



PLANNING & ZONING ADVISORY BOARD

Draft

Minutes of October 17, 2022

Meeting Called to order at 7:00 P.M.

1. ROLL CALL

P&Z Board Members

MEMBERS	10/17/2022	8/15/22	7/25/22	5/2/22	4/4/22	2/07/22	1/10/22	1/3/22	11/15/21	10/18/21
Jimmy Goulet	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
David Rouse	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	P
Jim Federici	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Lisa Dodge	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	A	P
Kelly Brown	P	P	A	P	P	P	A	P	P	P
Jeremy Katzman	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Alex Weisberg	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Candy Coyne	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
William Barkins	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
James Curran	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P

Reappointed ** Resigned * New appointment*

STAFF PRESENT: *Jason Chockley, Assistant Director of Community Development
Brandon Johnson, City Planner*

APPLICANTS: *Dennis Mele., Greenspoon Marder, LLP, Agent
Alan Bash, Nur-ul-Islam, Mosque President
Kem Husain, Nur-ul-Islam, School President
Salah Elroweny, Innovative Group, Inc., Architect*

2. P&Z BOARD - MINUTES - WAIVE/APPROVE MINUTES OF 8/15/2022:

Motion to waive the reading of the minutes made by Jeremy Katzman and seconded by Candace Coyne. All ayes on voice vote. **MOTION WAS APPROVED.** Motion to approve the minutes made by Alex Weisberg and seconded by Jeremy Katzman. All ayes on voice vote. **MOTION WAS APPROVED.**

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

None

4. NEW BUSINESS:

A) NUR-UL-ISLAM

- 1) VARIANCE #V 10-6-21*
- 2) SITE PLAN AMENDMENT #SPA 10-1-21
- 3) PLAT AMENDMENT #PA 4-2-22

Chairman Rouse turned the item 4A over to Mr. Chockley.

Mr. Chockley said I will do an overall summary of all three staff reports so that we have the entire set of circumstances laid out. The applicant has a presentation to do as well which covers all items grouped together. Before you tonight is a site plan amendment, a variance, and a plat amendment. The property itself is 4.2 acres in size and is located at 10600 SW 59th Avenue, Cooper City, Florida. The site plan amendment is to alter the site, adding a new three-story building and a new mosque with three minarets, and a dome roof within their existing Cooper City property. They do also own the north piece on the other side of 59th which lies in the town of Davie. The proposed school building has ground floor covered parking with school recreation space on the second floor and middle school classrooms on the third floor. The proposed building will be a little over 14,000 square feet, and will hold an additional 135 students increasing the total enrollment from 425 to 560 students. If the school building is approved, it will have 34,289 square feet of school buildings, 5,025 square feet of library, 2,225 square feet of shared admin office and 9,015 square feet of cafeteria multipurpose space. The new two-story mosque building totals 11,927 square feet with an open, no fixed seats worship area on both floors along with restrooms and storage closets. On the roof of this building are three minaret towers, one at 100 feet, two more at seventy feet, along with the dome height at fifty-one feet. Those will be covered in the variance application, subsequently. The site plan modifications throughout the site include new parking areas, additional water retention areas and some landscape changes. Central Broward has since approved the proposed drainage plan. The landscape alteration plans will result in a payment to the Tree Canopy Trust Fund of the City for \$2,400. Offsite work includes two road widening projects. The first is the widening of SW 106th Avenue at the intersection of 59th Street to create a dedicated left turn lane onto SW 59th Street. The second is to widen SW 59th Street at 106th Avenue to allow for a dedicated left turn lane out onto 106th Avenue going northbound. In addition to the above, the proportionate share costs for roadway trips added to the Griffin Road and Stirling Road intersections at 106th Avenue, equates out to \$23,366 total for both projects, respectively. A revised parent drop off and stacking plan is proposed. It includes staff members stationed at numerous locations to ensure an organized and efficient drop off. 7:30 AM is drop off and 2:45, 2:55 and 3:07 PM is pickup of the students. Included in the backup materials is a letter from the school, committing to an alternate arrival plan requiring parents to access the school entrance via 110th Avenue from the west if stacking delays are experienced on along 106th Avenue. The parking requirements associated with this new buildings are met with the restriction that the cafeteria, a multipurpose hall, only be used for assembly purposes during the weekends, and that school releases students on Friday at 11:50 AM to ensure parking for Friday prayers which start at 1:30 PM. Some historical background on the property itself: On 10/21/1999, pre annexation paperwork was filed with Cooper City, which included a letter to previous planning director noting the Broward County approvals for the construction of 36,000 square feet, full-time school and building mosque facility. That letter is included in your backup. On 9/7/2000, Broward County approved a height variance for a twenty-eight foot tall school building, thirty feet for the cafeteria, thirty-five feet for a mosque, and a one hundred foot tower instead of the max allowable height of twenty feet. The variance approval expired 180 days per county code section 39-43. That is also included in your backup. On 10/1/2000, Nur-ul-Islam was annexed into the City of Cooper City from Broward County. Relative to the variance, this is a variance petition seeking deviation from Broward County Code section 39-367 and 39-103, which limits the height of two stories to twenty feet plus 25% for the towers and domes if a building is located within 200 feet of a residentially zoned property. The mosque building being proposed is 192 feet from a residentially proposed property. On the roof of this building are three minaret towers, one at 100 feet and two more at seventy feet along with the dome at fifty-one feet. The new mosque building at thirty-five feet and the minaret at 100 feet had been previously approved from Broward County in September of 2000. The request is to restore the mosque building on the site plan as originally approved by the

County along with two new seventy foot minarets and a fifty-one foot dome. Justification for the variance includes numerous citations in the justifications statement, which is included in the backup, but the main purpose of it is to ensure reasonable amount of visibility to a passerby, and to serve as a beacon for the Islamic faith. Staff has determined that the application meets all the submittal requirements for view and processing of a variance petition, and therefore may be recommended for approved. The plat amendment is basically bringing the property into compliance with the proposed uses. The square footages on the proposed plat will match what is proposed in your site plan before you. That includes 11,927 square feet of mosque, 8,545 square feet of existing, 3,382 feet proposed, 34,289 square feet of school use, 17,880 existing, 16,409 proposed, 9,015 square feet of existing multipurpose, which is ancillary both to the mosque and the school. 5,025 square feet of that is the library, 2,225 square feet of the mosque school administrative offices, currently in use. It is noted that no daycare or preschool services will be permitted without the approval of Broward County Board of Commissioners. The above numbers equate out to 62,481 square feet of buildings and covered areas on the 4.2 acre property. Action is requested from the P&Z Board to make a recommendation on the site plan, variance and plat, which will then be forwarded to City Commission for further action.

Chairman Rouse turned it over to the Board for any questions they might have.

Mr. Curran asked if, regarding the size of the church or the school and the church on the plan, if it was going from twenty feet to twenty-five feet for a three-story building.

[Inaudible discussion]

Mr. Chockley said the twenty feet right now is the current code allowance. That specifies the three-story for the school is at 35 feet. The variance that's included is a twenty-five foot building height that is for the mosque because that's within the 200 feet. The school building that is three-stories is out of that 200 foot radius requirement, is therefore entitled up to forty feet, so that is not part of the variance.

Ms. Brown said that she had a question with reference to the stacking plan for the vehicles that are queuing up for pickup and drop off. She asked, at the busiest times of stacking for that queue, if the entire queue is fully contained on the property and off of 106th.

Mr. Chockley said it is anticipated that enough stacking will take place on site. Right now, obviously they are functioning and I don't believe there is too much backup, but they are adding a 135 additional students.

Ms. Brown said okay. She said I have a follow up question on that which may be for you or for the petitioner. With reference to drop off and pick up times, she asked if parents or individuals that are dropping off and picking up, would be able to enter and wait on property, and enter the queue prior to certain pickup time or if they will have to queue up off property on say, 106th or 59th and wait for the school to open the gate for folks to come in and queue up for pickup. I know with the elementary schools, they open the gate at a certain time so what you end up with is a long line of cars that are just sort of waiting until they open the gate to enter property, and then they can fully queue up on property.

Mr. Chockley said that would be a procedural question for the petitioner.

Ms. Brown said okay, then I'll ask that at another time. She asked where are we are, generally speaking, with the County on getting a left turn arrow on the light on 106th and Stirling.

Mr. Chockley said that is part of Kingfisher's approval. Part of Kingfisher's approval is widening Stirling and 106th once that improvement is done and all of their units are CO'ed so we get the max scenario from their improvement. They are submitting that request and analysis to Broward County. Ultimately Broward County has to grant it, but that request will be done post-construction by CC Devco.

Ms. Brown asked if there was some sort of standard metric at which Broward County has to grant it or if it was fully subjective.

Mr. Chockley said, to be honest, I don't know what threshold they would grant the dedicated left.

Mr. Weisberg asked if the left hand turning signal was a condition of the Kingfisher project being completed.

Mr. Chockley said the intersection improvements have to be constructed. Obviously if they're widening and increasing the stacking lane, that changes today's scenario. Compared to once the new improvements are operational, the demands will be different.

Mr. Weisberg asked if this project was conditioned on that happening.

Mr. Chockley said no.

Mr. Weisberg said he saw somewhere that it was conditioned upon, and the City recommended, that they want this to be finalized before this is approved.

Mr. Chockley said that is for their improvements. Kingfisher is improving Stirling at 106th. This proposed site plan is requiring the mosque to widen 59th Street and to widen 106th, further to the north of the intersection, making a left onto their site. For those two improvements, we are recommending those be conditions of approval that they need to be fully completed before they can submit in for a CO or a temporary CO.

Chairman Rouse turned it over to the Board for any additional questions they might have for Staff. There were none.

Chairman Rouse turned it over to the petitioner for their presentation.

Mr. Mele, on behalf of the petitioner, said first let me apologize for my voice. I was at a football game in Ann Arbor on Saturday and I think I was cheering a little too much. Before I start with my presentation, let me try to answer a couple of questions that were already asked. As Mr. Chockley said, we have to make these road improvements at 59th and at 106th prior to getting a CO and increasing the size of our school and our mosque. Secondly, Kingfisher is making the road improvement at the corner of Stirling and 106th. Regarding the left turn arrow, it's my understanding what has to happen after that is they have to look at a warrant study for a new signal that will do the same thing to determine if there enough left turns to warrant putting that left turn arrow in there. The County has jurisdiction over that. The

thought is widen the intersection, get the people in the houses, and then count the traffic turning left. The more people you have turning left, the more likelihood the County is to approve the left turn arrow. And that is all based on numbers. There are two traffic engineers here tonight, one for us and one for the City. They know more about it than I do, but at least that's my understanding. I know that everybody knows the location, but here is an aerial photo just showing you where we are near the corner of Stirling and 106th. Then just zeroing in on it a little bit more, you see where we're at. You notice that we mention some of the other uses around us. We actually have some input from some of our neighbors that's positive, so we want to make sure we highlight that. And then again, just zeroing in a little more, you can see 59th Street; you can see the intersection of 59th and 106th. We'll have a drawing in a moment that'll show you those expanded intersections and turn lanes and so on. I need to look at my paper copy while I talk about this. I can see everything better. What we've tried to do here is the buildings that are in that kind of bluish color, those are already there and you can see how they're labeled. You see where, in the middle, you've got the primary school. Over on the left, you've got the library. Then at the bottom are the existing school buildings, the administration building in the center, and the cafeteria to the lower right. Then the new buildings are shown in yellow. The large one in the upper right is the new mosque building. You would see how we pulled out the dome and the minaret locations. You've got the 100 foot minaret which is kind of in the center. Then you have the two seventies that are along the northeastern portion of the property. You also are seeing all of our entrances and our parking. Oh, I should have answered the question about the stacking. There is sufficient room for everyone to stack on site. We are showing a capacity for thirty cars at one time. The maximum demand we believe we will have at any one time is nineteen so we have enough stacking to do it on site. We will not keep people waiting outside. We'll let them come in. I understand what you're talking about, just driving by schools in the County and you see this sometimes on a main roadway. The whole right lane is blocked of people waiting to get in to pick or drop off. I guess it is worse in the afternoon especially when it rains. That's probably the time when you'd have the most people. Anyway, that plan is showing you what is there now and what we are proposing to add. And then this is just something to show it in a more architectural framework. You see the dome. You see the minarets, the two seventy footers and the 100 footer. You notice there's also a smaller dome on the building next to the 100 foot minaret. That one is okay on height because they're 200 feet away from the residential. One of our buildings is 192 feet away, so obviously the other ones are more than 200. This is just showing you from another angle looking south. If you were on 59th Street and looking south beyond our building would be Stirling Road in the distance. And then another angle, just looking at it from Stirling, now you notice that we don't front directly onto Stirling. There is another piece of property between us and Stirling that is owned by the Chabad, but it's vacant. We're looking at this as if that property was still vacant, and you're looking from Stirling Road. Then, these are just examples of other religious buildings that have certain architectural styles. I represent a lot of car dealers and one of the things I often have to deal with is the manufacturer tells the car dealer what the building needs to look like. In this case it's not a manufacturer, but history and years and years of certain type of architectural styles that denote a mosque, and the type of school buildings, and other things that we have here.

[Inaudible discussion]

Mr. Mele said what we are really trying to show you here are the three minarets. See the 100 footer on the left, the two seventy footers to the right, and then the two domes. The dome between the two seventy foot minarets is the one that requires a height variance because it's a little bit over fifty feet. That is showing you a view from Stirling. These are just different examples. Oddly enough, I've seen the one in

Dearborn that is shown in the upper left. It's not too far from Ann Arbor. I've also seen the one in Toledo a number of times. If you ever drive on I-75 going through Ohio, you can't miss the Islamic Society of Greater Toledo, Ohio. It's a beautiful building right off the expressway. And then you see other examples. We're just trying to show that the domes and the minarets are part of the architecture for this type of a religious institution. You see them at various places. These are just some examples in the United States. At the University of Tampa, it's more of just an architectural style that they've adopted. It is beautiful. If you've seen the University of Tampa and that building, it's using an architectural style that might be somewhat similar even though it's not a mosque. Then these are just examples of minarets from different places around the world. You see that sometimes there are three; sometimes there are four. Sometimes there's more; sometimes there's less but these are all examples of the architectural style. This is a letter from the rabbi from the Chabad. They are our neighbor. The Chabad and the mosque have a long history of supporting each other's efforts. When the Chabad has been on the agenda at various hearings, the folks from Nur-ul-Islam had come out to support them. When we're on the agenda, they are supporting us. The rabbi could not be here tonight because today is a holiday and he has observances of that holiday, but you see his letter of support. We also have letters from eighty-two residents of Cooper City. We had more than eighty-two, but some of them I saw had Davie addresses. We took those out. These are all residents of Cooper City, many of whom are members of the congregation, but many of them are not. I have hard copies of the letters in case you want to see them because I know you can't read them when the print is so small. Mr. Bash will hand those out if you'd like to look at those letters in more detail. I'll be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Ms. Coyne asked what the proximity of these residents is to this particular proposed development.

Mr. Mele said when you see the addresses, you're going to see addresses from all over Cooper City. They are not from any one specific area. I had simply asked the clients to get letters. I tell them that it is always good to have members of the public saying something positive about the application. I said, "Let's reach out to folks we know in Cooper City and see if people would be supportive." And so, they live in various parts of the City.

Ms. Coyne asked if there was public notice for all of the neighbors to see along 106th.

Mr. Mele said I know there is notice given, but I think staff would be better able to tell you exactly what that notice is.

Mr. Chockley said they were required to do a 400 foot notification from any property with a 400 foot radius. Staff had encouraged additional outreach to neighboring residents and the neighborhood communities but that was not a requirement by code or statute. That was up to the applicant to take it upon themselves and initiate.

Ms. Coyne asked how far the radius is and how far down 106th that would reach.

Mr. Chockley said on 106th, it crosses into what is the Rabbi Pinny's property. It crosses into the Sarah David piece which is vacant. It does go north into what would become Kingfisher, but obviously that's not developed now. There are not many residences. To the north is mainly Davie residences. It does extend to the south to the first couple of streets within Embassy Lakes. Some of Embassy was noticed with that 400 feet.

Mr. Weisberg asked if the only reason that these variances are needed is because one of the buildings is going to be 193 feet away instead of 200. He asked if this would not be necessary if the building was seven or eight feet further.

Mr. Chockley said some would still be needed. From zero to 200 feet, it caps at a twenty foot building height. From 200 feet to 400 feet, it goes up to forty. All structures are within the 400 feet, which would've kicked in at forty. Even if they were at the furthest points, they would still need variances. They just wouldn't be as significant.

Mr. Weisberg asked for confirmation that this was basically due to the minarets.

Mr. Chockley said this would also include the dome at fifty-one feet, the two seventy foot minarets and the 100 foot minaret as well.

Mr. Weisberg asked if the City limit of height is forty feet.

Mr. Chockley said no. It's actually a Broward County code section. They are still under the Broward County Code. That is twenty feet plus five feet for parapets within 200 feet of residential. The mosque building sits within 200 feet of residential.

Dr. Barkins asked what the tallest building is, overall, in Cooper City.

Mr. Chockley said the tallest, as far as building height, would be Baffly Woods at four stories right here next to the golf course.

Dr. Barkins asked if that was at approximately fifty feet.

Mr. Chockley said yes, it's probably forty-five to fifty feet.

Dr. Barkins said to get a perspective on the 400 foot radius, that's about a football field with end zones, where the notifications were made. It seems for a building this size, it should have gone out a little bit more.

Mr. Chockley said staff had a recommendation to do outreach, but again, we can't mandate that they do more than our code and state statute requirements. Our code actually exceeds state statute requirements.

[Inaudible discussion]

Ms. Brown said the building itself is beautiful. The architecture is beautiful. I did a little bit of cursory research today to get some historical contexts for the minarets, their purpose and all of that. What I did not see anywhere was any kind of height requirement or proportionate height requirement steeped within that architectural sort of context and history. Because the 100 feet and the two seventy feet minarets are obviously well outside what's approved, and also pretty inconsistent with the general aesthetic of the area, she asked why those heights were chosen.

Mr. Salah Elroweny introduced himself as the architect from Innovative Group, Inc. of 480 South Cypress Road, Pompano Beach, Florida. In regard to the architecture, historically, the minaret and the dome became part of the mosque design 1,400 years ago. Originally, the main purpose for the minaret was to call for prayer similar to the bell tower in the church. In time, it became kind of a symbolic recognition of a mosque. When you see a minaret, you know that it is a mosque. If you don't see the minaret, you don't recognize it as a mosque. Actually, I think the minaret is way more important than the dome when it comes to that image recognition and how it is important to people of that faith to realize that that's a mosque. I will say that the minaret is more important than the dome because a dome is more commonly used, for example, on a Roman temple or other building. The minaret is more specific to the mosque. Now, when it comes to height, it's really, a proportion of the building. We are not out of context on that. It's really the tower height which is more in proportion to the building. The 100 feet came from the original design that was approved by Broward County back in 2000. The height is more related to the proportion to the dome. There is actually no specific rule of thumb, but you see the minaret is two times the height of the dome. It frames the dome. Those kinds of special buildings are unique. Their uniqueness sets it apart from the residential. We don't want it to match a residential home and lose that uniqueness. Also, if we are part of Cooper City, there's no variance required for the tower. The zoning code of Cooper City allows those symbolic towers and dome which are not used for specific occupation. It's not a 10-story residential building. The zoning code allowed this. We don't need a variance if we are under the Cooper City. We are still going with Broward County 2000 code which was really also limited. Now, the height restriction under the current Broward County code is much higher than the twenty feet. I hope that answers your question. I do apologize for my voice. It's not from a football game. It's just that this is my third presentation today.

Ms. Brown said thank you for that very comprehensive answer. She asked if he felt that the general aesthetic and the architectural hallmarks cannot be achieved at less than a 100 feet and seventy feet respectively.

Mr. Elroweny said, as an architect, I never tell anybody I cannot achieve something. We can do anything, design wise.

Ms. Brown said I noticed the Islamic Cultural Center of New York, when you were showing the other buildings in your presentation, has a little bit of a different aesthetic. It still sort of speaks to those architectural hallmarks without having the minaret quite so high above the dome.

Mr. Elroweny said this is because the one in New York, actually located on 96th Street & 2nd Avenue, is a much taller building. The actual building and the dome is almost five stories high.

Ms. Brown said that would be about fifty feet.

Mr. Elroweny said yes. The whole building is much higher and the dome is a different proportion. To answer the first question, everything could be achieved, whether it's at 100, eighty, or eighty-five. The 100 feet was used because that was in the original design which was already approved. It was also used because it is close to the client's heart and because of how symbolic it is.

Ms. Coyne asked if he was saying that those heights can be adjusted. You said anything is possible.

Mr. Elroweny said it is possible. We designed these proportions based in the image we want to achieve. The tower is very important to that mosque building. Without it, it's not a mosque. That is how people assign meaning to the building.

Ms. Coyne said but it could be adjusted.

Mr. Elroweny said yes. It could be adjusted.

Mr. Katzman asked if Mr. Mele could address some of the other heights of other religious institutions in Cooper City. I know that, particularly on Flamingo Road, there are churches and synagogues that are fairly tall.

Mr. Mele said I don't have measurement but you see some of the pictures here. I know they're not all in Cooper City. Ukrainian Orthodox and couple of these others are in adjoining community but they have some tall elements. St. Mark Catholic Church is in Southwest Ranches on Flamingo Road. Their bell tower is a 100 feet just for comparison. You see that picture all the way over on the right and you see the bell tower on the right hand portion of the picture.

Mr. Katzman asked if that was technically located in Southwest Ranches.

Mr. Mele said that is in Southwest Ranches.

Mr. Katzman said it is visible from Cooper City.

Mr. Mele said yes.

Mr. Katzman said I actually went out to the site and I want to thank Alan for hosting me. One of your colleagues attended as well. I had a chance to walk around the facility and understand the scope of what this is and where everything is located. I was curious after looking through the book and hearing about the heights. I can say that I am confident that this would be an addition to our community. I understand that the purpose of this is to welcome the Muslim community who can then see these structures from the road or wherever they are. I don't think these are going to be seen by other residents or passersby as out of place. This is really a mini religious center for Cooper City. We have the Chabad of Southwest Broward located there. We have a church located there. We have the Nur-ul-Islam located there and all are within walking distance. I really think as the value that these organizations bring to our community, we need to show them the same respect and welcome them to express themselves. Another question that I asked, which might be of relevance to my fellow Board members, is regarding the structural design of these. I was concerned, if we have a storm, if a minaret is going to be launched into the neighbor's house. I was assured that these will be built to high level hurricane code where we are not going to have any situations like that. I understand some of the questions about the height, but I think you have to look at the perspective of the entire property and realize that this is going to be an addition to the property and it will welcome our Muslim community to Cooper City. I think it's a great project and I look forward to hearing what everyone else has to say.

Chairman Rouse said you had mentioned a bell tower. He asked if there was going to be a bell or speaker system in these minarets.

Mr. Elroweny said it is similar to a bell tower in a church but there will be no sound or speakers coming out of it.

Mr. Mele said he had asked the same question earlier. I've just seen it in a movie where, if you're in a Middle Eastern country, somebody's actually up there calling you to prayer. We don't do that here. We have the internet and we have technology. We don't need to send somebody up there to do it. There are no speakers. There is no noise coming out of the minaret.

Mr. Alan Bash, president of the Nur-ul-Islam mosque said if you were to just cut the minaret off here, you'll get a stub. Then there would be no aesthetics. Also this is inward. It's not on Stirling Road. And, just to make that point, all of the neighbors around us, the Chabad, the church and the pet place, all support us. This includes every neighbor all entirely around us. God willing, I would hope that this would be a beacon of consensus in our community. Just like on the Fourth of July, we light up here the colors of America, just like on Christmas and with the religious holidays with Jewish people, it is our dream that we are beacon of unity in our community. I just want to make that point about how it would look.

Mr. Katzman said it looked like, in 1999, on the pre annexation paperwork, we were looking construction of about 36,000 square feet. Now we're looking at 62,000 square feet now. He asked if that was correct.

Mr. Chockley said the 36,000 square feet from the County was specific to the school itself, not total on the property. The platted square footage for all uses on the property will equate out to 62,000 square feet. The school buildings themselves, if this new building gets approved, would be just under 35,000 for classroom uses. The admin offices are shared and the library also contributes. With this proposal, they would be including the shared uses over the original 36,000, but that was specific to school.

Chairman Rouse opened the public hearing for Nur-ul-Islam Variance at 7:45 PM.

Dr. Kem Husain introduced himself as the president of the school community at Nur-ul-Islam. He said we had this plan approved by Broward County for a 100 foot facility. We've had people for quarter of a century or more who committed funds for this purpose. They are no longer alive, but their funds have been committed specifically to see that this mosque was erected with this style. From that perspective, we humbly ask that you approve as presented. We currently have to do a lot of juggling in our educational facility to facilitate the worshipers and the instructional leaders of our school community. For example, on Fridays, we would have to break up classrooms to convert it into prayer facilities to accommodate our congregation. By approving the school building and the mosque facility, you would've greatly enhanced our capacity to be able to deliver quality education to citizens of Cooper City and beyond. Our school has been in existence for over a quarter of century. We have graduated people directly into the university systems and into some of the Ivy League schools. These students have come back to our community and made significant contributions. We thank you for your consideration and your support along with our religious communities. You can rest assured, as you heard in some of the opening remarks about our presentation to the Town of Davie, when Chabad needed our support, we were there. And if tomorrow they were to become annexed into Cooper City by whatever fortune that that would be, we would stand ready to support them if they had to build a tower of 100 feet or more. So, we thank you again for your consideration and your support.

Mr. Alan Bash introduced himself as the president of the Nur-ul-Islam mosque. Dr. Kem is president of the academy. It just so happened that in 2000, when Cooper City approached us for voluntary incorporation, I was president at that time. At that time, people were encouraged to join Cooper City because contiguous property around us become part of the City. I was one of the first to sign that voluntary petition for incorporation. In that petition, as you see in your documents, I had also asked that whatever benefits we had from Broward County, for example, the approval of the 100 feet minaret that would also be approved as a condition which we stated in the letter that we were joining Cooper City. If you look at the annexation documents, there was a letter attached to it that says that whatever benefits that we get from Broward County, although it was a variance, we would've gotten same benefits when we get became incorporated. We actually stated it as a condition of joining Cooper City. That is what I just want to bring to your attention also. Thank you.

Mr. Chockley said to clarify that that letter is provided in the backup which does specifically have a narrative of what had been approved based on chronological order. Thank you.

Dr. Khan introduced himself as a former president of the mosque. I'd like just to say that when we presented this minaret issue to Broward County over 20 years ago, it was unanimously approved. Not only that, there was a comment made by the Commissioners that this would be a remarkable structure on the landscape of Cooper City representing something which is not there. It's unprecedented. And at that time, they made the point that Cooper City is a city of many churches and synagogues, but this is the only mosque you have. So, I would humbly request it you look upon this structure favorably. Thank you.

Chairman Rouse closed the public hearing for Nur-ul-Islam Variance at 7:53 PM.

Chairman Rouse turned it over to the Board for any questions they might have.

Ms. Brown said I just want to say that I think the building is beautiful. I think more options for places to worship and educate our children do nothing but enrich our community. I think having a religious center here in this location right next to Chabad is wonderful and this building would be a beautiful addition. I wonder if the petitioner is amenable to considering constructing this building as it is proposed with the adjustment of the minarets at say fifty and seventy feet versus eighty and 100 so we can have all of these things as well as a cohesive and comprehensive land use plan, stay within the general aesthetic of the area, and still maintain these religious hallmarks and the grandeur of this building. If my colleagues on the Board don't want to entertain anything like that, they can let me know and I can stop commenting.

Mr. Bash said in our revision, we were thinking of proposing 125 feet, but given the advice from our learned colleagues, they said, you couldn't get past 100 feet. We know that we couldn't do that so we stayed within the limit of the variance that you've already had as part of it. It's going to be very difficult for us. As I stood up in the mosque community twenty-five years ago, we asked for funds to build this building with the tower. And every year since then, in our blessed month of Ramadan, we have been collecting. Remember, we can't build this on any loan. It has to be with hard earned dollars and donations from our community. Every year, consistently, we have been seeking funds to build this. A lot of people have passed on, long before Covid and during the Covid time. It is a testament to their legacy that we are doing this and we'd like your consideration. Thank you.

Mr. Weisberg said, with all respect to my colleague here, I also believe that this would be a great addition to our community. Somebody spoke about a message of unity and a religious unity. I think that is very welcome, especially in this day and age. I also don't believe that the way it is currently planned with the current height that would be really a problem to me. I don't think it's going to stand out so much that I would want to go against the wishes of the architect and everyone else that's pushing for this and supports this. The only thing I would ask is that the approval be conditioned upon, as the City has requested, the completion of the two street widening projects. But other than that, I like it. I like it the way it is.

Chairman Rouse said I'm a no vote on this. It is the over step of the two minarets. I don't even have a problem with the 100, but it just seems it's an overreach, with when you have not only one, but you have two towers that go beyond the code, and you have a dome that's beyond the code. It's not even close to within what the code represents so I will be a no in this vote.

[Inaudible discussion]

Mr. Curran said, just so we can all get a scope of the size, I'm guessing that the billboard at 106th and Stirling right now is probably twenty-five feet.

Mr. Chockley said it is smaller than your average highway billboard but I'd say probably twenty feet.

Mr. Curran said okay. I just wanted that for a scope in my mind. I can let everybody here know that I can see that billboard from my backyard. And I live in Embassy. For somebody to say it would only reach one street, I don't know if that's accurate. I remember what happened when the storage building came in at three-stories. Once the community was invited in to hear about it that changed everybody's mind as far as what was going to happen. There was no meeting and there was no mailer. I didn't receive anything and I know that I'm within the 400 feet. I know that. It makes me hesitant on it for one simple reason that the neighborhood doesn't know about it. Thank you.

Mr. Katzman said I just want to clarify that there's a big difference between the public storage unit and a religious organization that brings a lot of value to our community. I get where you are coming from regarding the comparison of the height of the public storage unit, which was a lot lower, but I don't think it's there. None of the issues with that storage unit come into play here. These are aesthetic. They're cultural and symbolic and aesthetic. And I think we need to keep that in mind as a Board. We are making a decision tonight that will have an impact in our community. It will say whether we are welcoming to all faiths or not.

Chairman Rouse said I really kind of took exception to that. Just because I don't like a seventy foot tower doesn't mean I'm not welcoming. I would be welcoming at a thirty-five foot tower. It's the fact that they chose that tower height. It has no relevance to whether we are welcoming or not. So, I'd take offense with that.

Mr. Katzman said my intent was not to offend anybody. I just think that our Board and the City are making a position on whether we're welcoming to their religious architectural structures.

MOTION: TO APPROVE NUR-UL-ISLAM VARIANCE PETITION #V 10-6-21 CONTINGENT UPON TWO ROAD WIDENING PROJECTS MADE BY JEREMY KATZMAN AND SECONDED BY ALEX WEISBERG. THERE WERE ALL AYES ON THE ROLL CALL VOTE WITH DAVID ROUSE, JIM FEDERICI & KELLY VANBUSKIRK DISSENTING. MOTION WAS APPROVED.

MOTION: TO APPROVE NUR-UL-ISLAM SITE PLAN AMENDMENT CONTINGENT UPON TWO ROAD WIDENING PROJECTS MADE BY ALEX WEISBERG AND SECONDED BY JEREMY KATZMAN. THERE WERE ALL AYES ON THE ROLL CALL VOTE WITH DAVID ROUSE & KELLY VANBUSKIRK DISSENTING. MOTION WAS APPROVED.

MOTION: TO APPROVE NUR-UL-ISLAM SITE PLAN AMENDMENT CONTINGENT UPON TWO ROAD WIDENING PROJECTS MADE BY ALEX WEISBERG AND SECONDED BY JAMES CURRAN. THERE WERE ALL AYES ON THE ROLL CALL VOTE WITH DAVID ROUSE & KELLY VANBUSKIRK DISSENTING. MOTION WAS APPROVED.

5. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT REPORT:

Chairman Rouse turned it over to Mr. Chockley to inform what petitions they have upcoming.

Mr. Chockley said in regard to upcoming meetings, we do not have a specific date set yet. We just finished the last DRC with the La Palma subdivision proposal which is back in Royal Palm Ranches. They have a couple corrections to make. They will be submitting to go to the Preservation Board first. Then they will submitting to the P&Z Board. I would anticipate at this point, maybe December, but we will follow up with everybody once that date has been set.

6. BOARD MEMBER CONCERNS:

Chairman Rouse turned it over to the Board for any concerns they might have.

Ms. Coyne said that she had been to Sunshine training a number of times. She asked if it was a yearly requirement.

Mr. Chockley said it is not necessarily a requirement where if you don't attend that you cannot serve on a Board. There are refreshers that we do offer once a year. For many people that are new on the Board, it is their first training. Some of the Sunshine criteria does change from time to time so it is strongly encouraged. However, you won't be removed from the Board if you are not able to attend.

7. ADJOURNMENT:

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 PM.