

City of Coral Gables
Planning Department Staff Report

To: Honorable Planning and Zoning Board Members

From: Planning Department

Date: May 13, 2009

Subject: **Application No. 04-09-083-P. Coral Gables Museum – Abandonment of Alley.** An Ordinance of the City Commission of Coral Gables pursuant to Zoning Code Article 3, Division 12, “Abandonment And Vacations”, providing for the vacation of a twenty (20’) foot alley between Lots, 1-4 and a portion of Lot 44, Lots 45 – 48 inclusive, Block 34, Coral Gables Section “K” and establishment of a new vehicular turnaround on Lots 42-44; and creation of two (2), sixteen (16’) foot public access easements on Lots 12-16, Block 34, Coral Gables Section “K,” to accommodate public access to the remaining portions of the twenty (20’) foot alley within Block 34; the vacation is necessary to allow for the construction of various improvements for the City owned property known as the “Coral Gables Museum”, legally described as Lots 1-4, 42-48, and vacated portion of the alley, Block 34, Coral Gables Section “K” (285 Aragon Avenue), Coral Gables, Florida; providing for a repealer provision, a savings clause, and a severability clause, and providing for an effective date (all legal descriptions on file for review).

The above ordinance provides for the following:

1. Vacation of a twenty (20) foot alley between Lots 1-4 and a portion of Lot 44, Lots 45-48 inclusive, Block 34, Coral Gables Section “K”.
2. Establishment of a new vehicular turnaround on Lots 42-44.
3. Creation of two (2), sixteen (16) foot public access easements between Lots 12-16, Block 34, Coral Gables Section “K”.

Recommendation

The Planning Department based upon the findings of fact contained herein recommends approval of the historically designated City owned property known as the “Coral Gables Museum”, legally described as Lots 1-4 and 42-48, Block 34, Coral Gables Section “K” (295 Aragon Avenue), Coral Gables, Florida, for the following:

1. Vacation of a twenty (20) foot alley between Lots 1-4 and a portion of Lot 44, Lots 45-48 inclusive, Block 34, Coral Gables Section “K”.
2. Establishment of a new vehicular turnaround on Lots 42-44.
3. Creation of two (2), sixteen (16) foot public access easements between Lots 12-16, Block 34, Coral Gables Section “K”.

A detailed Staff report prepared by the Historical Resources Department is provided as Attachment A. Historical Resources Staff will be presenting this item to the Planning and Zoning Board.

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Request

Public alleyway vacations and dedications are adopted in ordinance form after recommendation by the Planning and Zoning Board and consideration by the City Commission at two (2) public hearings. Review and recommendation is required by both the Public Works Department and the Development Review Committee (DRC), which is forwarded to the Planning and Zoning Board. The proposal was presented to the DRC at a special meeting held on 05.08.09. Both the Public Works Department and the DRC have no objection and support this proposal.

The draft Ordinance is provided as Attachment B.

Background

The “Old Police and Fire Station” at the corner of Aragon Avenue and Salzedo Street is a designated historic landmark which being restored for use as the “Coral Gables Museum”. A new gallery building and urban plaza are being constructed as a part of the museum complex across the existing alleyway on Parking Lot #2. The museum building and gallery are now proposed to be joined by an enclosed walkway connector which crosses the alleyway that separates the two parcels of the project. An open breezeway was originally proposed. The required vacation of the portion of alleyway separating the two parcels and the dedication of replacement easements to provide access to the alleyway is the subject of this request by City Staff.

The City Museum project is currently under construction. The funding for the project was approved by the City Commission on 08.26.08 by Resolution No. 2008-125. The City Commission approved the alley encroachment for the connector between the museum building and new gallery building on 10.14.08 by Resolution No. 2008-163. Copies of those Resolutions are provided as Attachments C and D.

The proposed project was presented to the Historic Preservation Board on 01.19.06, at which time the Board recommended approval by a 9 to 0 vote.

Facts – Background and Proposed Project

City reviews and approvals:

City Reviews/Timeline	Date Scheduled/ Reviewed/Approved*
Development Review Committee	05.27.05, 11.18.05 and 05.08.09
Board of Architects	12.15.05, 05.08.08 and 10.16.08
Board of Adjustment	N/A
Historic Preservation Board	01.19.06
Local Planning Agency	N/A
Planning and Zoning Board	05.13.09
City Commission	TBD

*All scheduled dates and times are subject to change without notice.

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Existing property designations:

Applicable Designations	
CLUP Map Designation	“Commercial Use, Low-Rise Intensity” and “Commercial Use, Mid-Rise Intensity”
Zoning Map Designation	“S”, Special Use District
Within Central Business District	Yes
Mixed Use District	No
Mediterranean Architectural District (citywide)	Yes
Within Coral Gables Redevelopment Infill District (GRID) (Traffic Concurrency Exemption Zone)	Yes

Surrounding uses:

Location	Existing Land Uses	CLUP Designations	Zoning Designations
North	Surface parking lot	“Commercial Use; Low-Rise Intensity”	“C”, Commercial
South	2-story commercial building	“Commercial Use, Mid-Rise Intensity”	“C”, Commercial
East	8-story mixed-use building	“Commercial Use, Mid and Low-Rise Intensities”	“C”, Commercial
West	Two 1-story commercial buildings	“Commercial Use, Mid-Rise Intensity”	“C”, Commercial

Findings of Fact

The findings of fact that support the approval of the proposal include the following:

1. The Historic Preservation Board recommended approval of project.
2. Affected utility companies have reviewed the proposed alley vacation and easement dedications and have no objections.
3. The alleyway vacation and easement dedications have been reviewed by City Staff via the DRC review process, and were no objections to the proposal.

Public Notification/Comments

The following has been completed to solicit input and provide notice of the application:

Type	Explanation
Neighborhood meeting completed	N/A
Courtesy notification mailed to all property owners within 1,000 feet of the subject property	04.24.09
Newspaper ad published	04.27.09
Posted property	05.01.09
Posted agenda on City web page/City Hall	05.01.09
Posted Staff report on City web page	05.08.09

The listing of property owners who returned the notification/comment form, including the date received, property owners name, address, object/no objection/no comment and verbatim comments are attached as Attachment E.

Respectfully submitted,

Eric Riel
Planning Director

Attachments:

- A. Historical Resources Department Staff report.
- B. Draft Ordinance – alley vacation and easement dedications.
- C. Resolution No. 2008-125.
- D. Resolution No. 2008-163.
- E. Synopsis of comments received from property owners within 1,000 feet.

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