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## DEVELOPMENT SOUTH FLORIDA

JUN 30, 2025 AT 5:30 PM

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By Katherine Kallergis

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## Michael Stern's JDS wins final OK on upzoning for South Beach high-rise

Residents were split on the height increase for the bayfront property next to Monad Terrace



Michael Stern and a rendering of 1250 West Avenue (JDS Development Group, Kobi Karp)



Developer Michael Stern's JDS Development Group notched a major win with the upzoning of a property in South Beach, where he plans a bayfront luxury condo tower next to the Monad Terrace project he built.

Miami Beach commissioners on Friday granted final approval to zoning amendments and a development agreement that will allow the developer to build a taller and slimmer tower on the site at 1250 West Avenue, including a floor area ratio of 5.75.

Commissioner David Suarez was the sole no vote. At the same meeting, Suarez was also the only commissioner to vote against the Meruelo family and David Martin's upzoning for the redevelopment of the former Deauville Beach Resort property into a luxury condo and hotel project.

The commission granted a first reading approval earlier this year for JDS's project, allowing for a building of up to 330 feet tall, or about 32 stories, which is more than double the 150 feet allowed. The project will mark a reduction in density, for a maximum of 125 condos, down from the 286 units allowed.

Stern's New York and Miami-based JDS is working with Gianluca Vacchi's GV Development Group on the project. Kobi Karp Architecture & Interior Design designed the plans. The building will also include ground-floor commercial space.

A JDS affiliate has been buying units at the 15-story Bay Garden Manor condo building, which was built in 1964 on the 1.9-acre site.

As part of the deal with the city, the JDS-led venture is in contract to acquire the Bikini Hostel property across the street at 1247 West Avenue, which is part of a public benefits package. It's not publicly known how much the developer is spending for the Bikini Hostel. Stern declined to disclose the amount at the commission meeting.

The hostel, owned by Philip and Michael Muskat, has been housing former Camillus House residents after the city of Miami, in a controversial move, relocated them to Miami Beach in November. Camillus House is a nonprofit that provides humanitarian services to homeless people and others in need.

A number of residents and some commissioners spoke about increased crime as a result of the homeless population, with reports of some people defecating on the street.

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Tom Hawkins, a Monad Terrace resident who spoke on behalf of the Sobe West Neighborhood Association, offered his support.

"Eliminating the Bikini Hostel and finishing off the baywalk are two very important benefits for our neighborhood," he said.

Laura Garafalo, president of the PTA at South Point Elementary, said that parents, grandparents and kids feel the area is unsafe because of the Bikini Hostel.

Others opposed the JDS project.

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Karina Mercado, a resident at 1200 West Avenue, said the approval would set a "very dangerous precedent."

"The Bikini Hostel situation has nothing to do with the 1250 development," she said, calling it a policy failure by the mayor and commission. "The next time a developer wants more height or FAR approved, a homeless shelter will magically pop up in the vicinity of where they're trying to get. ... People are not opposed to rebuilding, but we would only like to allow them to build within the existing height and FAR limits."

Paul, a condo seller at 1250 West Avenue who did not disclose his last name, said that when he signed his contract to sell his unit to JDS a year ago, the owner's true identity was not disclosed, and he accused Stern of "secretly buying units."

"We signed our deal [based on] the current zoning," he said. "There was no mention in our contract that it was based upon approval of 300 feet, or [that] 300 feet was even being considered." RecommendedLos Angeles -

JDS and its partners completed Monad Terrace, a 13-story, 59-unit building at 1300 Monad Terrace, designed by French architect Jean Nouvel, in 2021.

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