Save Miami Beach

Miami Beach Journal

SECOND READING · NOV. 18

FALL TALKS · SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2026

The Raleigh, Before the Vote

Three historic hotels, the 175-foot tower the preservation board approved in 2020, what the new owners want to add, and what the Commission decides on Wednesday.



2.0 → 2.5
floor area ratio for large oceanfront lots with a historic building: a change to the code, not a variance

+66,478 sf
more floor area than the 2020 approval

Wed., Nov. 18
second and final reading at the City Commission

Daniel Ciraldo · Save Miami Beach · Research by the Miami Beach Journal

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 18 · 5:02 P.M. TIME CERTAIN

Two votes, and each needs six of seven

R5AN · COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Adds a 2.5 floor area ratio to the city's plan

No conditions attached in this text: no height cap, no deadline, no agreement.

R5AO · ZONING CODE

Rewritten since Oct. 14 as a "bonus" with three conditions

215 feet overall, 200 for the building; a certificate of occupancy by Dec. 31, 2031; and a development agreement for infrastructure, amount not stated.

WHY SIX VOTES

Since January 2024 the city has required six of its seven votes to exceed the maximum floor area ratio. Mayor Meiner sponsored the rule.

WHY NO REFERENDUM

The City Charter sends floor-area increases to the voters. A 2023 state law, SB 718, bars referendums on zoning rules, so the Commission decides alone.

Agenda, Nov. 18, items R5AN, R5AO; city release, Jan. 31, 2024; Fla. Stat. §163.3167(8)(b), SB 718 (2023); MBJ, Oct. 13.

THE BUILDING

The Raleigh, 1940



The pool, March 1941 (Gottscho-Schleisner, Library of Congress). LIFE, in 1947: "the most beautiful pool in America."

DESIGNED BY L. MURRAY DIXON

Opened in 1940 on Collins Avenue at 18th Street

THREE HISTORIC HOTELS, ONE SITE

The Raleigh, the Richmond and the South Seas

All in the Miami Beach Architectural District.

DARK

The Raleigh since 2017; the other two since 2020

Library of Congress, Gottscho-Schleisner Collection (no known restrictions); The Miami News, July 7, 1940; LIFE (1947) as quoted by the owners; Nahla Capital, Nov. 5, 2026.

THE SITE, BEFORE THE DEMOLITIONS

Three Dixon hotels on one block



2015, looking east from Collins Avenue. Yellow line: the Richmond's lot, as marked in its report.

THE RALEIGH · 1940

An 8-story tower by L. Murray Dixon: 114 rooms and six suites

Permitted June 25, 1940, for $225,000. On opening night, New Year's Eve, a local drummer named Desi Arnaz filled in for a sick band member.

THE RICHMOND AND SOUTH SEAS · 1941

Also Dixon: three stories, 76 rooms each

In 1954–55 each got a taller Melvin Grossman addition at the back, toward the beach: the two marked in the photo.

Historic resources reports for HPB19-0341 (Arthur J. Marcus Architect, 2020); aerial: Richmond report, p. 2 (2015).

INSIDE THE RALEIGH

The bar in 1941, and on a tour in 2023



1941: the bar and its wall murals, which have since disappeared (Library of Congress).



The cocktail-glass medallion at the bar's door, April 22, 2023.



With architect Arthur Marcus, who wrote the 2020 historic reports, the same day.

Gottscho-Schleisner, 1941, Library of Congress; Raleigh historic resources report (2020); our photos, April 22, 2023.

WHO HAS OWNED IT

Six owners since 2002; the latest paid $270 million

THE OWNERS

2002
André Balazs
$25.5 million

2009
Brilla Group and AJ Capital
$21.8 million

2012
David Edelstein and Sam Nazarian
$39.5 million

2014
Tommy Hilfiger and Doğuş Group
$56.5 million. Closed by Hurricane Irma, Sept. 2017

2019
SHVO, Deutsche Finance America, Bilgili
Raleigh $103M, South Seas $52M, Richmond announced at $87.85M

Oct. 15, 2025
Nahla Raleigh LLC
$270 million for all three, with the 2020 approval

THE APPROVALS, AND NAHLA V. THE SELLER

CITY
May–Sept. 2020
Five preservation board meetings; 200 ft asked, cut to 175 ft

COURT
Jan. 21, 2026
Nahla sues the seller in New York over a $10M escrow

CITY
April 2026
Nahla files to raise the floor area ratio from 2.0 to 2.5

COURT
May 2026
Seller: "a classic money grab." Nahla moves to add $5.4M in claims

CITY
July 7
Planning Board recommends it, 5–1

CITY
Sept. 15
Preservation board OKs the terrazzo removal after the fact, 6–0

CITY
Oct. 14
Commission: fails 4–3, then passes 6–1

CITY
Wed., Nov. 18
Second reading

Prices: deeds, Miami-Dade Property Appraiser (Richmond: as announced). HPB19-0341; city agenda file; N.Y. Sup. Ct. No. 650394/2026 (no ruling).

WHAT IS ALREADY APPROVED

The 2020 approval, and what it requires

SEPT. 8, 2020 · HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD

175 ft

The new tower "shall not exceed 175'-0"."

The owner had asked for 200 feet and 18 floors. The board approved 16 floors, at 2.0 FAR: about 265,000 square feet.

THE KEY CONDITION

No certificate of occupancy for the tower until the three historic hotels are substantially restored

The condos can't open before the Raleigh, the Richmond and the South Seas are done.

RESTORATION THE ORDER SPELLS OUT

The Raleigh's Collins Avenue arch panels, under a materials conservator.

The original signs and lanterns recreated; history plaques at all three hotels.

The Richmond's and South Seas' lobby ceilings kept; their eyebrow signs recreated.

That approval is still in effect, and it is what Nahla bought. Restoring the three hotels is already a condition of it. Wednesday's vote is on the 66,478 square feet added on top.

HPB Final Order HPB19-0341, recorded Oct. 7, 2020 (Miami-Dade OR Book 32135, Page 596), conditions (a) and (d) and the restoration conditions; The Real Deal and SHVO, Sept. 2020.

HOW THE BOARD GOT TO 175 FT

Five meetings, and the board still cut it

July 31, 2019
Commission
Height limit for this site raised from 50 to 200 ft

May 12, 2020
Board, 1
Discussed: 200 ft, 18 floors

June 9
Board, 2
Continued

July 14
Board, 3
Heard, continued

Aug. 11
Board, 4
Continued "to address the Board's concerns"

Sept. 8
Board, 5
Approved, with the tower cut to 175 ft

AUG. 11 · THE BOARD'S CONCERNS

The tower's height, mass and location

Members asked for the top floors to step back, or for the tower to move west.

AUG. 17 · SHVO'S REVISION

Stepped back from the beach, still 200 ft

Upper floors pulled back 15, 30 and 45 ft on the east side; the tower got 5 ft wider.

SEPT. 8 · THE BOARD DECIDES

It took off 25 ft itself: 175 ft

And it made the beach-side step-back a condition of approval.

Nahla's 2026 request, a roof at 195 ft, would give back 20 of the 25 feet those hearings took off.

HPB19-0341 staff reports (June 9, Sept. 8, 2020), applicant letter (Aug. 17), order C.1.a–b; MDPL; The Real Deal, Aug. 12, 2020.

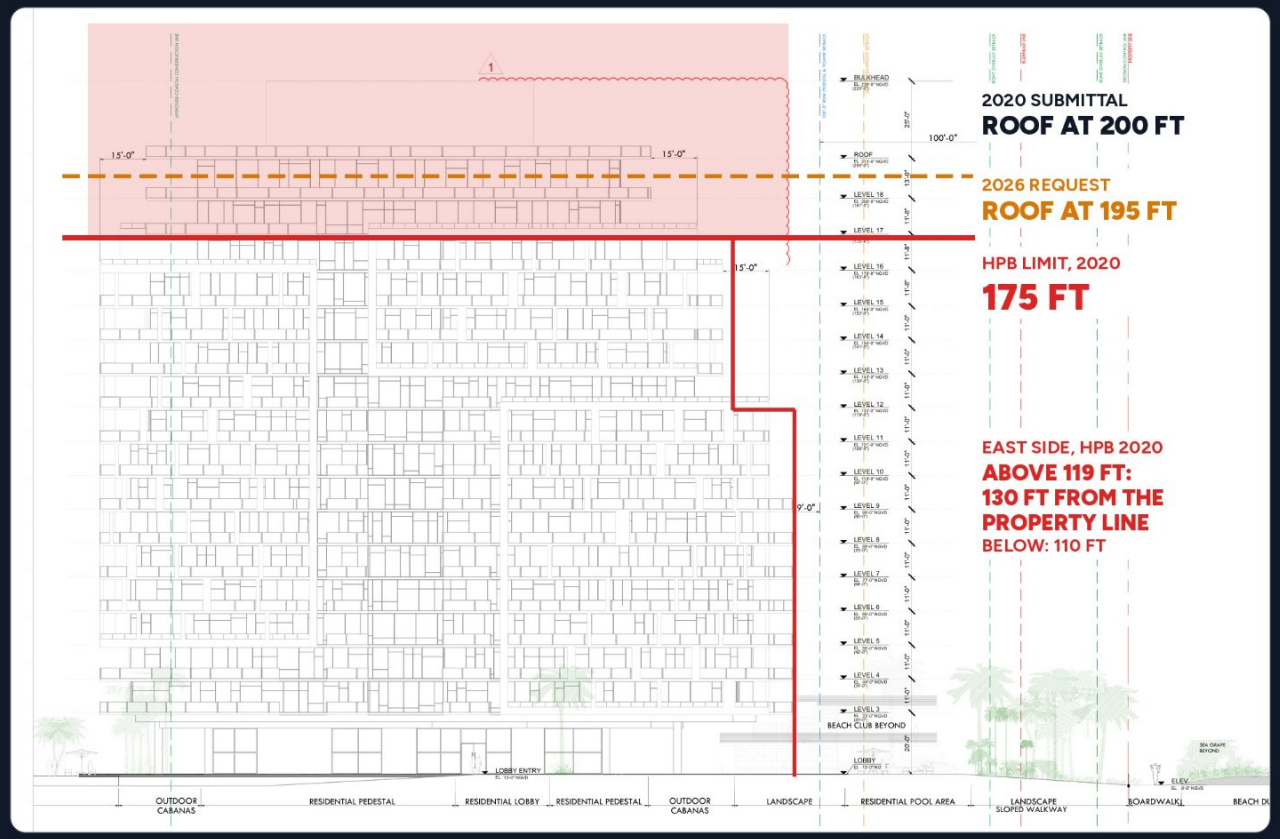
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SECOND READING · NOV. 18

THE 2020 APPROVAL, ON THE DRAWING

Where the board drew the line



SEPT. 8, 2020 · CONDITIONS C.1.A, B

"The height of the new tower addition shall not exceed 175'-0"."

Shvo drew 18 floors, roof at 200 ft; two came off. And above 119 ft, the tower stays 130 ft back from the east (beach) property line.

NAHLA'S REQUEST, 2026

Roof at 195 ft, plus a 20-ft bulkhead: 215 ft overall

Up from 175 plus 25 today. Height goes back to the HPB; Wednesday's floor area is what would fill it.

Kobi Karp sheet B4-A4.02 (HPB19-0341, Aug. 17, 2020); HPB order, conditions C.1.a and C.1.b; Dolkart letter, Oct. 11, 2026. Lines: Miami Beach Journal.

THE OWNERS' OWN RENDERINGS, SAME CAMERA

From Collins and 18th Street

APPROVED IN 2020 · ROOF 175 FT



Their label: "permitted design (2020 approval)."

PROPOSED 2026 · ROOF 195 FT



Their label: "proposed design (HPB submittal, November 2026)."

Nahla slide 19, City community workshop, Nov. 5; Kobi Karp renderings. Heights: HPB order, Dolkart letter. May not match approved plans.

THE OWNERS' OWN RENDERINGS, SAME CAMERA

From Collins Avenue, at the Richmond

APPROVED IN 2020 · ROOF 175 FT



Their label: "permitted design (2020 approval)."

PROPOSED 2026 · ROOF 195 FT



Their label: "proposed design (HPB submittal, November 2026)."

Nahla slide 18, City community workshop, Nov. 5; Kobi Karp renderings. Heights: HPB order, Dolkart letter. May not match approved plans.

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SECOND READING · NOV. 18

WHAT THE OWNERS ARE ASKING FOR

Floor area: 2.0 times the lot, to 2.5

APPROVED, 2020

FAR 2.0



≈ 265,700 sq ft

Two lots' worth of floor space

REQUESTED, 2026

FAR 2.5



≈ 332,100 sq ft

Half a lot more: about 66,400 sq ft

WHAT FAR MEANS

Floor area ratio is total floor space divided by the size of the lot. At 2.0, this 132,836-square-foot lot can hold about 265,700 square feet; at 2.5, about 332,100.

HOW THEY ARE ASKING

Not a variance for one building: two ordinances that change the city's comprehensive plan and its zoning code for large oceanfront lots in the Architectural District. Two readings at the Commission.

WHAT IS NOT ON WEDNESDAY'S AGENDA

Height and design. Those go back to the Historic Preservation Board, which approved 175 feet in 2020.

Commission items R5AH and R5AI (Oct. 14, 2026), R5AN and R5AO (Nov. 18). Lot area: March 2026 boundary survey. Chart: Miami Beach Journal.

BUILDING BY BUILDING

Where the 66,478 square feet go



TOWER **+48,202**

2 new floors (30,000), bigger ground floor (9,630)

PAVILION **+10,331**

No new floor: enclosed for a restaurant

SOUTH SEAS **+6,460**

RICHMOND **+1,485**

RALEIGH **0**

Their Nov. 5 slide: “less than 40%” is condos, about 26,000 sq ft. The tower’s other ~22,000: amenities for the condo owners.

Kobi Karp FAR tables (Planning Board, July 7, 2026, pp. 13–14); Nahla Capital, Nov. 5, slide 25. Model: Miami Beach Journal.

FROM THE BEACH

175 feet approved; 195 feet proposed





APPROVED SEPT. 2020

Roof at 175 ft; penthouse on Level 14

The Historic Preservation Board cut the tower from the 200 feet the owner asked for.

PROPOSED 2026

Roof at 195 ft, 215 with equipment; Level 16

The 215-foot cap was added on Oct. 14. Height itself goes back to the Historic Preservation Board.

Owners' renderings, Planning Board, July 7, 2026: Karp FAR plans p. 28 (Marino design) and Nahla p. 23. May not match plans.

WHAT THE DEVELOPER HAS SAID, AND WHAT THE RECORD SHOWS

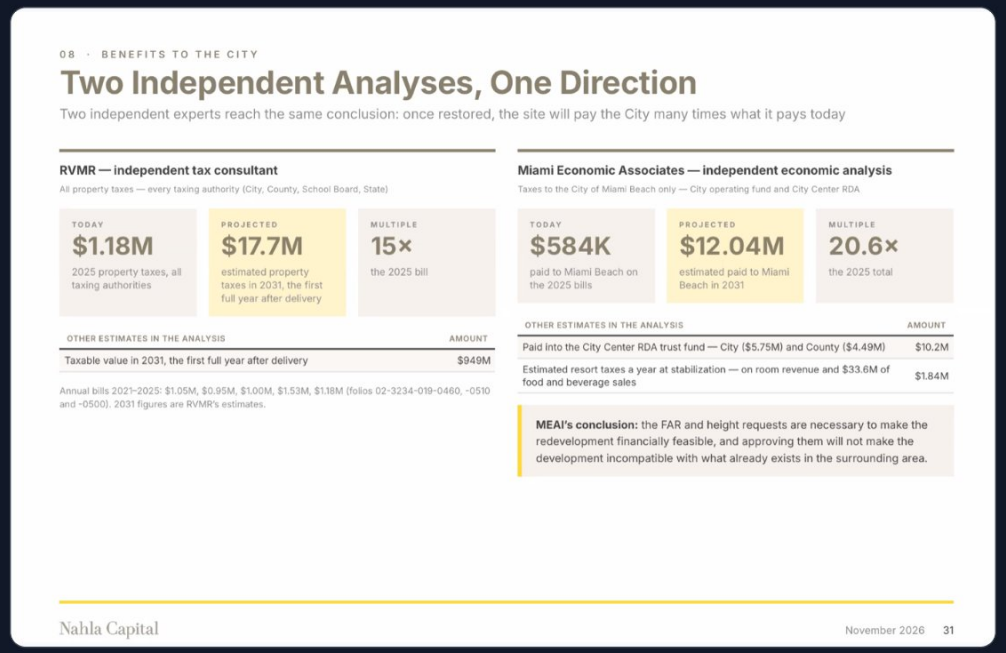
Five claims, checked

They said	The record shows
“No height increase”	Their own economist’s letter asks the preservation board to raise the tower from 175 feet plus 25 of equipment to 195 plus 20, and calls the FAR and the height both “necessary.”
“Fewer homes: 84 to 52”	84 was the 2020 plan. Their own letter of intent says the project under permit has 44. Against that, 52 is 8 more.
“It can’t go forward without this”	Planning staff: “the property can be used in accordance with existing zoning.” The 2020 project has its building permit and is under construction.
“Traffic goes down”	The traffic statement keeps the 2020 hotel and restaurants and cuts only condos. It doesn’t count the new members’ club, amenity or event space: most of the added floor area.
“Modest: neighbors have 3.15”	Those sites were assembled before the 1998 cutoff that grants 3.0. The Raleigh’s three lots were combined after it.

Economist’s letter, Oct. 11, pp. 1, 5; letter of intent, June 2, p. 3; PB staff report, July 7, p. 4; traffic statement, Feb. 4; memo R5AI.

THE ECONOMIST'S LETTER, OCT. 11

"The numbers don't work": on whose numbers?



08 · BENEFITS TO THE CITY

Two Independent Analyses, One Direction

Two independent experts reach the same conclusion: once restored, the site will pay the City many times what it pays today

RVMR — independent tax consultant

All property taxes — every taxing authority (City, County, School Board, State)

TODAY	PROJECTED	MULTIPLE
$1.18M	$17.7M	15×
2025 property taxes, all taxing authorities	estimated property taxes in 2031, the first full year after delivery	the 2025 bill

OTHER ESTIMATES IN THE ANALYSIS	AMOUNT
Taxable value in 2031, the first full year after delivery	$949M

Annual bills 2021–2025: $1.05M, $0.95M, $1.00M, $1.53M, $1.18M (folios 02-3234-019-0460, -0510 and -0500). 2031 figures are RVMR's estimates.

Miami Economic Associates — independent economic analysis

Taxes to the City of Miami Beach only — City operating fund and City Center RDA

TODAY	PROJECTED	MULTIPLE
$584K	$12.04M	20.6×
paid to Miami Beach on the 2025 bills	estimated paid to Miami Beach in 2031	the 2025 total

OTHER ESTIMATES IN THE ANALYSIS	AMOUNT
Paid into the City Center RDA trust fund — City ($5.75M) and County ($4.49M)	$10.2M
Estimated resort taxes a year at stabilization — on room revenue and $33.6M of food and beverage sales	$1.84M

MEAI's conclusion: the FAR and height requests are necessary to make the redevelopment financially feasible, and approving them will not make the development incompatible with what already exists in the surrounding area.

Nahla Capital

November 2026 31

THE INPUTS

Costs and returns are "based on information provided … by the Developer." No pro forma. Not in the city's record; the Planning Director hadn't seen it.

THE STORY

An expected 20% return turned negative: a year lost when the old architect's plans couldn't be used, $42 million of unbudgeted interest, costs up. More floor area brings it back to 15–20%.

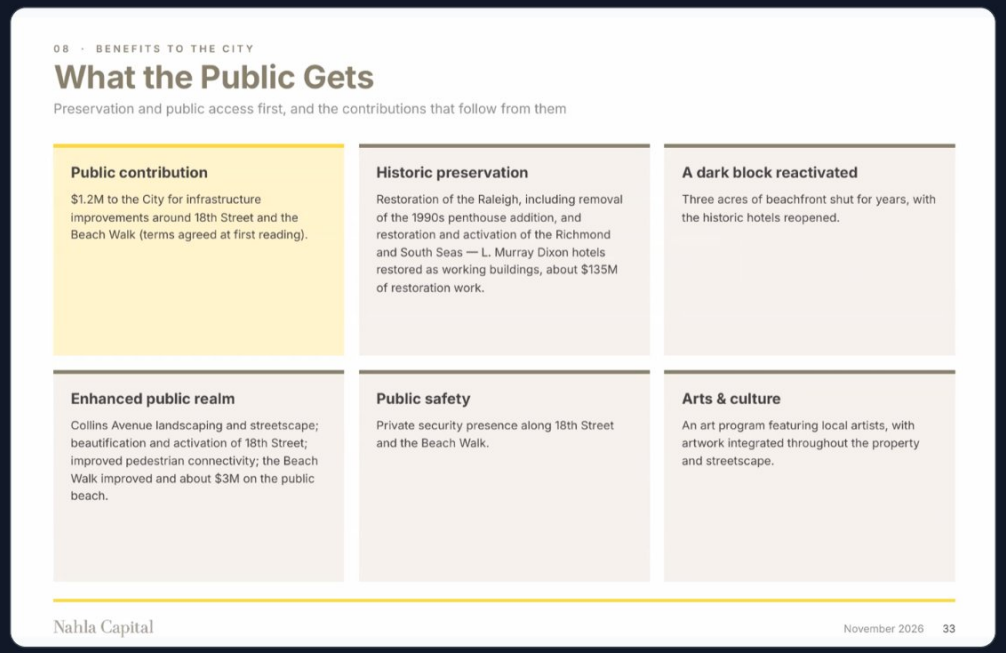
THE TAXES

$6.79 million a year in city property tax, but $5.75 million of it (85%) goes to the City Center redevelopment agency. City memos: "No fiscal impact expected."

Miami Economic Associates to the Planning Director, Oct. 11, 2026, pp. 2–5; Commission memos R5AH, R5AI, R5AO; Nahla Capital, Nov. 5, 2026, slide 31.

THEIR SLIDE: "WHAT THE PUBLIC GETS"

Which of it is written into the law?



08 · BENEFITS TO THE CITY

What the Public Gets

Preservation and public access first, and the contributions that follow from them

Public contribution

$1.2M to the City for infrastructure improvements around 18th Street and the Beach Walk (terms agreed at first reading).

Historic preservation

Restoration of the Raleigh, including removal of the 1990s penthouse addition, and restoration and activation of the Richmond and South Seas — L. Murray Dixon hotels restored as working buildings, about $135M of restoration work.

A dark block reactivated

Three acres of beachfront shut for years, with the historic hotels reopened.

Enhanced public realm

Collins Avenue landscaping and streetscape; beautification and activation of 18th Street; improved pedestrian connectivity; the Beach Walk improved and about $3M on the public beach.

Public safety

Private security presence along 18th Street and the Beach Walk.

Arts & culture

An art program featuring local artists, with artwork integrated throughout the property and streetscape.

Nahla Capital

November 2026 33

IN THE NOV. 18 ORDINANCE

A development agreement for infrastructure before a building permit. The city manager picks the work; money or in kind. No dollar amount.

ONLY IN THE STAFF MEMO

The $1.2 million, up from $1 million after the Mayor's "Could you do a little better?" About 0.4% of the $270 million price.

ALREADY REQUIRED IN 2020

Restoring the three hotels: the tower can't open until they're done.

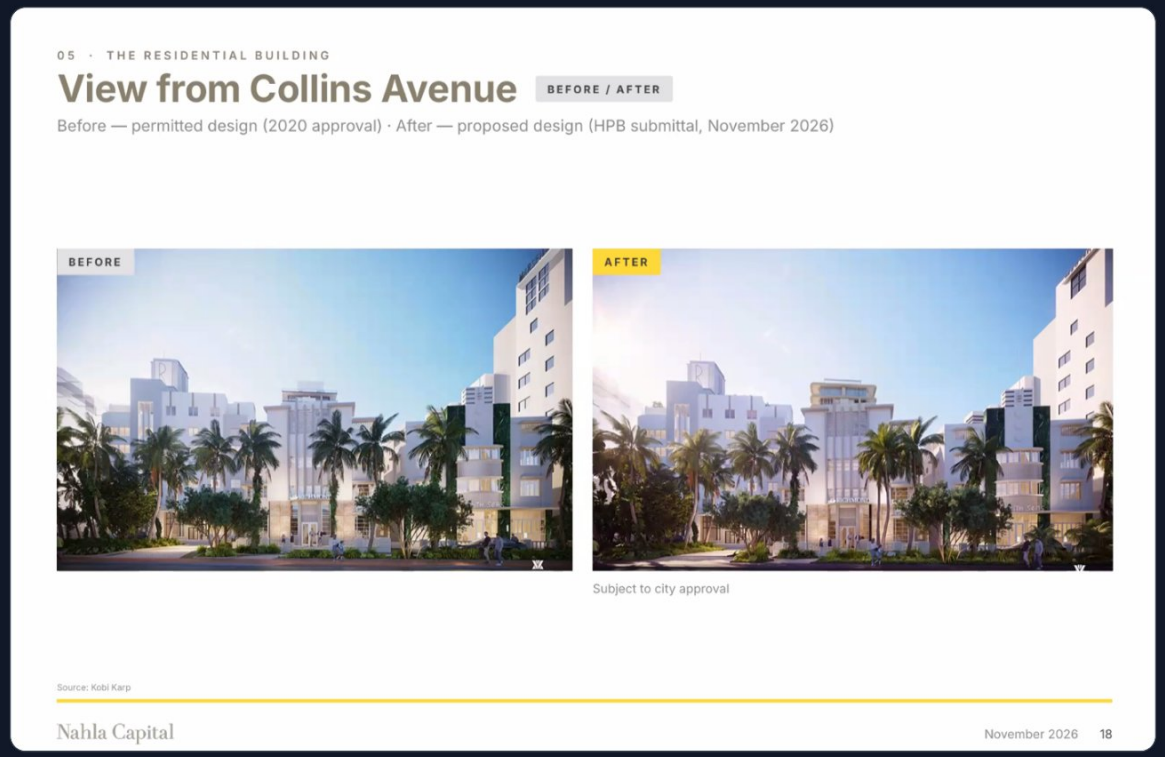
NOWHERE BINDING THAT WE FOUND

Security patrols, the art program, $3 million on the beach, local hiring.

Nahla Capital, Nov. 5, slide 33; ordinance and memo R5AO, Nov. 18; Commission video, Oct. 14 (3:21–3:22); HPB19-0341 order (d).

THE CITY'S COMMUNITY WORKSHOP, THURSDAY, NOV. 5

A new tower design, and new numbers



Nahla Capital's slide 18, captured during the workshop. Left: the 2020 design. Right: the new one, "HPB submittal, November 2026."

HEIGHT

Roof from 175 to 195 feet

"200 to 215 feet overall" on their slide; the rooftop equipment band shrinks from 25 to 20 feet.

REVENUE TO THE CITY

$584,000 now, "$12.6 million" in 2031

Now counts the county's levy routed to the City Center redevelopment agency. The next slide says $12.04 million.

JOBS

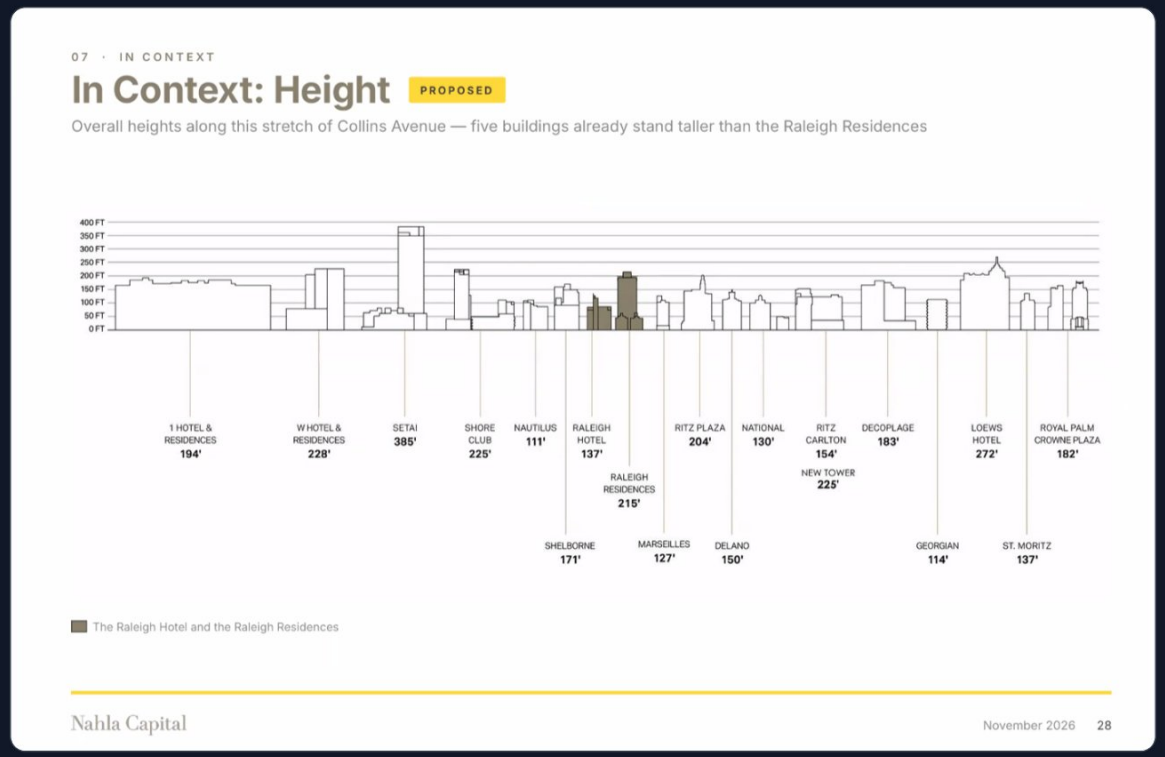
About 357 permanent

On Oct. 14 it was "400."

City community workshop (Zoom), Nov. 5, 2026: Nahla Capital slides 18, 22, 30–32. Recording: youtube.com/watch?v=dDS5xgJIRWE

CHECKING A CLAIM

“Five buildings already stand taller”



STANDING TODAY, OVER 215 FEET

Three

The Setai (385 ft), the W (about 230 ft) and the Loews (272 ft by their slide; we have not checked it)

Shore Club, “225 ft”

That 1998 tower is gone; the site was cleared by early 2025. The tower going up in its place is approved at 200 feet.

Ritz-Carlton “new tower, 225 ft”

Not built. We could not confirm its status before tonight.

Nahla Capital slide 28, City workshop, Nov. 5. Heights: Miami Beach Journal’s checked heights; Shore Club replacement, HPB21-0481.

THE LAWSUIT IN NEW YORK

Buyer v. seller, over $15.4 million held back

THE CASE

Nahla Raleigh LLC v. BSD Raleigh Trustee LLC

New York State Supreme Court, Commercial Division, Index No. 650394/2026. Filed Jan. 21, 2026. The seller is "c/o Shvo, Inc." Still in discovery; no ruling.

Why New York: the purchase contract says disputes go there.

$10 MILLION: THE ARCHITECT'S DESIGNS

Nahla says it was promised the use of Peter Marino's design work and didn't get it on the agreed terms. The seller says the consent counts as given and the money is its own.

$5.4 MILLION: WHAT THE SELLER KNEW

Nahla says the seller withheld engineering reports: the ground-floor slabs of all three historic hotels have to be demolished and replaced, and the inherited drawings "could not have been" built. It claims at least $9.38 million in costs.

THE SELLER'S ANSWER

"A classic money grab." It counterclaims for all $15.4 million plus damages.

NYSCEF 650394/2026: complaint (Doc 1 ¶1), counterclaims (Doc 22 ¶3), amended complaint (Doc 29 ¶¶53, 59, 76). Allegations only.

THE LAWSUIT AND WEDNESDAY'S VOTE

What the court file says about the project

WHAT NAHLA BOUGHT

The 2.0 project: 265,058 square feet, 42 condos, a 17-story tower

The contract's description, with the 2020 approval, the development rights and a building permit the seller called "valid and in full force." The price is fixed at $270 million.

WHAT WE DID NOT FIND

No payment tied to more floor area

Nothing in the contract terms we read pays the seller more if 2.5 passes. We read the main terms, not every exhibit.

THE SELLER SAYS

Nahla's Planning Board application "deviates materially" from the design it bought, "expanding the number of condominium units … from 44 to 52," and Nahla plans "to value engineer the project."

NAHLA SAYS

The drawings it inherited "were not based on the existing conditions," so "the construction could not have been done" from them.

The seller cites the application as evidence in the escrow fight; the case doesn't challenge it or the 2020 approval.

Neither side's claims have been tested in court. But both say the 2020 design is not what will be built.

NYSCEF 650394/2026: purchase agreement (Doc 23, §§2.1, 8.2.11); counterclaims (Doc 22 ¶¶34–35, 10th def.); Doc 29 ¶53.

WHO ELSE CAN USE IT

Written for every lot; staff say only one fits

THE TEST, IN THE ORDINANCE

Lots that, "as of January 1, 2026, are oceanfront lots within the architectural district … with a lot area of greater than 100,000 sq. ft. with an existing contributing building" may receive bonus floor area up to 2.5.

STAFF

"Other than the applicant's property, there are no other properties to which this code amendment would be applicable."

THE DATE FREEZES IT

A lot assembled after Jan. 1, 2026 can't qualify. The other big oceanfront sites in the district already have 3.0 or more.

THE WIDER REACH

The preservation league and the Shelborne argue the next large oceanfront owner will point to this one as precedent.

Ordinance R5AO (Nov. 18) and Oct. 14 text, RM-3 FAR footnote; memo R5AI; Oct. 14 public comment (MDPL; Shelborne counsel).

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SECOND READING · NOV. 18

FIRST READING, OCT. 14

Failed 4 to 3, then passed 6 to 1



Meiner
Morning: No
Afternoon: Yes



Fernandez
Morning: Yes
Afternoon: Yes



Bhatt
Morning: Yes
Afternoon: Yes



Dominguez
Morning: Yes
Afternoon: Yes



Magazine
Morning: Yes
Afternoon: Yes



Matteo-Salinas
Morning: No
Afternoon: Yes



Suarez
Morning: No
Afternoon: No

WHAT CHANGED BETWEEN THE VOTES

An afternoon public-comment period where six speakers asked the Commission to reconsider and two objected. Commissioner Matteo-Salinas moved to reconsider; Mayor Meiner switched with her.

SAID ON THE RECORD

Matteo-Salinas: a yes on second reading will be “really tough … not impossible.” Suarez wants the city to have “a stake in the game.” The owner’s offer rose from $1 million to $1.2 million at the Mayor’s request.

City Commission, Oct. 14, 2026, items R5AH and R5AI (meeting video, machine transcript checked against the video); Miami Beach Journal, Oct. 15.

BEFORE WEDNESDAY

Questions you can put to the Commission

1 · SHOW UP OR WRITE

Items R5AN and R5AO, Wed., Nov. 18, 5:02 p.m., City Hall. Each commissioner's email is on the city's website.

2 · PUT THE MONEY IN WRITING

Ask that the $1.2 million and what it pays for be in the ordinance or a signed development agreement before the vote.

3 · ASK FOR THE REAL NUMBERS

The case rests on a letter built from the developer's own inputs. Ask for the pro forma, or an independent review paid by the city.

4 · ASK WHAT 2.5 ADDS TO THE CITY

Ask for the tax gain from the extra 66,478 square feet alone, after the redevelopment agency's share, not the whole project.

5 · CLOSE THE PLAN TEXT

Ask that the height cap and the 2031 deadline go into the comprehensive plan too, not only the zoning code.

6 · FOLLOW IT TO THE HPB

The height and the redesigned tower go back to the Historic Preservation Board: another public hearing.

Commission agenda, Nov. 18, 2026. Records requests go to the City Clerk under Chapter 119, Florida Statutes.

WHAT COMES NEXT

Wednesday, then Tallahassee

WED., NOV. 18

Second reading at the City Commission

The Raleigh floor area items, R5AN and R5AO, at 5:02 p.m. City Hall, 1700 Convention Center Drive. The Sunset Harbour sewer report is due as a letter to the Commission.

AFTER NOV. 18

If it passes, the design goes back to the Historic Preservation Board

Floor area first, then the height and the new tower design. Each is a public hearing.

SUNDAY, DEC. 13, 4 PM

The last Fall Talk: "The Fix, Tallahassee in 2027"

What the 2027 legislative session could change about Live Local, and who to call.

Tonight's recording, the slides and the Journal's research will be on savemiamibeach.org.

FALL TALKS · NOV. 15, 2026

Questions

Use the chat or raise your hand. If we can’t answer something tonight, we’ll find out and post it with the recording.