsahealth.com</p>
24.	04 18 05	Walter & Olga Baquero-Lima 641 Majorca Avenue	walterolga84@yahoo.com	<p>We are asking you, as our elected representatives, to preserve the character, charm, and scale of Coral Gables. These features are what make our city unique and they are under assault by the oversized homes being built without concern for the proportion of the lots or the character of specific neighborhoods. Until the deliberate and well-thought-out zoning code re-write is completed, it would be counterproductive if there was a rush to build the very houses that are a problem and would be affected by the new code.</p>

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				<p>Specifically, we are asking you to approve the following in your interim and long-term solutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> C require new and remodeled homes to be no larger or more massive than the existing norm for the immediate neighborhood and surrounding streets; C increase the minimum allowable setbacks; C decrease the maximum allowable height; C decrease the maximum allowable size, <u>both</u> square footage and cubic footage (volume); C provide the Board of Architects with strict objective guidelines, rather than flexibility in interpreting the code; this addresses the problem of architects who serve on the board and who also design or build homes in Coral Gables, or have business interests with those who do; C restrict the variance process so that it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to obtain a variance to the code; C make it harder to demolish existing homes, and require notification to neighbors; <p>We feel that residents -- not speculators and developers -- should determine the direction of our city. Property values have <u>always</u> gone up in the Gables. It's not because of the recent trend toward large houses stacked close together, but precisely because our city offers architecture of harmonious proportions, street trees, and backyards to provide breathing space, sunlight, and privacy. Once you overbuild a neighborhood, it is changed forever. If the problem of oversized homes is not corrected, it will also change for the worse the residential quality of life that defines Coral Gables.</p> <p>Thank you, Walter & Olga Baquero-Lima 641 Majorca Avenue</p>
25.	04 18 05	Danny A. Rosario Angela K. Rosario 540 Cadagua Avenue Coral Gables, FL 33146-1710	angelkat04@comcast.net	<p>We are asking you, as our elected representatives, to preserve the character, charm, and scale of Coral Gables. These features are what make our city unique and they are under assault by the oversized homes being built without concern for the proportion of the lots or the character of specific neighborhoods. Until the deliberate and well-thought-out zoning code re-write is completed, it would be counterproductive if there was a rush to build the very houses that are a problem and would be affected by the new code.</p> <p>Specifically, we are asking you to approve the following in your interim and long-term solutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> C require new and remodeled homes to be no larger or more massive than the existing norm for the immediate neighborhood and surrounding streets; C increase the minimum allowable setbacks; C decrease the maximum allowable height; C decrease the maximum allowable size, <u>both</u> square footage and cubic footage (volume);

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				<p>C provide the Board of Architects with strict objective guidelines, rather than flexibility in interpreting the code; this addresses the problem of architects who serve on the board and who also design or build homes in Coral Gables, or have business interests with those who do;</p> <p>C restrict the variance process so that it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to obtain a variance to the code;</p> <p>C make it harder to demolish existing homes, and require notification to neighbors;</p> <p>We feel that residents -- not speculators and developers -- should determine the direction of our city. Property values have <u>always</u> gone up in the Gables. It's not because of the recent trend toward large houses stacked close together, but precisely because our city offers architecture of harmonious proportions, street trees, and backyards to provide breathing space, sunlight, and privacy. Once you overbuild a neighborhood, it is changed forever. If the problem of oversized homes is not corrected, it will also change for the worse the residential quality of life that defines Coral Gables. Thank you.</p> <p>Danny A. Rosario Angela K. Rosario 540 Cadagua Avenue Coral Gables, FL 33146-1710</p>
26.	04 13 05	Sanford I. Rakosky, M.D. P.A. 401 Miracle Mile Suite 301 Coral Gables, FL		<p>To whom it may concern:</p> <p>Not only am I the owner of the 401 Miracle Mile office building across the street from City Hall, but I am also a physician (Ophthalmologist) who occupies an office in the building for the past thirty (30) years.</p> <p>I am very concerned about Article 4, Division 3, Section 4-301, Commercial Limited District, pertaining to the definition of a Medical Clinic, consisting of two (2) or more physicians. I do understand the sensitivity surrounding Medical Clinics especially in reference to sleep clinics.</p> <p>All the physicians and dentist, including myself, are in private practice. Many of them are already in partnership with another physician or dentist. I too, wishing to retire in the near future, would like to take into my practice a junior physician.</p> <p>According to the definition, I would be prevented to do so. In fact, the present as well as any future second physicians, and dentists would be considered illegal or at least placed in a non-conforming use.</p> <p>I, respectfully request the Board Members to consider my suggestion of changing the definition from two (2) to three (3) physicians. This would immediately solve this potential problem, not only for all the physicians and dentist in my building, but for other physicians in private practice in Coral Gables. Having a second physician or dentist in private practice is <u>not</u> a Medical Clinic. Thanking the Board Members in advance.</p> <p>Sincerely yours,</p>

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				Sanford I. Rakofsky, M.D.
27.	04 13 05	Jennifer M. Blattman, Park Planner Miami-Dade County Park and Recreation Department 275 NW 2nd St., Ste. 420, Miami, FL 33128 Phone: (305) 755-7807; Fax: (305) 755-7864	JennyB@miamidade.gov	I remember meeting with you and Walter before the holidays to discuss the "P-use" zone for the County parks (Matheson Hammock, R. Hardy Matheson and Chapman Field). I wanted to know if there have been any revisions to the "P-use" language since our last discussion and if we could have a copy of the most recent version of that language. Any information is greatly appreciated. Jennifer
28.	04 13 05	Mari Molina Executive Director Business Improvement District of Coral Gables 224 Miracle Mile Coral Gables, Florida 33134 (305) 569-0311 www.shopcoralgables.com	mmolina@shopcoralgables.com	As we discussed on the phone yesterday, at Tuesday night's Public Hearing regarding the Miracle Mile Streetscape project, one of the major issues that came up was with regard to the zoning code governing the use of the sidewalks for café's. Asst. City Manager Jimenez asked me to follow up with you and Planning, in order to address this issue. In order for the property owners and merchants of Miracle Mile to be supportive of the project, there needs to be a cost benefit for them to invest in the widening of the sidewalks – which is what the city is proposing. Public Works Director Delgado informed us that the current zoning code would not allow restaurant owners to receive the full benefit of the expanded sidewalk, but only 50% of it. We were told that the current code is that 50% or 5 feet of the sidewalk, whichever is greater, must be left open. Therefore, we would need the code to be revised to allow the widened sidewalks to be fully used for café's or commerce – and retain just the 5 feet for passage on the sidewalk. And just to be safe, can you please advise what the process would be to change this BEFORE the re-write? Please advise. Thanks, Mari Molina Executive Director Business Improvement District of Coral Gables 224 Miracle Mile Coral Gables, Florida 33134 (305) 569-0311 www.shopcoralgables.com

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29.	04 11 05	Bruce Katz 645 Majorca Avenue	bkat99@comcast.net	<p>We are asking you, as our elected representatives, to preserve the character, charm, and scale of Coral Gables. These features are what make our city unique and they are under assault by the oversized homes being built without concern for the proportion of the lots or the character of specific neighborhoods. Until the deliberate and well-thought-out zoning code re-write is completed, it would be counterproductive if there was a rush to build the very houses that are a problem and would be affected by the new code.</p> <p>Specifically, we are asking you to approve the following in your interim and long-term solutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> C require new and remodeled homes to be no larger or more massive than the existing norm for the immediate neighborhood and surrounding streets; C increase the minimum allowable setbacks; C decrease the maximum allowable height; C decrease the maximum allowable size, <u>both</u> square footage and cubic footage (volume); C provide the Board of Architects with strict objective guidelines, rather than flexibility in interpreting the code; this addresses the problem of architects who serve on the board and who also design or build homes in Coral Gables, or have business interests with those who do; C restrict the variance process so that it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to obtain a variance to the code; C make it harder to demolish existing homes, and require notification to neighbors; <p>We feel that residents -- not speculators and developers -- should determine the direction of our city. Property values have <u>always</u> gone up in the Gables. It's not because of the recent trend toward large houses stacked close together, but precisely because our city offers architecture of harmonious proportions, street trees, and backyards to provide breathing space, sunlight, and privacy. Once you overbuild a neighborhood, it is changed forever. If the problem of oversized homes is not corrected, it will also change for the worse the residential quality of life that defines Coral Gables.</p> <p>Thank you. Bruce Katz 645 Majorca Avenue</p>
30.	04 08 05	Janet Nostro	nostro@comcast.net	<p>Dear Mayor and Commissioners:</p> <p>I am very concerned about the character of our neighborhoods in Coral Gables. I would like to preserve the charm and uniqueness that we have.</p> <p>I am distressed to see large homes being built in our area. Please consider and approve the following:</p>

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				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - new homes should not be larger than the existing norm in the immediate neighborhood; - increase the setbacks; - decrease the allowable heights; - Board of Architects should have strict rather than flexible guidelines in interpreting the code; - restrict variance process; - make it harder to demolish existing homes. <p>I feel that residents, not speculators and developers know what is best for our city. What gives our area charm are the trees, harmonious proportions and nice backyards. I fear that once the area is totally built up, we will look more like one of the other cities to the south and lose our charm forever.</p> <p>Please keep our charm in the Gables.</p> <p>Thank you, Janet Nostro</p>
31.	04 08 05	Kevin Cheatham 1231 Medina Ave. Coral Gables, FL	cheats01@comcast.net	<p>Lady and Gentlemen:</p> <p>I am asking you, as our elected representatives, to preserve the character, charm, and scale of Coral Gables. These features are what make our city unique and they are under assault by the oversized homes being built without concern for the proportion of the lots or the character of specific neighborhoods. Until the deliberate and well-thought-out zoning code re-write is completed, it would be counterproductive if there was a rush to build the very houses that are a problem and would be affected by the new code.</p> <p>Specifically, we are asking you to approve the following in your interim and long-term solutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> C require new and remodeled homes to be no larger or more massive than the existing norm for the immediate neighborhood and surrounding streets; C increase the minimum allowable setbacks; C decrease the maximum allowable height; C decrease the maximum allowable size, <u>both</u> square footage and cubic footage (volume); C provide the Board of Architects with strict objective guidelines, rather than flexibility in interpreting the code; this addresses the problem of architects who serve on the board and who also design or build homes in Coral Gables, or have business interests with those who do; C restrict the variance process so that it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to obtain a variance to the code. <p>We feel that residents -- not speculators and developers -- should determine the direction of our city. Property values have <u>always</u> gone up in the Gables. It's not because of the recent trend</p>

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				<p>toward large houses stacked close together, but precisely because our city offers architecture of harmonious proportions, street trees, and backyards to provide breathing space, sunlight, and privacy. Once you overbuild a neighborhood, it is changed forever. If the problem of oversized homes is not corrected, it will also change for the worse the residential quality of life that defines Coral Gables.</p> <p>Thank you. Kevin Cheatham 1231 Medina Ave., CG</p>
32.	04 08 05	Chris Rupp	crupp@kiminc.com	<p>Greetings all: I recently received an e-mail from a concerned citizen regarding the out-of-scale, huge homes going up in our neighborhoods. This issue is of concern to me also. Recently, an incredibly large home was completed at the west end of San Esteban, and another lot-smothering giant is now going up in the 500 block of Geronimo on the waterway. Last weekend I called a realtor about a one-story home for sale on Geronimo which she dismissed as a "tear down" and informed me that the asking price of \$1.3 million included plans for a two story 6000 sq. ft home to be constructed on the property. These enormous homes are totally out-of context with the existing neighborhood. It's time to take a look at this P/Z issue.</p> <p>Regards, Chris Rupp</p>
33.	04 04 05	Raul R Suarez & Rosemary Suarez 1328 Asturia Ave, Coral Gables, FL 33134 305.567.1552	rsuarez@emteca.com	<p>Mayor, Commissioners:</p> <p>In a spirit of cooperation, I would like to ask you to consider the following as an immediate solution to the existing problem of oversized houses built on small residential lots.</p> <p>We all want to preserve the character, charm, and scale of Coral Gables which makes our city the very special place that it is.</p> <p>To wait until the review of the zoning code in which this issue is to be addressed would definitely have a detrimental impact on our neighborhood.</p> <p>This would allow developers and builders to continue with the construction of over sized structures. If corrective action is not taken immediately, we would be directly affected in our street Asturia Avenue.</p> <p>We would like to propose the following course of action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * require new and remodeled homes to be no larger or more massive than the existing norm for the immediate neighborhood and surrounding streets; * decrease the maximum allowable height; * decrease the maximum allowable square footage and volume;

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				<p>* issue strict objective guidelines to the Board of Architects to prevent misinterpretation of the code; this would tend to address the existing conflict with those architects who serve on the board and design or participate in building homes within our City;</p> <p>* establish new strict guidelines in order to minimize the opportunity for applying for a variance to the code;</p> <p>* restrict the issue of demolition permits for existing homes, as well as requiring timely notification to neighbors;</p> <p>We appreciate the opportunity to communicate our thoughts,</p> <p>Raul R Suarez & Rosemary Suarez 1328 Asturia Ave, Coral Gables, FL 33134 305.567.1552</p>
34.	04 04 05	Bill and Marcia Silver 10 Edgewater Drive, 5G Coral Gables, FL 33133-6963 Phone: 305-665-5124 Fax: 305-666-1592 Cell: 786-423-1122	billsilver@comcast.net	<p>Hi Don,Ralph,Maria,Bill and Chip, We are asking you as our elected representatives, to preserve the character, charm, and scale of Coral Gables. These features are what make our city unique and they are under assault by the oversized homes being built without concern for the proportion of the lots or the character of specific neighborhoods. Until the deliberate and well-thought-out zoning code re-write is completed, it would be counterproductive if there was a rush to build the very houses that are a problem and would be affected by the new code.</p> <p>Specifically, we are asking you to approve the following in your interim and long-term solutions:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">require new and remodeled homes to be no larger or more massive than the existing norm for the immediate neighborhood and surrounding streets; increase the minimum allowable setbacks; decrease the maximum allowable size, <u>both</u> square footage and cubic footage (volume); provide the Board of Architects with strict objective guidelines, rather than flexibility in interpreting the code; this addresses the problem of architects who serve on the board and who also design or build homes in Coral Gables, or have business interests with those who do; make it harder to demolish existing homes, and require notification to neighbors;</p> <p style="text-align: center;">OR SIMPLY PROVIDE A MORATORIUM ACCORDING TO THESE OR SIMILAR TERMS!!</p> <p>We feel that residents -- not speculators and developers -- should determine the direction of our city. Property values have <u>always</u> gone up in the Gables. It's not because of the recent trend toward large houses stacked close together, but precisely because our city offers architecture of harmonious proportions, street trees, and backyards to provide breathing space, sunlight, and</p>

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				<p>privacy. Once you overbuild a neighborhood, it is changed forever. If the problem of oversized homes is not corrected, it will also change for the worse the residential quality of life that defines Coral Gables.</p> <p>Thank you.</p> <p>Bill and Marcia Silver 10 Edgewater Drive, 5G Coral Gables, FL 33133-6963 Phone: 305-665-5124 Fax: 305-666-1592 Cell: 786-423-1122</p>
35.	04 04 05	Hernan Galindo 818 Catalonia Avenue Coral Gables, FL 33134	hgalindo@coralgablesrentals.com	<p>Dear Mr. Mayor;</p> <p>We are asking you, as our elected representatives, to preserve the character, charm, and scale of Coral Gables. These features are what make our city unique and they are under assault by the oversized homes being built without concern for the proportion of the lots or the character of specific neighborhoods. Until the deliberate and well-thought-out zoning code re-write is completed, it would be counterproductive if there was a rush to build the very houses that are a problem and would be affected by the new code.</p> <p>Specifically, we are asking you to approve the following in your interim and long-term solutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> C require new and remodeled homes to be no larger or more massive than the existing norm for the immediate neighborhood and surrounding streets; C increase the minimum allowable setbacks; C decrease the maximum allowable height; C decrease the maximum allowable size, <u>both</u> square footage and cubic footage (volume); C provide the Board of Architects with strict objective guidelines, rather than flexibility in interpreting the code; this addresses the problem of architects who serve on the board and who also design or build homes in Coral Gables, or have business interests with those who do; C restrict the variance process so that it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to obtain a variance to the code; C make it harder to demolish existing homes, and require notification to neighbors; <p>We feel that residents -- not speculators and developers -- should determine the direction of our city. Property values have <u>always</u> gone up in the Gables. It's not because of the recent trend toward large houses stacked close together, but precisely because our city offers architecture of harmonious proportions, street trees, and backyards to provide breathing space, sunlight, and privacy. Once you overbuild a neighborhood, it is changed forever. If the problem of oversized</p>

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				<p>homes is not corrected, it will also change for the worse the residential quality of life that defines Coral Gables.</p> <p>I am particularly affected as an oversize home at 830 Catalonia Ave which is next to me was recently approved. This house will change the character and privacy of our street.</p> <p>Thank you. Hernan Galindo 818 Catalonia Avenue Coral Gables, FI 33134</p>
36.	04 04 05	Param Singh 524 Alcazar Avenue Coral Gables	espmia@hotmail.com	<p>We are asking you, as our elected representatives, to preserve the character, charm, and scale of Coral Gables. These features are what make our city unique and they are under assault by the oversized homes being built without concern for the proportion of the lots or the character of specific neighborhoods. Until the deliberate and well-thought-out zoning code re-write is completed, it would be counterproductive if there was a rush to build the very houses that are a problem and would be affected by the new code.</p> <p>Specifically, we are asking you to approve the following in your interim and long-term solutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * require new and remodeled homes to be no larger or more massive than the existing norm for the immediate neighborhood and surrounding streets; * increase the minimum allowable setbacks; * decrease the maximum allowable height; * decrease the maximum allowable size, both square footage and cubic footage (volume); * provide the Board of Architects with strict objective guidelines, rather than flexibility in interpreting the code; this addresses the problem of architects who serve on the board and who also design or build homes in Coral Gables, or have business interests with those who do; * restrict the variance process so that it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to obtain a variance to the code; * make it harder to demolish existing homes, and require notification to neighbors; <p>We feel that residents -- not speculators and developers -- should determine the direction of our city. Property values have always gone up in the Gables. It's not because of the recent trend toward large houses stacked close together, but precisely because our city offers architecture of harmonious proportions, street trees, and backyards to provide breathing space, sunlight, and privacy. Once you overbuild a neighborhood, it is changed forever. If the problem of oversized homes is not corrected, it will also change for the worse the residential quality of life that defines Coral Gables.</p> <p>Thank you.</p>

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				Param Singh 524 Alcazar Avenue Coral Gables
37.	04 04 05	Larry and Jeanne Snyder	SNY04@aol.com	<p>To: Coral Gables Mayor and Commissioners From: Larry and Jeanne Snyder Date: April 2, 2005</p> <p>When we moved onto Majorca Avenue in 1974, we had no idea that our starter house would turn into our retirement home. Over the years we have had many opportunities to move to other municipalities or to relocate within the Gables. Why not? A charming house in a quiet, treelined, historic neighborhood withing walking distance to downtown and minutes from an international airport is ideal for us at any age.</p> <p>We have, of course, seen Majorca in its many transformations over thirty years. "Handyman specials" have morphed in an area of quality people living in quality restored and maintained homes. Our neighborhood is very special not only in Miami-Dade county but in the country. The people living here appreciate that and have carefully preserved our area's very distinct character over the years.</p> <p>Of late, however, there seems to be a growing threat to to that character. The current practice of building of overside homes on undersize lots can and will destroy the nature of our area if it is allowed to go on unchecked. High walls, building to the very edge of the lots, no green space and upper decks peering over the neighbors is not what we are accustomed to or willing to accept. I assume this is all legal which leads me to urge that relevant zoning regulations be revisited and revised to protect and preserve the character and integrity of what we all moved here to enjoy.</p> <p>I am sure that their is no disagreement on the Commission that this is not only happening but done primarily by profit-seeking developers who will never live in our neighborhoods. Thank you for your efforts both now and in the future to find answers to this problem.</p>
38.	04 04 05	Janice B. Gates 305-510-2411	janbgates@comcast.net	<p>We are asking you, as our elected representatives, to preserve the character, charm, and scale of Coral Gables. These features are what make our city unique and they are under assault by the oversized homes being built without concern for the proportion of the lots or the character of specific neighborhoods. Until the deliberate and well-thought-out zoning code re-write is completed, it would be counterproductive if there was a rush to build the very houses that are a problem and would be affected by the new code.</p> <p>Specifically, we are asking you to approve the following in your interim and long-term solutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · require new and remodeled homes to be no larger or more massive than the existing norm for the immediate neighborhood and surrounding streets; · increase the minimum allowable setbacks;

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	Date	Name & Address	Email Address	Verbatim Comments
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · decrease the maximum allowable height; · decrease the maximum allowable size, <u>both</u> square footage and cubic footage (volume); · provide the Board of Architects with strict objective guidelines, rather than flexibility in interpreting the code; this addresses the problem of architects who serve on the board and who also design or build homes in Coral Gables, or have business interests with those who do; · restrict the variance process so that it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to obtain a variance to the code; · make it harder to demolish existing homes, and require notification to neighbors; <p>We feel that residents -- not speculators and developers -- should determine the direction of our city. Property values have <u>always</u> gone up in the Gables. It's not because of the recent trend toward large houses stacked close together, but precisely because our city offers architecture of harmonious proportions, street trees, and backyards to provide breathing space, sunlight, and privacy. Once you overbuild a neighborhood, it is changed forever. If the problem of oversized homes is not corrected, it will also change for the worse the residential quality of life that defines Coral Gables.</p> <p>Thank you. Camp & Associates Int'l Real Estate Investment Inc., Co. 1221 Brickell Ave. Miami, Fl. 33131 Janice B. Gates 305-510-2411</p>
39.	04 04 05	Lisa DeNunzio	lisadenunzio@aol.com	<p>We are asking you, as our elected representatives, to preserve the character, charm, and scale of Coral Gables. These features are what make our city unique and they are under assault by the oversized homes being built without concern for the proportion of the lots or the character of specific neighborhoods. Until the deliberate and well-thought-out zoning code re-write is completed, it would be counterproductive if there was a rush to build the very houses that are a problem and would be affected by the new code.</p> <p>Specifically, we are asking you to approve the following in your interim and long-term solutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> C require new and remodeled homes to be no larger or more massive than the existing norm for the immediate neighborhood and surrounding streets; C increase the minimum allowable setbacks; C decrease the maximum allowable height; C decrease the maximum allowable size, <u>both</u> square footage and cubic footage (volume);

Zoning Code Rewrite (Part 2)

Public Comments - Verbatim (Updated 04 01 05 thru 06 01 05)

	Date	Name & Address	Email Address	Verbatim Comments
				<p>C provide the Board of Architects with strict objective guidelines, rather than flexibility in interpreting the code; this addresses the problem of architects who serve on the board and who also design or build homes in Coral Gables, or have business interests with those who do;</p> <p>C restrict the variance process so that it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to obtain a variance to the code;</p> <p>C make it harder to demolish existing homes, and require notification to neighbors;</p> <p>We feel that residents -- not speculators and developers -- should determine the direction of our city. Property values have <u>always</u> gone up in the Gables. It's not because of the recent trend toward large houses stacked close together, but precisely because our city offers architecture of harmonious proportions, street trees, and backyards to provide breathing space, sunlight, and privacy. Once you overbuild a neighborhood, it is changed forever. If the problem of oversized homes is not corrected, it will also change for the worse the residential quality of life that defines Coral Gables.</p> <p>Thank you.</p>