

November 30, 2022

Dear Neighbors, Friends, and Residents of Miami Shores,

I would like to share some reflections, updates and facts regarding the proposed development of approximately 23 acres of land owned by Barry University in the far northwest corner of the Village - west of NW Second Avenue between NW 115 Street on the north and NW 112 Terrace on the south.

As the largest resident property owner (109 acres), employer (1,500 plus current employees) and educational institution (approximately 7,000 students) in Miami Shores, Barry University is a proud member of this community.

On a personal note, when I spoke briefly at the Village Council meeting on October 18, I mentioned how much my family and I have enjoyed being residents of Miami Shores. If I had more time, I would have added that I wish we lived here when our children were younger as the Village is such a wonderful place to raise a family. The unique charm of our community is special and a source of considerable joy on a daily basis. It is quite understandable why residents are so passionate about their hometown.

At Barry, we are equally invested in this community and the entirety of the issues being considered in the Comprehensive Plan and we thank the Councilmembers for addressing such a divisive, but critical initiative for the well-being of our Village. For the purposes of this communication, I will focus on the land owned by Barry, which will be redeveloped in some shape or form in the near future.

I have been quietly, but thoroughly, absorbing all the comments and feedback regarding the Comprehensive Plan, and especially of late, our development plans on the land owned by Barry. In doing so, I have observed that aside from our friends who reside near our campus, there is little to no familiarity with the site in question.

I would respectfully encourage those who have not done so recently to drive, and if able, walk the space under consideration. This experience, when coupled with an understanding of the style and quality of living units being proposed, will provide a more complete picture of why we feel the development will benefit our Village.



As we shared with those who attended our community meetings on November 10 and November 29, Barry has reached an agreement to sell the land to Lennar Homes to build market-rate housing that will include townhomes and garden-style apartments, upon the completion of the Village's update to its planning documents and corresponding zoning code amendments, and upon obtaining site plan approval from the Village of Miami Shores.

Under normal circumstances, Lennar, in conjunction with Barry, would have filed applications with the Village to get these processes underway; however, as most are aware, there has been a moratorium on such filings since February, when the Village's elected officials and leadership began to navigate required updates and corrections to the Comprehensive Plan.

Before getting into specifics of the land transaction, and putting politics and preferences aside for a brief moment, I would like to take a step back and simply acknowledge what should be Barry's right as a landowner in Miami Shores – to sell our land for the value that it is worth. To deny this right is tantamount to telling homeowners in the Village that they can only sell their home for less than market value and only to a buyer of their neighbor's choosing. This is fundamentally wrong and unjustifiable.

It also is noteworthy that this land is not and never has been single-family land. It was the Biscayne Kennel Club even before the Village was incorporated 90 years ago and it is currently vacant, underutilized surface parking and unused hardscape. Arbitrary restrictions on density for this 23-acre site would directly contradict Miami-Dade County and the State of Florida's clearly articulated initiatives to create broader diversity of housing options for its residents. Such restrictions would also raise serious questions about the application of the Fair Housing Act.

Getting back to the land transaction at issue, it may be helpful to understand why Lennar was selected as our development partner. As you might imagine, the interest in this large parcel of currently vacant land was overwhelming. Lennar's concepts were by far the most positively aligned with the needs of Barry and the Village. Specifically, Lennar's proposal had significantly less housing density, thoughtful traffic considerations, and a sensitivity to the interests and needs of our surrounding neighbors.

It is worth pointing out that no one has a greater stake in making sure this land gets developed in a manner that is aligned with the best interests of Miami Shores than Barry University. The residential community that is created on this land will be our immediate neighbor forever. Therefore, and at the risk of stating the obvious, we are deeply invested in making sure that this project gets done well. We have gone to great lengths to bring forward the most compatible proposal for all parties involved, including our neighbors. There is no guarantee that future alternate options will have the same considerations.

Please allow me to provide additional clarifications about the land proposal in question based on some of what has been shared and circulated to date.

- Barry's arrangement with Lennar has no connection to any other areas of Miami Shores being discussed as part of the Comprehensive Plan.
- Lennar will provide market rate, garden-style apartments and townhomes.
- Anything built on this property will still need zoning and site plan approval through the Village.
- There is no retail component in the currently planned project.
- The land that Barry provided to the Village in 2003 for the construction of Doctors Charter School is not part of the land transaction.
- Thorough studies will be conducted and executed to ensure a thoughtful and reasonable approach to the flow of traffic in this area.

There has been much conjecture about Barry's motivation for developing this land. The land is part of the overall net assets owned by the University and the proceeds from the sale will create other investment opportunities that will allow Barry to thrive for decades to come. At the same time, our goal is to create a diversity of nearby housing options for our faculty, staff and graduate students, along with other local working professionals such as teachers, police, first responders, Village employees, and current residents of Miami Shores who are looking for a downsizing option without moving out of town.

All of us at Barry welcome the opportunity to work with our neighbors and Village leaders to create a development that enhances our community and allows the Village of Miami Shores to prosper while maintaining its unique character and charm. I encourage you to attend any of our informational sessions to share your feedback or ask questions. And please consider a visit to one of the Lennar properties for a first-hand experience of what is being planned. You also can submit comments or questions to buquestions@barry.edu.

Thank you for your partnership and collaboration.

Sincerely,



Mike Allen, Ph.D.
President, Barry University