

PLANNING AND ZONING BOARD/LOCAL PLANNING AGENCY MINUTES

The Brevard County Planning & Zoning Board met in regular session on **Monday, June 16, 2025**, at **3:00 p.m.**, in the Florida Room, Building C, Brevard County Government Center, 2725 Judge Fran Jamieson Way, Viera, Florida.

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m.

Board members present were Mark Wadsworth, Chair (D4); Henry Minneboo, Vice-Chair (D1); Ana Saunders (D5); Erika Orriss (D3); Debbie Thomas (D4); Eric Michajlowicz (D3); Greg Nicklas (D3); Ron Bartcher (D2); Ruth Amato (D1); John Hopengarten (D1); Jerrad Atkins (D1); and Robert Brothers (D5).

Staff members present were Trina Gilliam, Zoning Manager; Paul Body, Planner; Alex Esseesse, Deputy County Attorney; Billy Prasad, Planning and Development Director; Darcie McGee, Natural Resources; Rachel Gerena, Public Works; John Scott, Emergency Management Office; Edward Fontanin, Utility Service Director; Lucas Siegreid, Utility Services; Alice Randall, Operations Support Specialist; and Jordan Sagosz, Operations Support Specialist.

Excerpt of complete agenda

H.8. Emerald Plaza Development, Inc (Louis Riposta) requests a CUP (Conditional Use Permit) for Alcoholic Beverages for On-Premises Consumption accessory to a cigar bar in Units 1-5. (25Z00014) (Tax Account 2419246) (District 2)

Trina Gilliam read Item H.8. into the record.

Louis Riposta spoke to the application. He said we've been in business four and a half years, built a good quality business. We currently have beer and wine. In the past year and a half there's been three other cigar bars that opened in the county within 15 miles of me and basically, it's eroded a little bit of my business. It was always my plan to get liquor when I could afford it and now's the time to try and protect our position in the County as the top cigar bar that people want to go to, but they want that liquor. It's going to help me to maintain number one.

No Public Comment

Mr. Minneboo stated this gentleman's the only guy that doesn't have a CUP in Merritt Island for liquor. He's entitled. Everybody on North Tropical Trail or North Courtney has one so this gentleman certainly deserves it.

Mr. Hopengarten asked how close they are to the high school.

Mr. Riposta responded footage wise I couldn't tell you.

Mr. Minneboo commented 800 feet.

Mr. Riposta stated It's down the road beyond, you must get in a car to get there. It's not across the street. Arby's is across the street; an abandoned car wash is across the street.

Mr. Hopengarten said you're not close to the school so the students can go and partake.

Mr. Riposta responded with no they even solicit us for donations. We do have a coffee bar with great milkshakes and stuff but that's not who we are. We're cigars.

Ms. Amato asked how it works with it being within 300 feet of a church.

Mr. Riposta responded that's why I'm here. When I was granted the business license with the beer and wine for almost 5 years ago the ministry was there. They're open four hours a week on Sunday from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. I had to pay the surveyor here recently \$1,500 to affirm the distance between the schools and the churches. He didn't even know it was there it's so nondescript. So that's why we're going for I guess as the notice in my front yard is a variance in understanding that I'm applying for this application.

Ms. Gilliam added at the MIRA meeting the board of directors reviewed this proposal. They approved it 7 to 1. Their recommendation is that the CUP will no longer be in effect should the space be leased to another tenant or if the use of the property is modified. So, Myra understood the situation with the church. I believe the church maybe moved in afterward.

Mr. Riposta responded in my research they came in 2011, and it's changed hands once or twice since then. It was much more active back in the day but now there's tumble weeds in front of the door.

Ms. Gilliam responded so the reason why we're submitting this application is for the board to decide of whether it should be approved knowing that there is a church that's in the same plaza.

Mr. Riposta added there's a marijuana dispensary next to the church, with a marijuana doctor. We're all trying to get along but that's the reality.

Mr. Hopengarten asked did they need a CUP for the beer and wine.

Ms. Gilliam responded you do.

Mr. Hopengarten then said so this will be their second CUP.

Ms. Gilliam replied Yes. Because he's expanding the use beer and wine to full alcohol that's why he must apply for another CUP.

Mr. Minneboo asked if it was a 4COP license.

Mr. Riposta responded yes. It's a quarter license. I had sold my house to get the money to put down on it.

Motion to recommend approval of Item H.8. by Henry Minneboo, seconded by Debbie Thomas.
Motion passed with a vote of 11:1.