

**TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD  
CORAL GABLES ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPT.  
427 BILTMORE WAY  
2nd FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM  
CORAL GABLES, FLORIDA 33134  
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2019 @ 5:15 PM**

**Meeting Minutes**

<b>Members</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Appointed</b>
	<i>18</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>19</i>	
Steven Naclerio	(+)	P	(+)	P	P	P	P	(+)	P	E	P	P	P	Raul Valdes Fauli
Gordon Sokoloff	(+)	P	(+)	P	P	P	P	(+)	P	P	p	P	P	Patricia Keon
Robert Ruano	(+)	P	(+)	P	P	P	A	(+)	P	E	p	P	P	Vince Lago
Debbie Swain									(* -)	P	P	E	P	Michael Mena
Sue Kawalerski								(* -)	P	P	P	P	P	Jorge Fors
Nicholas Barshel	(+)	P	(+)	P	P	P	P	(+)	P	P	E	P	E	Commission as- a-whole
Peter Wood	(+)		(+)					(+)	P	P	E	P	P	City Manager

**P - Present**  
**E - Excused Absence**  
**A - Absent**  
**\* - New Member**  
**+ - No Meeting**  
**(#) Resigned**

**STAFF:**

Ed Santamaria, Assistant City Manager  
 Jessica Keller, Assistant Director Public Works Department  
 Melissa De Zayas, Senior Transportation Engineer  
 Jeanne Espinal, Assistant to the Public Works Director

**GUEST:**

Janet Perez	Roberta Neway
Desiree Caskill	J.C. Diaz Padron
Marvin Ross Friedman	

**1. CALL TO ORDER:**

The Chair, Dr. Gordon Sokoloff, called the meeting to order at 5:15 PM. Roll call was done, and a quorum was present.

**2. Meeting Minutes Approval**

Minutes for this meeting were amended to reflect the requested edits.

**Dr. Sokoloff proposed a motion to approve the amended October meeting minutes supplemented with the verbatim transcript. The motion was seconded by Sue Kawalerski, voted upon and adopted unanimously by the board.**

**Sue Kawalerski proposed a motion at the December 17, 2019 meeting to approve the minutes with the requested changes. The motion was seconded by Debbie Swain, voted upon and unanimously approved by the Board.**

Sue Kawalerski proposed a motion at the December 17, 2019 meeting for the minutes to reflect that there was a vote, but no motion passed regarding the election of a vicechair. The motion was seconded by Debbie Swain voted upon and adopted unanimously by the board.

### **3. CHAIRMANS REPORT**

220 Miracle Mile: Dr. Sokoloff asked Ed Santamaria for clarification on the proposed alterations to the ground floor and he confirmed that changes regarding the use of the alley are in the works but have not been submitted yet.

Courtney Thompson Initiative: Dr. Sokoloff reminded the board that no progress has been made but it is still in the works for 2020.

Zone Based Appointments: As per Debbie Swain's recommendation, no changes to the existing zones will occur. Dr. Sokoloff wants to ensure that the city is well represented, and adequate attention is given to all citywide transportation projects. Deborah Swain confirmed that all zones are well represented with some overlap.

### **4. Secretary's Report**

GRID: Sue Kawalerski opened discussion and requested for City staff to provide the GRID's history and explain why it is still in place after they have successfully brought in the sought-after developments. Jessica Keller deferred this question to Ramon Trias, who was invited to the meeting but failed to attend. Him or his supervisor Devin Cejas.

*i) Robert Ruano requested time to clarify the accusations made against him by a guest at the October meeting about a potential conflict of interest. He had reached out to the City Attorney and she confirmed that no conflict exists. On that basis he will not recuse himself from the board.*

*ii) Jessica Keller received an update from the City Attorney regarding the verbatim transcript referenced during the meeting minutes approval. The City Attorney confirmed that if no verbatim transcript exists, the minutes should incorporate the recording by reference only. Ed Santamaria advised the TAB that a transcript is possible, but funding would have to be identified and would be an additional expense. Debbie Swain stated that she does not deem it necessary, and Dr. Sokoloff agreed.*

Alhambra Circle: Jessica Keller advised the board that the walk shop was well attended, and the video of the workshop is available online. Notifications will be sent out to those who have signed up to continue the City's community engagement efforts. Jessica Keller reminded the board that the polling area is West to Red Road and one (1) block to the East. Debbie Swain attended the walk shop and expressed that it was good and helpful.

Dr. Sokoloff read a statement and in it he requested for the project to be paused until proper community input is sought. He suggested five (5) more community meetings at five (5) different locations. He further

recommended that notifications be mailed out return receipt to avoid notification issues. Robert Ruano disagreed with Dr. Sokoloff's statement and believes it would be unfair to stop the project since he was informed of the grant back in 2014 and attended the public meetings held by the City.

*iii) Dr. Sokoloff opened discussion about an ongoing investigation regarding a potential conflict of interest between Robert Ruano's company, Ecostrada and the City of Coral Gables' pre-qualified engineering consultant, H.W. Lochner. Robert Ruano clarified to Dr. Sokoloff that no conflict exists. He further clarified Ecostrada worked with H.W. Lochner at the City of Miami Beach, and at one-point H.W. Lochner asked him to be part of the Coral Gables Team. H.W. Lochner submitted a contract that included his name, however, Robert declined the offer and did not sign.*

Debbie Swain expressed her concern with pausing the project. She believes the public process should continue and fears that the City will lose funding. Dr. Sokoloff asked that the City reconsiders the way the polling is carried out to ensure transparency.

Sue Kawalerski is concerned about the large number of angered residents and suggested for the City to ask residents, whenever implementing any project, what they would like on their streets prior to starting any process. Dr. Sokoloff clarified that he is not against the project, however, he does not want to continue seeing an angry citizenry. Debbie Swain continued the discussion and stated that if balloting occurs before studies then community input cannot occur. Further, she suggested a reevaluation of the City's outreach efforts but believes efforts have been successful because she received the notification. Dr. Sokoloff stated that active members of the community are informed, but changes need to occur to inform those that are not active.

Peter Wood reminded the board that any kind of change will be met with resistance. Debbie clarified to the board that the right-of-way belongs to the City and as such there is no obligation to ask for permission on how the City uses their own property. Debbie Swain disagrees with the polling area suggested to include only those immediately affected, since all residents are ultimately affected. Robert Ruano stated that a motion is not necessary, and the City should continue with the process.

## **GUEST**

Debbie Swain requested for the guests to be brief, particularly those that spoke at the last meeting.

1. J.C. Padron advised the TAB that he received the notice. He suggested for notices to be mailed out return receipt to avoid future notification issues.
2. Desiree Caskill disagrees with the notion that people are throwing out notices and that everyone was informed. Ms. Caskill became recently informed and she personally informed other neighbors about the project. She informed Mr. Friedman who was not notified or aware of the project.
3. Marvin Friedman stated that most residents on Alhambra Circle are against the project. Mr. Friedman believes the project is bad for this main corridor and would eviscerate the existing tree canopy.

*Traffic Impact Study Applications:* Melissa De Zayas updated the TAB on the submittal of a fifty-one (51) unit multi-family development at 2335 Sidonia Avenue. It is not generating a traffic impact study.

**6. Traffic Update:** None

**7. Transit Update:** None

**8. Police Update:** Sergeant Maurice Sikes failed to attend the meeting.

**9. New Business**

*iv) Robert Ruano requested to speak prior to the Vice Chair election. He believes that Dr. Sokoloff's attempt to nominate Sue Kawalerski as vicechair is a conflict of interest as they are board members of the Riviera Association, classified as a 501(c) 4. In his opinion it is concerning that they are meeting outside of the TAB and discussing transportation matters which could potentially lead to a sunshine violation. Dr. Sokoloff informed Robert Ruano that he resigned from his role with the Riviera Association a couple months ago, however, the Sunbiz record has not been updated.*

Vice Chair Election: Robert Ruano nominated Peter Wood as the vice chair and Peter Wood accepted the nomination. Dr. Sokoloff mentioned that at the previous meeting he nominated Sue Kawalerski as vice chair. **A motion was made by Robert Ruano to nominate Peter Wood as Vice Chair. The motion was seconded by Debbie Swain.** Debbie Swain, Robert Ruano, and Peter Wood voted in favor to elect Peter as the Vice Chair. Stephen Naclerio abstained from voting. Dr. Sokoloff and Sue Kawalerki did not cast a vote. With most votes in favor, Peter Wood was elected as the Vice Chair.

Ordinance Modification: Debbie Swain suggested that in the Membership section it should appoint an advocate for each transportation mode. Dr. Sokoloff suggested for the TAB to have more influence over new developments and have them go through the board when traffic studies are exempt to avoid issues like the 220 Miracle Mile project. Modifications were deferred to the next meeting until everyone reviews it.

*v) Robert Ruano provided to the board his resignation letter and resigned immediately. He clarified that his resignation is not due to a conflict of interest as he has never received any money from the City of Coral Gables.*

## **10. Old Business**

Legislative Priorities: Jessica Keller clarified to the TAB that the they are past the window and legislative priorities are at a state level.

Annual Report: Peter Wood suggested that the Courtney Thompson should be listed as a goal, therefore, it should not be listed as an accomplishment. Dr. Sokoloff assigned the annual report update to Peter Wood who will submit at the next TAB.

Function of TAB: Debbie Swain suggested to define all transportation users, however, no changes were made to the draft of the new proposed function. **A motion was made by Sue Kawalerski to amend the function of the TAB, seconded by Debbie Swain, voted upon and unanimously approved by the Board.** Jessica Keller advised the board that the new function needs to be presented to the City Commission as a resolution.

Board priorities: Priorities were compiled, and it was agreed that they will be changed to future tense.

## **Guests' Comments**

Janet Perez stated that there are inconsistencies with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) grant application and believes that the application should be reviewed. Jessica Keller advised Ms. Perez that she has relayed the various concerns to Gabriel Gonzalez from FDOT and they have no concerns as the application was reviewed by multiple entities.

Marvin Friedman reiterated his concern regarding the mature trees and requested that the vote be limited to only those that live on Alhambra Circle. Debbie Swain advised Mr. Friedman that Deena Bell and Brook Dannemiller surveyed the trees at the walk shop and are doing all they can to preserve them and only diseased trees would be removed.

Jessica Keller reminded the guests that the City will be sending out information and there is no defined plan. The City will continue to work with the Community to identify what the plan will be. Debbie Swain advised everyone that for the construction of sidewalks or bicycle paths on collector roads polling is not a requirement.

**Meeting Adjourned at 6:43 PM**