

**Sea Level Rise/Historic Preservation – Public Dialogue on “Creative Zoning”
12/20/2017, 7-8:30PM, FIU MBUS, 420 Lincoln Road. 30-40 people in attendance.**

John and Tiffany Introduction: passion for historic preservation and urgency around sea level rise. FIU as a neutral platform for conversation at MBUS. Most enlivened conversations were initiated around zoning. We communicated with the MB Planning Department and they said that zoning could be an important topic to cover.

Will be looking at buildings in the lowest part of Flamingo Park and talking about the pieces that could be looked at – what are the options that are available?

- Why didn't we choose a waterfront neighborhood to discuss tonight?
 - o Because Tatum Waterway (waterfront community) isn't "unique" enough. Flamingo has scale and size of buildings that are also at waterfront
 - o Also, fair to say that what we talk about here can be transferrable to other places in the city

**First property: 636 Michigan Ave – 1936 – two one story buildings, made out of concrete.
100% lot coverage**

- By 2060 mean SL (high tide) would be just about at the front door of the building.
- If building is above 8 feet we could keep it and be happy, but what about the FEMA 8-foot federal rule?
- Some things that can be done to a building like this to save it:
 - o To save the structure and maintain the character of the building without any addition the answer is there is no way, but if you're able to accept that today's structure will evolve into a new structure, then we might need to demolish part of the building. If you can demolish it then you may have economic capability to raise it – raise about 4.5-5 feet (more height)
 - o If not financially viable there's no point to changing the zoning for something that no one is going to build – if you need more height to make it financially viable, then that has to be part of the zoning
 - o Premise of possibilities:
 - Elevating existing structure
 - Demolishing and rebuilding (recreating/replicating structure)
 - Augmenting existing structure (adding to the structure)
 - First floor underwater, or second floor entrance, first floor garage etc.
 - Repurposing structure
 - Evolved blueprint/calculus
 - o Tel Aviv – incentive by giving people two-three extra floors which allowed for increased preservation – incentives must be developed
 - o Have design guidelines to mimic the current buildings so they don't lose their integrity and original character

- Must have an economic assessment and must do this first and then figure out zoning in order to encourage people to make changes that are viable. Until we start doing that, then things we can't control, like flood insurance, will do it for us. Should be factoring economics into conversations now.
- Keep conversation open because we might hit on something – do we preserve these buildings in a totally new way than we've been doing in the past?
- Shrinking the number of units in the buildings – the London House that became affordable housing – city took it over and renovated it, it's beautifully preserved, but it's less units and cost taxpayers tons of money. While we're looking to evolve to the challenges of SLR and factors out of our control, we are also faced with housing crisis and part of solution should take into account the supply of housing in the market.
- Think about types of adhesion for these facades – using older facades onto newer structures. Integrating a new structure with the old façade by adhering it to new structure.
 - This process is called skinning – vitamin shop on 5th street did this – few people that do this – they skin the façade and put them in protective water and then when the structure is built they come in and put it back on – expensive but possible.
- Connecting adjoining building – aggregation incentive for units to join – to get more space and then build up.
- Maybe we should think about what is below 8ft? Below 8ft becomes uninhabitable.
 - Zoning can change to count anything below BFE as uninhabitable and would not be counted on FAR so that you have a 0 lot-line and can build above so first floor can become something else
- Can we more easily create a calculus/design guideline without current conditions in mind and think about creating another unified district based on similar guidelines from the past.
 - Must rethink all guidelines and be more creative, not sticking to past guidelines because they are outdated and ineffective today...
 - Not a matter of authenticity but a matter of making it completely new – not a Disney-like replica.
- Why do people want to come here?
 - If our economic identity and culture is tied to our historic district, then if we destroy one of our great assets how do we replace that value.
 - It's already destroyed, beyond the point of repair – lots of the beautiful historic places are gone...
- Talking about Flamingo park – there's an economic and aesthetic and cultural allure. Changing and modifying it is unthinkable. Why go beyond “elevate”, “recreate” or “augment” possibilities if they haven't been exhausted yet?
 - But would it still be the same structure if we did those three things?
 - It would be an adapted version of the structure.
 - You can't have it both ways – either you lose it or you alter it...

- How do you get fire requirements for a building where you're not going to build steps to the street – what it means is that by raising a building up you're creating a new building with an old building structure on top...
 - You could also add new structure on top of old structure for adaptation.
- Additionally, this building is very horizontal and only has one entrance – difficult for architect.
- How to keep something that we know that's our asset but modify it to meet the new conditions?
 - Great example of city that did this – Seattle (early 1900). You can see an underground city there. The difference is the structures were made of brick so they were able to withstand additional weight and height. We should consider if the structure can withstand the upcoming conditions (water, building around possibilities, etc.).
 - If developer comes in and says to do something different, then you lose community trust.
- How to make the changes financially suitable for owners?
 - Adding floors adds square footage, which increases financial viability.
- Assuming that these buildings are developers, but condo associations are different situations. Could imagine condo association gearing up because economic assessment is so complicated.
 - How many are rental and how many are condo associations? Only one in the 10 John looked at, was a condo...

SLR and flooding are a constant and something we haven't seen before. We're missing how assessment of economics work and it will filter down to design. You can't zone each building differently so it'll be by area and designation. Things will change and look different – some factors won't be in the hands of the community. Have to look at infrastructure. Insurance is in the process of changing and it is the tip of the spear. Communities must look at economic assessment first before moving to zoning changes. We must have the business community engaged and factor in things that are happening that aren't within our control (like Washington, etc.). Must think about how to run economics.

- The only way a political conversation will come to pass is if we continue to have conversations like this and support this sort of education and awareness. We have to find our own solutions, because our social fabric and physical elements are all different to other cities'. We can learn from everyone, but must come up with our own solutions too.
- Old Motel Ankara (now Gates hotel) near 23rd street from a 2-story structure to a 7-story structure – gaining value. We should talk about and think about bringing value to our structures.

Netherlands lessons:

- Learn to figure out ways to live with the water
- They have a unified consensus opinion that the gov't will take care of citizens – they have water boards that are powerful and can do what needs to be done to

save citizens and adapt to the sea level conditions. We have to agree that this is a major issue.

- When we get to that place then we can start getting somewhere, otherwise we won't get anywhere.
- Can we change a federal rule? – Yes, if we make enough of a case. But city must act on citizen's behalf.

Condo building example – 940 8th street

- Convert first floor to new uses and add floors on top
- If you own one apartment in a condo building – the economic incentive has to be equal for all owners of the apartments in the buildings. How does this work?
- Create a value/an entitlement for the owners, etc.
 - Rooftop restaurant?
 - Heliport? (in jest)
 - Community garden?
 - 5 floors of apartments....
 - Increasing residential is the better way to fund adaptation of the structures. But then it changes the individual apartments' benefits, etc.
- But then bringing up the building might cast shadows – depends on street size and surrounding structures.
 - Formula may have something to do with neighbors
 - Is historic district still intact if we build up by 5 floors?
- Different architects would look at this building in different ways – keeping different elements of the building intact to keep the character of the building
 - So, we should tell the architect what to design, as opposed to letting them do what they want with the rules they get (square footage and usage)
- But if we want to keep the scale of our neighborhood – since we're going to lose the first floor then let's add one floor – one-for-one.
- Flamingo Park renovation on 11th street shows the complexities that each of the properties are currently going through – this is more realistic because we'll see the streets will keep being raised.
 - Sidewalks are a disaster on 10th street for example – so we also have to think about integrating properties with city elements (sidewalks, streetlights, signage, etc.) Today's changes aren't working because property owners are in a difficult predicament.
 - We should probably decide which buildings are worth saving and which aren't.
- “Change of use” question
- Put the options on the table and see what the neighborhood will say – the character of Flamingo Park will change and the only proper way to pursue that is to collect what the opportunities are by communicating with the community so they can embrace it.

- Property owners aren't crazy, they understand the value of their structure. So, the market will decide.

Why can't we trust the architects of today? Why are the architects of 1940 more reliant in our minds than those of today?

- In a historic district these architects are time proven – architects from yesterday are representative of a different time/place.
 - But is that historic weight intrinsically valuable enough to maintain the buildings?

Why not designate what is truly significant and not the entire area of the historic fabric – we have to choose because of economics, etc.

- This might be because we have the largest collection of buildings from this time period and that designates our preservation district.

Changing our “culture” and historic preservation can actually create a new reason for tourism and visitors.

- Maybe a new higher park on top of these buildings (like highline) like a public access park built high up.

Mixing both a new building and infrastructure and keeping the old fabric.

- Every building will have its own design since everyone is different? Is there nothing that unifies all of these old and new structures?