

Ex-Ecuadorian official accused of laundering \$10 million in bribes faces trial in Miami

BY JAY WEAVER
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The corruption trial of a former senior Ecuadorian official charged with laundering more than \$10 million in bribes through Miami's banking system and real estate market may not feature a household name as a defendant.

But the Brazilian company accused of paying off Ecuador's ex-comptroller, Carlos Ramon Polit, is one of the biggest engineering and construction firms in the world. Its name is Odebrecht, which admitted to a massive bribery scheme across the Americas in 2016 and agreed to pay \$2.6 billion in a record corruption settlement with the Justice Department.

Polit's trial, a spin-off of that high-profile scandal, started Tuesday with opening statements in Miami federal court, offering for the first time the prosecution of an Odebrecht-linked defendant on conspiracy and money-laundering charges in the United States.

Polit, 73, who was arrested in Miami in March 2022, was portrayed by federal prosecutors as an influential Ecuadorian bureaucrat who extorted the conglomerate for millions of dollars in cash bribes in exchange for making more than \$100 million in government fines on a hydroelectric power-plant project disappear.

"He was one of the most powerful people in Ecuador — someone you didn't want



The defense attorney for Carlos Polit says his client, above, 'did not launder a single dollar' into Miami.

as an enemy," Assistant U.S. Attorney Michael Berger told the 12-person jury in a packed federal courtroom. "Millions of dollars of these bribes were laundered into Miami with the help of the defendant's son."

"In the end, Odebrecht got what it paid for: the removal of those \$100 million in fines," said Berger, noting that two of the Brazilian firm's former executives who received non-prosecution deals with the U.S. government are key witnesses against Polit.

Polit's son, John, a Miami banker, has not been charged with the father, who is standing trial alone. It remains unclear whether John Polit will be charged in the aftermath of the three-week trial, but his name came up repeatedly during opening statements Tuesday in connection with the alleged bribery payments moving through Panamanian and Miami banking accounts through intermediary companies into several local real estate deals, including the pur-

chase of an office building and a luxury home in exclusive Cocoplum in Coral Gables.

Carlos Polit's defense attorney, Howard Srebnick, tried to distance his client from the alleged bribery-fueled money-laundering scheme.

"Carlos Ramon Polit did not launder a single dollar" into Miami, Srebnick told the jurors, describing his client as a former private businessman who joined Ecuador's government as its comptroller in 2010. "Not a single dollar bill was found in the possession of Carlos Ramon Polit."

Srebnick said the real criminals are the two former Odebrecht executives who cut plea deals in Brazil and non-prosecution agreements with the U.S. government for their testimony against Polit.

"They blame Carlos Polit, so they don't go to jail," Srebnick told the jurors.

Polit, who after his arrest was released on an \$18 million bond and lives in a condo high-rise along the Miami River, wielded tremendous sway over Odebrecht after it was found to have committed contractual and technical violations on the \$320 million power-plant project built near an active volcano in central Ecuador, according to federal prosecutors.

Polit's position, which was created to combat the fraudulent use of government funds, required him to sign off on public bud-

SEE POLIT, 5A



CITY OF DORAL NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

All residents, property owners and other interested parties are hereby notified of a **COUNCIL ZONING MEETING** on **April 24, 2024** beginning at **6:00 PM** to consider the variances in connection with the proposed Doral Marketplace Retail site plan. The meeting will be held at the City of Doral, Government Center, Council Chambers located at 8401 NW 53rd Terrace, Doral, Florida, 33166.

The City of Doral proposes to adopt the following Resolution:

RESOLUTION No. 24-

A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF DORAL, FLORIDA, APPROVING/DENYING (I) A VARIANCE FROM SECTION 77-185(A)(1) OF THE CITY'S LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE TO PERMIT 249 PARKING SPACES OF THE 488 PARKING SPACES LENGTHS OF 18-FEET, IN LIEU OF THE 19-FOOT MINIMUM, AND TO PERMIT 87 PARKING SPACES OF THE 488 PARKING SPACES TO BE COMPACT SPACES OF 16 FEET IN PARKING STALL LENGTH AND EIGHT (8) FEET IN WIDTH A REDUCTION OF ONE (1) FOOT FROM THE NINE (9) FEET REQUIRED BY THE CODE; (II) A VARIANCE FROM SECTION 77-193(2)(D) AND SECTION 71-213(3) OF THE CITY'S LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE FOR PARKING ROW LANDSCAPE STRIP REDUCTION AT FOUR (4) PARALLEL ROWS OF PARKING STALLS ADJACENT AND PERPENDICULAR TO THE PRIMARY GROCERY BUILDING FROM 7.5 TO 0 FOR THE PROPERTY LOCATED ON THE SOUTHWEST CORNER OF THE INTERSECTION OF NW 41 STREET AND NW 107 AVENUE, DORAL, FLORIDA, AS LEGALLY DESCRIBED IN EXHIBIT "A"; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE

HEARING NO.: 24-04-DOR-04

APPLICANT: Doral Marketplace, LLC (the "Applicant")

PROJECT NAME: Doral Marketplace Parking Variances

PROPERTY OWNER: Doral Farms, LLC

LOCATION: Southwest corner of NW 107 Avenue and NW 41 Street

FOLIO NUMBER: 35-3030-000-0020

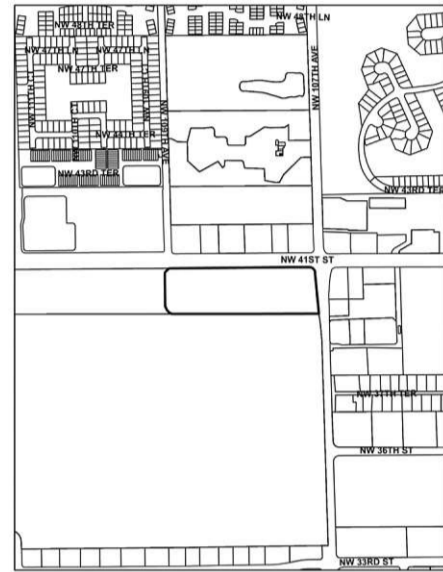
SIZE OF PROPERTY: ±10.05 acres

FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORY: Business

ZONING DISTRICT: Commercial Corridor District (CC)

REQUEST: The Applicant is requesting two (2) variances in connection with the proposed Doral Marketplace Retail Site Plan.

Location Map



Inquiries regarding the item may be directed to the Planning and Zoning Department at 305-59-DORAL. The application file may be examined at the City of Doral Planning and Zoning Department located at 8401 NW 53 Terrace, Doral, FL 33166.

Pursuant to Section 286.0105, Florida Statutes, if a person decides to appeal any decisions made by the City Council with respect to any matter considered at such meeting or hearing, they will need a record of the proceedings and, for such purpose, may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based. This notice does not constitute consent by the City for introduction or admission of otherwise inadmissible or irrelevant evidence, nor does it authorize challenges or appeals not otherwise allowed by law. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, any person who are disabled and who need special accommodations to participate in this meeting because of that disability should contact the Planning and Zoning Department at 305-59-DORAL no later than three (3) business days prior to the proceeding.

Connie Diaz, MMC
City Clerk
City of Doral



CITY OF DORAL NOTICE OF ZONING WORKSHOP

All residents, property owners and other interested parties are hereby notified of a **Zoning Workshop** on **Wednesday, April 17, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.** The Meeting will take place at the City of Doral, Government Center, 1st Floor Multipurpose Room located at 8401 NW 53rd Terrace, Doral, Florida, 33166.

The following application will be presented:

HEARING NO.: 24-04-DOR-01

APPLICANT: MIA 102nd Ave Hospitality, LLC (the "Applicant")

PROJECT NAME: Hyatt House

PROPERTY OWNER: EWE Hotel LLC c/o The Easton Group

LOCATION: 10234 NW 19 Street, Doral, FL

FOLIO NUMBER: Portion of 35-3032-034-0020

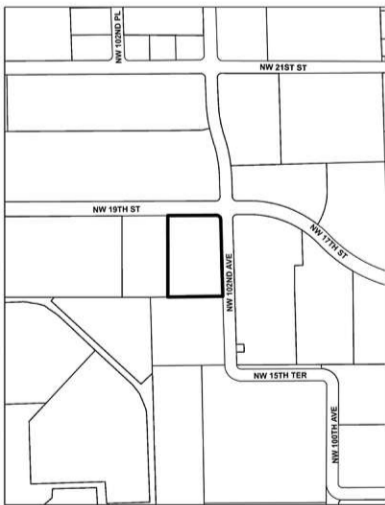
SIZE OF PROPERTY: ±1.30 acres

FUTURE LAND USE MAP CATEGORY: Industrial

ZONING DISTRICT: Industrial (I)

REQUEST: The Applicant is proposing a 6-story Hyatt House hotel consisting of 124 hotel rooms including amenities and retail space with a restaurant and pub.

Location Map



ZONING WORKSHOP PROCESS: The zoning workshop consists of two sessions:

1. First Session. The first session of a zoning workshop shall provide a forum for members of the public to learn about proposed developments within the city. Developments may be presented to the public simultaneously, in several locations within the meeting site. During this session, members of the public are encouraged to ask questions and to provide feedback to the applicant about the proposed development. The applicant shall provide visual depictions, such as renderings, drawings, pictures, and the location of the proposed development. In addition, representatives of the applicant shall be available to answer questions that members of the public may have about the proposed development. The members of the City Council shall not be present during the first session of the zoning workshop.

2. Second Session. The second session of a zoning workshop shall provide a forum for the City Council to learn about the proposed developments discussed at the first session of the zoning workshop. No quorum requirement shall apply. Developments shall be presented by the applicants sequentially, one at a time, for the City Council's review and comment. The applicant shall again present visual depictions of the proposed development. In addition, the applicant shall be available to answer any questions that members of the City Council may have about the proposed development.

No quorum requirement shall apply nor will any vote on any project be taken, but roll call will be taken, as it is a publicly noticed meeting.

Information relating to this request is on file and may be examined in the City of Doral, Planning and Zoning Department located at 8401 NW 53rd Terrace, Doral, FL 33166. Maps and other data pertaining to these applications are available for public inspection during normal business hours in City Hall. Inquiries regarding the item may be directed to the Planning and Zoning Department at 305-59-DORAL.

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, all persons who are disabled and who need special accommodations to participate in this meeting because of that disability should contact the Planning and Zoning Department at 305-59-DORAL no later than three (3) business days prior to the proceeding.

NOTE: If you are not able to communicate, or are not comfortable expressing yourself, in the English language, it is your responsibility to bring with you an English-speaking interpreter when conducting business at the City of Doral during the zoning application process up to, and including, appearance at a hearing. This person may be a friend, relative or someone else. A minor cannot serve as a valid interpreter. The City of Doral DOES NOT provide translation services during the zoning application process or during any quasi-judicial proceeding.

NOTA: Si usted no está en capacidad de comunicarse, o no se siente cómodo al expresarse en inglés, es de su responsabilidad traer un intérprete del idioma inglés cuando trate asuntos públicos o de negocios con la Ciudad de Doral durante el proceso de solicitudes de zonificación, incluyendo su comparecencia a una audiencia. Esta persona puede ser un amigo, familiar o alguien que le haga la traducción durante su comparecencia a la audiencia. Un menor de edad no puede ser intérprete. La Ciudad de Doral NO suministra servicio de traducción durante ningún procedimiento o durante el proceso de solicitudes de zonificación.

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The following application will be presented:

HEARING NO.: 24-04-DOR-06

APPLICANT: Harborgenix, LLC (the "Applicant")

PROJECT NAME: Harborgenix, LLC Rezoning

PROPERTY OWNER: Harborgenix, LLC

LOCATION: 10450 NW 33 Street, Doral, FL

FOLIO NUMBER: 35-3029-118-0001

SIZE OF PROPERTY: ±0.028 acres

FUTURE LAND USE MAP CATEGORY: Industrial

ZONING DISTRICT: Industrial (I)

REQUEST: The Applicant is requesting a zoning map amendment from Industrial (I) to Industrial Commercial (IC) for the property located at 10450 NW 33 Street.

Location Map



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