

MIAMI BEACH

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COMMITTEE MEMORANDUM

TO: Land Use and Sustainability Committee

FROM: Alina T. Hudak, City Manager

DATE: January 25, 2023

SUBJECT: **Proposed Overlay Regulations for Century Lane and Farrey Lane, Located In The RM-1 Zoning District on Belle Isle, to Preserve the Low-Scale Residential Character of the Neighborhood.**

HISTORY

On October 26, 2022, at the request of Commissioner Alex Fernandez, the City Commission referred the subject Ordinance to the Land Use and Sustainability Committee (LUSC) and the planning Board (C4 C). On November 18, 2022, the LUSC discussed and continued the proposal to January 25, 2023. Additionally, the item sponsor indicated he will be meeting with the affected stakeholders and surrounding residents to discuss appropriate revisions to the draft overlay.

As noted in the attached referral memo and supplement, which includes a map, the subject overlay would apply to properties with a lot line on Century Lane or Farrey Lane on the north side of Belle Isle. In particular, the item sponsor has requested that the overlay include the following components:

1. Preserve the low-scale residential character of the neighborhood.
2. Promote resilience of both existing structures and new development.
3. Encourage property owners to preserve existing architectural styles and incorporate existing architecture styles in new construction.
4. Limit the height of single-family residential homes to two stories.
5. Increase setbacks for active roof decks.
6. Limit maximum lot aggregation.

ANALYSIS

Development History

Both Century Lane and Farrey Lane were primarily developed with single-story bungalows, constructed between 1940 and 1941. The lots on Century Lane and Farrey Lane, which range in size from under 3,000 square feet up to 4,500 square feet, are among the smallest individual lots within any RM-1 multi-family zoning district in the city. As noted in the 1952 plat book (see attached 1952 plat book map), Century Lane contained 12 individual lots and Farrey Lane contained 14 individual lots, most of which exist today.

These lots were actually subdivided from the original platting, as seen in the 1935 plat book.

The original bungalows remained largely intact on both streets until the mid-1990's, when a permit was issued for the demolition of six (6) homes and the construction of the 6-story 'Vistas' condominium on Century Lane at the western end of the north side of Belle Isle. The Vistas project included 48 residential units and 71 parking spaces, and was designed to the maximum FAR allowed at that time (~87,000 SF, 2.0 FAR with bonuses).

Six (6) individual properties remain on the northeast side of Century Lane. Of these six properties, one includes a new home under construction, and two other properties have new homes pending review by the Design Review Board, leaving only three (3) properties with no development currently planned. Of the original 14 homes on Farrey Lane, 10 homes remain, none of which have completed development applications or approvals for substantial new construction.

Belle Isle Zoning

The north side of Belle Isle, including Century Lane and Farrey Lane, is zoned RM-1, Residential Multifamily Low-Intensity, with a maximum F.A.R. of 1.25 and maximum height of 55 feet when parking and/or non-habitable spaces are provided at the ground level. The south side of Belle Isle is zoned RM-2, Residential Multifamily, Medium Intensity, with a maximum F.A.R. of 2.0 and maximum height of 60 feet to 140 feet, depending on the ground floor configuration and size of the lot.

Proposed Overlay Regulations

Concerns have been expressed regarding development on the remaining small lots of Century Lane and Farrey Lane, and the resulting change of character for each street. It is important to note that although these streets were originally developed with small single-family homes, the zoning district on the north side of Belle Isle has always allowed the construction of multifamily units.

Pursuant to the request of the item sponsor, the attached overlay Ordinance has been prepared, and includes the following:

1. A 'purpose' section is proposed and includes the following:
 - a. Provide land-use regulations that are sensitive to and compatible with, as well as preserve the existing low-scale residential character of the neighborhood.
 - b. To promote resilience of both existing structures and new development.
 - c. To ensure that the scale and massing of new development is sensitive to and compatible with the established context of the existing residential neighborhood.
 - d. Encourage property owners to preserve existing architectural styles and incorporate existing architecture styles in new construction.
2. A limit of two (2) habitable floors for single family residences is proposed.
3. A reduction in the maximum overall building height from 55 feet to 35/40 feet is

proposed. The proposed reduction is tiered and limits new buildings to a maximum height of 24 feet (for a flat roof) or 27 feet (for a sloped roof) for the first 25 feet of building depth, as measured from the minimum required front setback. A maximum building height of 35 feet would be permitted for the remainder of the building depth; the Design Review Board may allow for an increase in height above 35 feet for the remainder of the depth of the building for the sole purpose of providing additional height to the non-habitable portion of the ground floor.

4. A more limited list of allowable height exceptions is proposed, and such exceptions cannot exceed 10 feet from the roofline, as opposed to the current maximum of up to 25 feet.
5. Roof decks are required to be setback a minimum of five feet from each side of the exterior outer walls.
6. When lots are aggregated (up to the maximum two currently permitted) a ground level, street facing courtyard with a minimum width of 10 feet and a minimum depth of 20 feet from the minimum required front yard setback, shall be required to better reflect the original development pattern of the individual lots.

To accommodate the current maximum FAR allowed for a site, while also reducing the mass of new construction along Century Lane or Farrey Lane, and allow for adequate off-street parking, the following additional requirements for the overlay have been included:

1. A reduction in the minimum front yard setback from 20 feet to 10 feet and a reduction in the minimum required interior side setbacks from 7'-6" to 5'-0".
2. Allowing parking within the required front setback within driveways. Such use is currently prohibited, unless a variance is granted.
3. The inclusion of minimum standards and requirements for the non-habitable, ground floor portions of a building.

Lastly, the proposed overlay includes the following Design and Resiliency Standards:

1. All levels of an existing structure located below Base Flood Elevation plus one (1) foot (BFE +1') may be repurposed with non-habitable uses.
2. Subterranean levels shall only be permitted in the event that the space is purposed and designed as part of a storm water management plan, including but not limited to storm water collection and cisterns for reuse of captured water.
3. New construction shall be designed to incorporate naturally landscaped areas at the ground level, in addition to the minimum setback requirements, which is equal to or greater than five (5) percent of the total lot area. In lieu of this requirement, a green roof(s) may be provided with a minimum area of 25% of the total roof area.
4. For raised yards requiring a retaining wall, the exterior of such wall, on all sides, shall be designed and finished in a manner that result in a high quality appearance when seen from adjoining properties.

5. In all instances where the existing elevation of a site is modified, a site shall be designed with adequate infrastructure to retain all stormwater on site in accordance with all applicable state and local regulations.

SUMMARY

The existing residences on Farrey and Century Lane work well as a cohesive architectural form, due to their collective low scale and connection to the street. However, these older homes are all well below current standards for flood elevation, and any new construction, regardless of lower building heights, is going to have an impact of the older scale of buildings. New construction, for better or for worse, simply does not have the ability to accommodate this same scale, due to minimum flood elevation requirements.

In general, the Administration is supportive of the proposed Ordinance, as it attempts to achieve a careful balance between accommodating existing development regulations (e.g., FAR) and encouraging a lower scale of new construction along Century and Farrey Lane. However, it is recommended that more flexibility with regard to architectural design be included in the proposal. This will allow for more movement in new construction, which will result in less of an impact on existing buildings and better accommodate the goal of a lower scale of new construction. As such, the Administration recommends additional refinement of the 'purpose' section to be less prescriptive regarding the architectural styles of existing and new buildings.

CONCLUSION

The Administration recommends that the Land Use and Sustainability Committee discuss the item and provide an applicable recommendation to the Planning Board and the City Commission.


ATH/RW/TRM/MB