

TRAFFIC ADVISORY BOARD
CORAL GABLES YOUTH CENTER
CORAL GABLES, FLORIDA
APRIL 16, 2008

	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	
MEMBERS:													APPOINTED BY:
Ian Martinez	-	-	-	P	P	P	E	*	E	P	P	P	Donald D. Slesnick, II
Larry D. Kries	P	P	P	P	E	E	P	*	P	P	P	P	Maria Anderson
Douglas Yoder	P	P	E	P	P	P	P	*	P	E	E	P	Rafael "Ralph" Cabrera, Jr.
Frank Quesada	-	-	-	P	P	E	P	*	P	P	E	P	William H. Kerdyk, Jr.
Christopher Morrison	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	*	P	P	P	P	Wayne "Chip" Withers
Bertram Goldsmith, Jr.	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	*	P	P	P	E	Commission-as-a-Whole
Ramon Irigoyen	P	E	E	A	A	A	A	*	P	P	P	A	City Manager

(*) Board recommended not holding a meeting due to holiday vacations

A - Absent
E - Excused
P - Present

STAFF

R. Alberto Delgado, P.E., Public Works Director
Esther Zabalo, Civil Engineer
Sgt. Tom Carrigan, Police Department
Capt. John Curry, Fire Department
Dr. Hesham Elbadrawi, Marlin Engineering Consultants
Yamilet Senespleda, Marlin Engineering Consultants
M. Francomacaro, Central

News Media

Sebastian del Marmol, Coral Gables Gazette

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 5:38 p.m. The draft minutes of the March 18, 2008 were e-mailed to the Members and they did not have time to review them. Dr. Yoder noted that he had reviewed them and he was shown as excused. The Chairman recognized Sgt. Tom Carrigan, from the Police Department. Upon motion made by Mr. Kries, seconded by Mr. Martinez, the minutes were unanimously approved.

Public Works Director Report

Mr. Delgado informed the Board that the Hammock Lakes I & II Special Taxing District request was coming to the April 29th City Commission meeting at 10:00 a.m., Time Certain. The presentation will be the same one that was discussed at the January 15th meeting, the installation of a Guard House and an unmanned gated entrance on Old Cutler Road.

Mr. Morrison requested the Minutes show that we request that the Zone Representative for the area (Chico Goldsmith) be present at that meeting. At this point Mr. Morrison asked for a motion to show Mr. Goldsmith's absence as excused. Dr. Yoder moved, seconded by Mr. Martinez, motion carried. Staff will contact Mr. Goldsmith.

Mr. Delgado noted that the surveyors had already started taking measurements at Bella Vista. Ms. Dona Kooper and Chico Goldsmith have met and reviewed the plans for those circles. Public Works already has the approval of the County and are moving along with that project at Bella Vista and Deva, Bella Vista and San Mateo and Bella Vista and San Jose.

The South Alhambra and Veronese project has been dropped. The Chairman asked if we had sent notification to everyone that had voted previously for or against informing them that the project was no longer on the books. Mr. Martinez moved that letters be sent to the residents notifying them. He recommended notification be sent to those residents. Mr. Kries seconded. Motion carried.

Mr. Delgado continued that we will be doing the Ponce de Leon Boulevard and Lorenzo Avenue crosswalk. The County just completed the installation of the crosswalk with the new solar technology like the one installed on Ponce de Leon and Suarez Avenue, where Ponce de Leon runs parallel with the Metrorail. It was mentioned that some drivers are not stopping.

Dr. Yoder asked if there is some kind of flashing light, it was flashing when he saw it this morning, but he wanted to know if it flashes all the time or if it is activated by the pedestrian. It is activated by the pedestrian. Mr. Delgado noted that some drivers are not respecting the flashing light and do not stop. Further discussion ensued with the Police representative, who explained that drivers are supposed to stop when the pedestrian is crossing the median.

Dr. Elbadrawi suggested we ask the County to install additional signs, in advance, of the crosswalk so drivers can have warning.

Mr. Delgado explained that at the beginning the City thought it would be a small amount, but the cost of that project was \$56,000.00. The City offered to pay \$25,000.00 out of that. And the County would pick-up the remainder. Signing of an Inter-local Agreement would have taken approximately one year, so the City agreed to provide in-kind service, meaning that we would not have to pay up front, but would have to do work in County roads, such as the drainage problem we have on Old Cutler Road and another one at Kendall Drive.

One of the Commissioners' office and Mrs. Roxy Bolton, encouraged Commissioner Gimenez to proceed with that project.

Mr. Morrison noted that if it is in the State statutes, drivers must stop any time anyone steps on the crosswalk with or without flashers he does not feel we should put additional warning signs. Mr. Delgado explained that the reason for the warning is for safety. Discussion ensued.

When asked how he felt about the signs, Mr. Delgado noted that the sign would be (like a stop ahead sign, drivers look for the stop sign); this type of caution sign will alert drivers of the crosswalk ahead. It is like an extra precaution.

Dr. Yoder commented that maybe perhaps one of the unintended consequences of that signage is that somebody is looking for the flashing light, while someone is stepping from the curb onto the crosswalk. We must condition people what when they see the light flashing know that that means they are supposed to stop. Somehow someone may go by and push the button, but actually no one was entering the crosswalk whether it would actually be a violation of the law if the sign was flashing but no body was on the crosswalk.

Sgt. Carrigan most crosswalks have “caution, crosswalk” ahead.

Mr. Morrison asked Dr. Elbadrawi if the signs would be similar to the ones that we have on the circles with crosswalks and Dr. Elbadrawi informed him that the circles the signs point to the crosswalks. The crosswalk signs should only have a pedestrian.

Dr. Yoder asked how we were coming along with the Blue Road roundabouts. Mr. Delgado informed him that we are bidding out the Segovia and Coral Way circle in the coming week. The specs book for the Blue Road roundabouts will be bid out in May, with construction being planned for the summer.

Dr. Yoder asked what we plan to do with the street light on the corner where the Blue Road and San Amaro roundabout will go, which is obscured by the trees. Mr. Delgado to look into the lights and if possible we will install another light pole.

Le Jeune Road and Ingraham Highway. Mr. Morrison asked when this project was going to start and he was informed that it has been scheduled for survey, but they need to coordinate with the Police. Once it is scheduled we will let the Board Members know. Mr. Delgado to give an update at the next meeting.

Mr. Morrison noted that there is a crosswalk on Le Jeune Road and Ingraham Highway and that is the only place where we can cross Le Jeune Road/Ingraham Highway. He further noted that he had checked the lighting sequence and they do not change the signalization. Mr. Delgado to check with the County and bring an update on this issue.

Mr. Martinez asked if we had had any answer from the County on the Bump-outs. Nothing yet. Esther Zabalo to meet with the County this week.

Mr. Delgado mentioned that he had met with the County on the dead-end issue of Alfonso and Herald and the installation of signs indicating that it is a cul-de-sac to see if we could place some signs indicating that it is a dead-end.

Mr. Morrison commented that at the last meeting he asked to have the redundant signs removed and he reported that they had “all” been removed.

Mr. Kries asked about the circle on Almeria and Hernando, the old circle, which is smaller in diameter than the others. Mr. Delgado noted that Public Works is going to re-visit the circle and enlarge it. They have already surveyed and will try to enlarge with the minimum impact to the area. This was agreed to by Rhonda Anderson and Wendy Cook, the two ladies assisting the calming plan for this area.

Mr. Kries wanted the record to reflect that Mr. Delgado had provided him with all correspondence exchanged on the Bacardi Project and he asked if we were closer to setting up a meeting for that area. Mr. Delgado noted that he had a meeting at Tim Plummer’s office, the end of the month. They were supposed to go back to the community to discuss further what they are proposing. The next step is to consider the no-left restrictions or diverters. If they go this route it will only be a temporary measure. We will install delineators on a temporary basis, like 90 days. Do the traffic counts before and after then determine. That is why they are leaning toward, but they need to come back to us.

Mr. Kries: “At that point, we will have meeting with them.” Mr. Delgado: “Yes, we will.”

Mr. Delgado emphasized that everyone will be informed that this is a temporary measure. That traffic counts have to be taken before and after the delineators go in place. Maybe then, they will be able to obtain the County’s required 2/3 votes for the calming measures. Further discussion on how this project will proceed.

Mr. Kries: “The question I ask at every meeting: What is the latest on the Segovia Median?”

Mr. Delgado noted that there is another developer (Mr. Menoyo) who is also asking that same question. We do not have any answer from the developer and they are running out of time. They are to the point right now that if they do not make a decision by May, and even if they go with the impact fee moneys they will not be able to do it. The Inter-local Agreement will take approximately one year, get the consultant, and get the contractor... they are running out of time and they need to complete that before they can get the CO. The other option will be to pay and do it themselves. If this is the case, it will get done quickly. Comments from the Board Members.

Dr. Elbadrawi presented an update of the Ponce de Leon and Galiano intersection. Attached is copy of his report. Mr. Martinez wanted to ask when the counts were taken because there are a couple of schools in the area and Dr. Elbadrawi confirmed that the counts were taken in December before schools were out.

Dr. Elbadrawi continued that Alternative 1 will take care of most of the problem, but not all of them.

ALTERNATIVE 1: Converting closing East Ponce at Galiano, converting it into a cul-de-sac, and losing three parking spaces on the southwest leg of East Ponce, which will be substituted with four parking spaces. This needs to be done in order to convert it into a cul-de-sac. The same thing with the northeast leg of East Ponce, also three parking spaces along Galiano, if the northeast leg of East Ponce is closed. Dr. Elbadrawi noted that this may cause drainage problems, because we do not want to fix a problem and create another one. By doing this we are diverting all the traffic to use the two mid-intersections, Galiano and Calabria, and Galiano and Santillane. By this, we have two options: We can install four-way stop signs at each intersection allowing all the cars to come to a complete stop and then proceed. The Members discussed whether there were stop signs on the intersections or not.

Mr. Delgado noted that we had requested the installation of four-way stop signs.

Dr. Elbadrawi continued with his report, that if we have the stop signs it would allow the installation of traffic circles, if we need to. If we find that drivers are running the stop signs, then we may find it necessary to install the circles.

Mr. Quesada noted that he had brought this concern to the Board because he works in the area and he has almost crashed several times. He referred to the counts indicated on the report and asked whether they were high numbers. Dr. Elbadrawi confirmed that they are high numbers, when you are talking about local streets which should carry from 1,000 to 1,500 vehicles a day. Connections should carry 3,000 vehicles a day. This is working as a collector but the roadway geometry and the parking, and the side distance obstruction it should not have all this traffic, but we cannot divert this traffic to somewhere else, so let's make it a safer place. The main thing here is the skewed angle of the intersection plus along the street parking causing side distance problems. So we need to do something.

Mr. Quesada emphasized that he wanted to make sure before they recommend spending money for something that is necessary.

Dr. Elbadrawi noted that they are not recommending that. They have pictures of the drivers who are not stopping at the stop signs on East Ponce.

As to the speed posted and the speed at which the traffic traveled, Dr. Elbadrawi explained that it was within the range, but 34 mph is considered to be on the border.

Mr. Morrison asked on Alternative 1, in the northeast corner, where the board shows the cul-de-sac, the heavy white line in front of the parking spaces, if that a curb or that will still remain parking spaces? The parking spaces will remain.

Mr. Martinez wanted to know if we had paid any consideration to the historic aspect of the presentation. As to the cul-de-sac, he noted, would we be disturbing George Merrick's vision for the City, referring to the Douglas entrance.

Dr. Elbadrawi noted that he did not think we would be disturbing the image or the view, because he is not recommending that alternative. They are leaning towards the other alternative, which looks to convert Ponce to be one-way from Galiano to Santillane and Galiano to Calabria and put signs. The main problem is people crossing from East Ponce to Galiano. If we have people to make turns (left or right) at low speed, they cannot go at high speed because of the skewed configuration of the street.

Mr. Quesada wanted an explanation of Alternative 2.

Dr. Elbadrawi: With Alternative 2 we are bringing the street to a 90 degree. In order to make a turn, you have to go slower.

Mr. Morrison: "If I am going northbound on Galiano, I would have the option of continuing straight or to turn right onto Ponce (or left). And if I was southbound on Galiano, I would only have the option of going straight?" Dr. Elbadrawi noted right and left.

Dr. Elbadrawi continued: We are shifting cars to go from Santillane to Galiano using East Ponce and the same thing from Ponce. This would allow us to add additional parking. The Members discussed the two alternatives at length.

Mr. Martinez moved that the Board would like to receive comments from the Police and Fire Departments as to the consultant's presentation and bring them back to the next meeting. Seconded by Mr. Kries, motion passed.

The Board Members tabled the presentation until we receive the comments from both the Police and Fire Department.

Mr. Morrison thanked Dr. Elbadrawi for his presentation.

The Chairman read the letter from the City Clerk regarding the unexcused absences.

Old Business:

Mr. Martinez wanted to know what was going on with the trolley since we had not heard anything for a while.

Mr. Delgado: "We had a meeting with the mid-year projection. We need to look for additional funding for the trolley. In the future it will be better since we are facing out the Hybrid trolleys. By September they will be five years old and our commitment with the MPO was five years operation, at least we will be able to get rid of two or three. In the meantime, we need to maintain those trolleys in operation. We are expecting the one from George Washington University, which is the fifth diesel trolley."

Mr. Morrison asked Mr. Delgado why had we purchased that trolley from the University and Mr. Delgado noted that the University had no use for the trolley and we purchased it at a very good price (\$68,000.00). Mr. Morrison also asked if it was similar equipment. Mr. Delgado informed him that it was longer and had more capacity, and that it will look like the other trolleys.

Mr. Delgado noted that he had met with Vice-Mayor Kerdyk and the County and that Vice-Mayor Kerdyk had asked for more money. One is to get money from the Federal Government. \$100,000.00, and \$125,000.00 from DOT. Mr. Delgado also mentioned that Commissioner Gimenez may be able to assist us in getting some money from the Impact Fees, since we do not have any more capacity improvement projects. We expect to have the RFQ's for advertising out and in a couple of weeks have the results.

Mr. Morrison asked what the optimum size of the trolley fleet was and also if we are looking for more diesels. Mr. Delgado informed him that we should have six trolleys in operation at all times and one spare and yes, we are looking for more diesels.

We are supposed to get \$125,000.00 from DOT. We hope it will be approved in May.

Mr. Morrison: "If we had a full fleet could we again look into extending the route to Flagler?"

Mr. Quesada: "How much are we short this year?" Mr. Delgado: "\$125,000.00."

Mr. Quesada asked that took into account advertising. No. Mr. Delgado noted that if we received the \$125,000.00 from DOT, it will cover the shortage. Or if we received the money from ----- It will cover that. We need to get all these funds before the end of this year, September 2008.

The Advertising is digital and the company who installs it will be in charge of retaining the advertisers and paying the City a percentage. A Committee will decide which advertising is appropriate. Discussion ensued as to how profitable it would be for the City to advertise in the trolleys.

Mr. Kries: "Certain employers that are benefiting from this trolley, has there been any thoughts given to that? Has there been any consideration at all to some sort of special taxing district, along Ponce?"

Mr. Delgado: "Remember there was a time when we did not have funding for the trolley. Five years ago that concept was looked at for the Ponce de Leon Corridor, the Salzedo Corridor, and the Galiano Corridor. Any time the people on both sides would contribute a percentage. The other streets one-half of a percentage because they were like a block apart. And then we determined that some property/business owners could be assessed a transportation tax. There was some plan, but nothing developed."

Mr. Kries noted that business owners that would benefit from the advertising may be charged a nominal amount.

Mr. Delgado: “The advertising could announce you are reaching a certain business/restaurant. The advertising will include that. Advertising is very expensive.”

The Board Members discussed how the City could benefit and get money from the advertising and the use of the trolley.

NEW BUSINESS:

Mr. Martinez: “This came up in December. I asked Mr. Delgado if I could meet with the BID Director. I finally met with the Director. The Business Improvement District runs Miracle Mile, one block north and one block south. I met with her because it is my district and I figured, if I’m seating here and I’m making decisions regarding traffic patterns, it is important that I meet with a contact person. And one of the questions they have is the want to valet park along Miracle Mile and they are trying to get, it would be (At this point Mr. Morrison noted that he thought they had centralized valet parking and Mr. Delgado noted that they have two centralized vale parking. They want to have one of the lanes where the parking is basically bigger sidewalks and then have an ingress valet dedicated a valet station where people would leave their cars, valet will take and reduce Miracle Mile one lane going east and one lane going west. Although I do not think I made a stand where we are opposed.... One of the questions she has, and I cannot commit the Board to anything, is perhaps is something they could get funding for. I did not know how to answer the question. I told her I would bring it back to the Board.”

Mr. Delgado informed the Board that we have a proposal for Miracle Mile. One of them is converting the angle parking to parallel parking, still keeping the two lanes and increased the sidewalks. But the County still feels it is not a capacity improvement. The funding is not there, and that is another problem. Assess the merchants, we can, but they are not in any shape to be assessed right now. Mr. Delgado does not see that happen for quite a while.

Mr. Martinez wanted to know, hypothetically, this could be the proper body which could consider funding such a project. Mr. Morrison noted that this would be the body, but is in the future.

Mr. Delgado noted that we have \$1.4 million obligation bond that can be tied to Miracle Mile if we work on the replacing the sidewalks, only. In order to do a good project in Miracle Mile we need at least 6 million dollars and we do not know where to get that money. It does not seem that Miracle Mile will happen unless we get funding from another source, such as Downtown USA.

Mr. Martinez: “So I can answer her, if she asks that the merchants want more crosswalks on the streets behind Miracle Mile, can they come to us? I know in the residential areas, the residents request that, but in the business district, how do we go about it?”

Mr. Delgado noted that right now we are doing the beautification of the alleys and making them more pedestrian friendly. Aragon and Andalusia we are working with the developer of The Palace to beautify Andalusia in that section and do a connection to Miracle Mile. The developer will pay for that. Besides that the Museum is also doing some improvements to Aragon. He does not see anything else.

Mr. Martinez will tell her that she can bring her projects and ideas to the Board, that we have no money, but they can come to us.

Mr. Martinez asked who put the street lights timers and Mr. Delgado informed him that it was the County.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:42 p.m.