

Florida neighbors fought plans to build 62-story condo tower. They lost

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What will be the tallest building in Sunny Isles Beach, a 62-story condo tower, got the green light on Thursday night after hours of discussion and debate. City commissioners voted 4-1 to approve the developers' site plan for the 145-unit Miami Beach Club at 19051 Collins Ave., with a few conditions.

The plans were unpopular with some residents, as they heckled from the audience during the meeting. Thursday's vote followed another contentious meeting on the issue last month, when commissioners decided to defer voting on the plans. Before Thursday night's vote, commissioners and the developers

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agreed on a requirement: that construction vibrations will be monitored at the Miami Beach Club. Sunny Isles Beach sits on a sandy barrier island, and experts warn that drilling a foundation for a tall building could disturb the foundations of surrounding buildings.

The proposed project, which will replace an aging low-rise condo building of the same name, will be the tallest building in Sunny Isles Beach and on the barrier island. Developers BH Group, Related Group and Dezer Development are collaborating on the 820-foot tall building. The developers were not asking for any variances to the city's zoning code, but their plans make use of bonuses and transferable development rights, which allow developers to buy the rights to build projects with more floor area or units than would typically be permitted under the city code. The developers have agreed to pay the city more than \$26 million. Eric Fordin, managing director at Related Group, said the developers "remain committed to ongoing coordination with residents, city officials, and environmental stakeholders."

He expects sales for the building to begin in early 2027. Developments like this one typically break ground 18 months after sales begin, meaning construction is likely to begin in mid-2028.

During last month's meeting, residents raised concerns about traffic, sea turtle nests and construction that could damage nearby buildings. Some are worried about the long shadow the building would cast on the beaches below, with one resident saying during public comment that Sunny Isles Beach may soon be more shady than sunny. When asked about the construction concerns on Wednesday, Gil Dezer told the Herald he trusts the engineers his team is hiring to mitigate those risks. But several residents voiced their support for the development, praising the project as a fitting addition to the city's towering skyline.

After the vote, Alessandra Stivelman and Alex Alonso, attorneys representing the residents of a neighboring condo building, said they were frustrated with how the meeting played out. Stivelman said she thinks the commission didn't "understand its authority" to reject the developers' request for transferable development rights.