

May 27, 2024

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Re: PB23-0625
1509 - 1515 Washington Avenue and 1500 Collins Avenue

Dear Planning Board Members:

The Art Deco Neighborhood Association has been consistently advocating for incentivizing more residential housing in our neighborhood within the Art Deco Cultural District and, as such, takes this opportunity to present this statement of position.

We are OPPOSED TO ANY AND ALL MICRO UNIT HOTEL proposals and are in AGREEMENT with the majority of the Commission, as articulated at the May 15, 2024, Commission Meeting, to SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF MORE RESIDENTIAL HOUSING in our community, in particular on Washington Avenue which has a great deal of potential and possibilities for new housing.

We believe that residential development and stakeholder investment would provide a more long-term benefit to our community, for the reasons listed below:

1. A greater long-term return of investment, not only in the form of a tax base but genuine care for the property and of the area by its residents.
2. Increased residential density will provide a more consistent base of support for local businesses and services that depend on local residents, thereby creating a sustainable ecosystem with a much higher likelihood of success in the long term, than motels.
3. Residential development also creates a community whose needs can be better met and handled by our city without overwhelming its resources, providing a safer, cleaner environment that would be most desired and supported by residents.

Conversely, we believe Micro Unit Hotel Development poses significant risks to our neighborhood, is an impediment to the direction in which our neighborhood should be going and is an overall threat to our fragile barrier island. Similarly, we believe that Micro Unit Hotel Development and the challenges that they foreseeably create acts to reduce the quality of residential living conditions and will adversely impact desirable residential development. As such, we **UNEQUIVOCALLY OPPOSE** the further development of these micro units, any similar type hotels, and any development counter to residential for the reasons stated below.

Overcrowding and Increased Density:

The compact nature of micro units (at less than 200 sq. ft./unit) means more rooms per floor, contributing to higher overall occupancy and since these micro unit hotels typically have such a high number of units, it leads to increased density and potential overcrowding in the immediate area.

Noise and Disturbance:

Increased density results in increased risk for noise pollution from these tourists, particularly at night, that can disturb the peace of nearby residential neighborhoods as we've experienced with the Good Time Hotel.

As the design of Micro Unit hotels often includes an emphasis on shared common areas, they tend to host events and parties in these common areas which can contribute to noise pollution and disturbances. The large events and gatherings commonly advertised by promoters to attract guests will only increase the current challenges on Washington Avenue.

Increased Traffic Congestion and Parking Issues:

Increased density and overcrowding results in increased vehicular and foot traffic congestion on the already busy streets in our area.

The increase in guests does not always coincide with an increase in additional parking needed for these guests. As Micro Unit hotels maximize the space they have for profit, they either don't offer parking or offer limited spaces for their guests, and with our already limited parking, this influx of hotel guests will cause a further strain and exacerbation of the parking difficulties for current residents and visitors.

Impact on Residential Character (Perpetuation of Transient Population & Loss of Community Feel):

As there is more frequent turnover of guests in these micro unit hotels it can disrupt, further deter, and erode any sense of community and stability in our neighborhood. Unlike residents, tourists tend not to invest in our community or care for it the way stakeholders do, and it will most certainly contribute to and increase the challenges we face within a transient area.

Impact and Strain on Local Services and Infrastructure:

An increase in tourists puts a strain on local services such as police, sanitation, and emergency services.

The high turnover of guests can make it challenging for our police to do their job. Our MBPD have repeatedly said that a transient, constantly changing and uncertain environment dramatically increases the potential for crime.

In case of emergency, the high density of guests can also complicate evacuation and response efforts, posing additional safety risks as, unlike our residents, visitors are not as familiar with our areas.

A larger turnover in guests is also correlated with higher waste generation and can overwhelm local waste management systems. Guests who will not care as much as stakeholders, tend also to contribute to litter and pollution, impacting the cleanliness and aesthetics of the area.

We need to decide WHO we want to be and WHAT we want to offer:

Miami Beach needs to act in furtherance of its messaging. “Breaking up with Spring Break” was to stop the unsafe, loud, party atmosphere and, instead, promote a quality of life for its residents. We cannot allow the wrong business model such as micro unit hotels, and allow the area to become overly commercialized, as this will take further steps in creating a less desirable living environment for residents.

Businesses will also continue to shift their focus to cater to tourists rather than residents which will, in turn, impact the availability of services and goods needed to support a local community of residents.

We believe it is in the best interest of businesses and residents that our city government and its committees support incentivizing Residential Development as it eventually leads to

Miami Beach Planning Board
May 27, 2024

a more sustainable and thriving local economy that weathers the storms much better than what we've seen in these past years.

Short-term Gains at the Expense of Cultural and Long-term Revenue Losses:

The “short-term gain short-sightedness” can profoundly affect our community’s landscape, residential growth and will undoubtedly contribute to the loss of our local culture and character.

Protecting our HERITAGE and CULTURE is of utmost importance.

Not only is it important in order to maintain our uniqueness and pride in who we are, but, with a Cultural Heritage Tourism industry that yields hundreds of billions of dollars (~\$600 billion) each year, we stand to lose quite a lot financially as well.

This is our current reality, and we are at a critical moment.

We ask this question sincerely:

Who is going to turn their back on Washington Avenue and allow for yet another lack luster hotel to come in, and who will be joining Commissioners and Neighborhood Associations in supporting incentives for real growth and positive change?

We certainly hope you choose the latter and reject this proposal.

Respectfully,

Irene Bigger
ADNA President