

TRAFFIC ADVISORY BOARD
CORAL GABLES YOUTH CENTER
CORAL GABLES, FLORIDA
NOVEMBER 20, 2007

	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	
MEMBERS:													APPOINTED BY:
Ian Martinez									P	P	P	E	Donald D. Slesnick, II
Larry D. Kries	*	E	E	A	P	P	P	P	P	E	E	P	Maria Anderson
Douglas Yoder	*	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	P	P	P	P	Rafael "Ralph" Cabrera, Jr.
Frank Quesada	-		-	-	-	-	-	-	P	P	E	P	William H. Kerdyk, Jr.
Christopher Morrison	*	E	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	Wayne "Chip" Withers
Bertram Goldsmith, Jr.	*	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	Commission-as-a-Whole
Ramon Irigoyen	*	P	P	A	E	P	E	E	A	A	A	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
Lt. A. Diaz, Police Department
Esther Zabalo, Civil Engineer
M. Francomacaro, Central
Hesham Elbadrawi, Marlin Engineering
Yamilet Senespleda, Marlin Engineering

Residents:

Mike Jullie, Riviera Neighborhood Homeowners Association
Paul van Walleghem, Riviera Neighborhood Homeowners Association

Press

Sebastian del Marmol, Coral Gables Gazette

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 5:36 p.m. The Minutes of the October 19th meeting were distributed to the Board Members. The October Minutes were corrected by Dr. Yoder regarding his comments on Page 4, under his comments; the word *contributable* should be changed to *attributable*. Under a motion made by Dr. Yoder, seconded by Mr. Kries the October Minutes were approved, as corrected.

The Chairman asked Mr. Delgado to discuss the purpose of the proposed Hammock Lakes meeting in January. Mr. Delgado informed those present that since the Board will not meet in December, Public Works is planning to have another public hearing for the Hammock Lakes Phase I and II Homeowners Association in January. The association has come to the City with a plan for a guardhouse, gating the community. A requirement of the County for any Taxing District in a community is that they receive a recommendation from the City and that the affected area residents

have an opportunity to express their concerns. The affected area is the neighborhood(s) within the gates.

Mr. Delgado proposed that we invite all the affected residents to come to our January meeting for the Board to listen to the plan. To Mr. Morrison's question as to whether we should hold the community meeting on the same day of the Board's regular meeting, Mr. Delgado noted that we could. Staff was instructed to find a meeting room that could accommodate the attendees. It was determined that the Board meeting would be held at its regular time 5:30 p.m., and an hour later, at 6:30 p.m., the community meeting would be held at the Youth Center auditorium. It was thought that would give the Board enough time to complete its meeting and be on time for the community meeting.

Mr. Delgado further explained that what the homeowners association is proposing to close Hammock Lakes at Old Cutler Road with a gate on School House Road at Kendall Drive. According to the Taxing District requirements, if it a street closure or semi-closure is requested, all affected parties must be heard. After that has been accomplished, the process can move forward. An election must be held and the approval of about 51% of the affected area residents is needed.

Mr. Morrison gave a brief synopsis of what took place at the October 2004 Hammock Lakes Phase I and Phase II community meeting for the benefit of the new Board Members. He asked that the minutes of that meeting be e-mailed to those members. He also noted that the area in question is a large area and when we first held the community meeting, residents from the east side of Old Cutler Road, who use that road to go to Kendall, attended the meeting and were not in favor of the proposed closure. Dr. Yoder noted that these are all public streets. A member raised the question whether there are any traffic and/or speeding issues that the City is aware of at this point and which are out of the ordinary. Mr. Delgado noted that right now the Homeowners Association has a roving patrol.

Mr. Morrison continued, that at that same meeting one-third of the residents were against the closure and concerns were voiced that this was only to lead into putting a gated community in and that was the real intent of the closure. Whether a gated community was to be created was not the issue before this Board, only to determine if there was a reason for a street closure. One reason would be traffic intrusion and the other, speeding. So we sent the consultant to take a look at the situation and he reported back at a subsequent meeting that 1) he could not find significant intrusion, and 2) could he find any speeding through the neighborhood. At that time the Board voted unanimously, that since neither condition existed, we were not in favor of the street closure. This is documented in the minutes. In principle the Board has not supported any additional street closures in the City, whatsoever. So now, this is coming before us again and as Mr. Delgado has explained, is coming to us from a different direction. It is a taxing District, so we will have to go through the whole process all over again.

To the question of what kind of response have we had from the affected area residents Mr. Delgado noted that the President of the Association says that 80% is in favor and 20% are against. That is the last count they have. Again, they need to show that through elections. At least we will listen to the concerns of the neighbors to see what the problem is and see if the Board can help.

Mr. Morrison: “If we only vote on the merits of traffic...” Mr. Delgado, “that’s right if we only vote on the merits of the traffic.”

Mr. Morrison noted that he thought if we spent the money to send the consultant again we would get similar results. Mr. Delgado mentioned that it is a winding road and that he did not see anyone taking it to go to Kendall. The only time it would be used by persons outside the neighborhood would be if there was road work being conducted and the drivers needed to detour.

Mr. Delgado informed the Board about the meeting he had had with County representatives the week before, regarding all the pending issues, such as the Miracle Mile parking. The City was trying to see if the County would be amenable to allow us to use the Impact Fees to change the parking from angle to parallel as a capacity improvement and the response was **NO**. They do not consider this a capacity improvement, so impact fees cannot be used for this purpose.

Mr. Morrison asked if the only way we could use those funds was if it was a capacity improvement. Mr. Delgado explained that the only way we could get funding for the Miracle Mile parking project would be through a GOB. There is close to \$1.4 million (\$1.385 million to be exact) which has been targeted for Miracle Mile. The County might be able to help us if we undertake drainage improvements and the paving associated with the drainage work, since that qualifies for Impact Fees. We need to do some minor assessment if we want to do only the sidewalks on Miracle Mile. Right now we are doing in-house estimates to replace sidewalks, trimming the trees, installing decorative lighting which is also needed and do the minor trench improvements that need to be done. If we are able to do at least the work he had just outlined, we would leave the parking the way it now is. What really makes this project expensive is moving the curb line because of the parking.

Mr. Morrison asked as to the tree replacements and Mr. Delgado noted that Public Service is addressing the removal issue. A meeting is scheduled for next week with the BID and the City Manager. Regarding amenities, such as benches, Mr. Delgado noted that we can add those, as well as lighting and irrigation. If the estimate can be reduced by half, probably the project can be put together. This will be reported to the BID at the upcoming meeting.

Regarding the 25 MPH that the Board has been discussing, the County’s position is that it should be City-wide, not only in a small section, avoiding having to post so many signs. Throughout the City we can say that there is a 25 MPH limit, unless otherwise posted. The County is sending a letter confirming this.

Mr. Morrison asked Mr. Delgado if he needed a recommendation from the Board at this point or at a later date and Mr. Delgado confirmed at a later date. This needs to be brought back to Commissioner Cabrera who was the proponent. Once we receive the letter from the County, we will meet with Commissioner Cabrera.

Dr. Yoder: Does the County have the authority to authorize that? Doesn’t it have to go to the State? Mr. Delgado informed him that the County is the only one that has the authority to approve it. So Dr. Yoder noted that the letter is basically going to say that if the City wants to do it, the City can do it, but only if its done City-wide. Mr. Delgado further explained that the county does not want to create what the call speed traps. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Kries noted that Biscayne Park already has the 25 MPH limit and Mr. Delgado explained that it is the only jurisdiction that already has the 25 MPH limit. Mr. Kries: “What, if anything, have we learned from that?”

Mr. Delgado: “Three things need to be done: a study that Hesham is proposing, but in this case it will be simpler. Lt. Diaz interjected that the speed on all streets cannot be 25 MPH and Mr. Delgado explained to him that only residential streets, not the ones controlled by the County. Mr. Delgado continued: an Interlocal Agreement must be signed in which the City agrees to certain terms; and the City is responsible for the maintenance of the signs, installation and liability. The Board Members concurred that this would be a great idea.

RIVIERA NEIGHBORHOOD HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

Mr. Morrison welcomed Messrs. Jullie and van Wallegghem, representing the Riviera Neighborhood Homeowners Association (RNA.)

Mr. Delgado reported that they had done their homework. The last time we met with them we talked about the location of the traffic circles under consideration and we ask Dr. Elbadrawi to give us his recommendation, considering the fact that we have installed two new circles on Maynada.

Dr. Elbadrawi: “We reviewed the counts that were taken after the installation of the traffic circle on S Alhambra and Maynada and what we found was that the traffic on Palazzo is higher than on Mentone. That fact supports my theory that if we put a circle on Mentone, people will see the circle ahead and they will go down Palazzo to avoid it. So, I still recommend we install a circle on Palazzo.”

Mr. Morrison: “The next circle would be on Trionfo? Mr. Delgado clarified that the recommendation is Palazzo and then Trionfo. Dr. Elbadrawi continued: “About the priority of the locations, I believe we need to treat the ones that have conflicts - safety is number one - plus the number of cars using that intersection. So the first one would be South Alhambra and Trionfo. The second South Alhambra and Veronese. This one has a long history and is a very big intersection with a lot of conflict points. Then the third one would be South Alhambra and Palazzo. After that Santana and Domenico, and following that South Alhambra and Nervia.

The order is:

Trionfo, Veronese and Palazzo. This is the order of priority. It has to do with speed.

Mr. Jullie: “can I ask why you are doing Trionfo?” Dr. Elbadrawi:: “Because now Trionfo has a lot of volume on both streets. South Alhambra has almost 4000 vehicles. Cars are running the stop signs and there are a lot of conflict points, so we think this is the highest priority.

Mr. Jullie: "I am focused on the speeding issue and I was wondering if that is going to slow the speeding down. If they run a stop sign are they cruising through a stop sign? That is lot different than speeding." Dr. Elbadrawi: "If we were to install the one on Palazzo first we are not looking at the whole corridor, but when install one in the middle we are giving the drivers the sense that this is a traffic calming district. We want you slow down and it will reduce the speed, in general. So this is the idea behind it. When we consider traffic calming, we take into consideration volume, speed, conflicts, and accidents."

Mr. Jullie asked about the other ones and Dr. Elbadrawi explained that they had not had a chance to look into them in detail but they have the same volume, and same speed more or less.

Mr. Morrison asked if those other ones would be as effective without the circle at Trionfo and Dr. Elbadrawi explained that they still will be effective. But, there is an intersection in the middle that has a lot of problems. Dr. Elbadrawi explained that usually the circle is the best device because you are treating two intersections, two streets. When a median is installed, you are dealing with only one street. This is how it is done in the City of Miami. The circles first.

Mr. Morrison: "So moving ahead nine months to the next budget year, the fourth was Nervia and fifth was.... The Fifth is Nervia, the fourth Santona and Domenico. Everything else, including the \$15,000.00 for the median that Mr. Jullie is talking about will fall into that money being available." Dr. Elbadrawi noted that there is also a device proposed for Hardee and Manatee, an intersection with two streets meeting in a 90 degree angle.

Mr. Jullie noted that the residents on San Remo were complaining and Dr. Elbadrawi explained that there are a couple of intersections that need to be aligned and a couple of medians added.

Mr. Jullie: "Right, I just can't help voicing my opinion and those of our area. We want the speeding to slow down and I just don't buy your argument. We already have stop signs on Nervia and I think a circle belongs there, for sure, to make it nice so people don't flow through the stop sign. I think the most important things are the ones that are actually going to slow-down speeding."

Dr. Elbadrawi: "Allow me give you an example - when we put counting machines, we put them on Trionfo between sunset Drive and South Alhambra - two blocks - and guess what the speed limit on the two block stretch was, 30 MPH, which is relatively high. Then we put one between Corsica and Gratian - one a half block - and the speed was 34 MPH. And then we put it also one and a half block west of Trionfo and the speed was 35MPH."

To Mr. Jullie's statement that there is calming device planned for that area, even though we have all way stop signs, still drivers run the signs, especially at night and it is creating a problem. So we need to do that one. Mr. Morrison asked if drivers are actually going faster east and west of the stop signs. Dr. Elbadrawi explained that the recommendation is never to use stop signs as traffic calming devices, because drivers feel they loose time at the stop signs and they need to make up for the lost time, so drivers speed before and after stop signs. If there is a physical circle they go slowly but drivers do not feel that they are wasting time.

Mr. Jullie asked if we had gotten any further with the prioritization and Dr. Elbadrawi that we did not, explaining that the priority is more or less the same. We may go to Gratian.

To Mr. Jullie's question as to whether we were going to be able to do all these five this year Mr. Delgado noted that we had to make sure that we have three and if any others do not go through, then we will add theirs, which although it is on the list it depends since, as Mr. Morrison explained, the traffic calming budget allocation had been cut, but the list had been left as it was originally developed.

At this point Mr. Jullie noted that he will defer to the experts. Mr. Delgado noted that that is the reason why the City retains expert consultants.

Public Works will be working on the proposed calming devices for the new budget year and Mr. Jullie has asked to receive the list of names of all residents who will be receiving notifications and a sample ballot letter. The traffic calming installations are expected to commence in January.

Mr. Delgado noted that the County had already approved the circles for Blue Road. The JPA has been approved and Public Works is moving on those. We will meet with the contractor to set the requirements.

Mr. Jullie questioned Mr. Delgado why we do not have another contractor. Mr. Delgado explained that for those little circles we have a good contractor. The larger circles, Segovia and Coral Way, those are three other projects. Mr. Jullie commented that the critical path is contractor and that we do not have enough contractors, we only have one. He suggested putting this out for bid and contracting the first and second bidders. Mr. Delgado explained that the City has to use the low bidder. Mr. Jullie replied: "You don't want to do that." Mr. Delgado reiterated that although we only have one contractor, Metro Express, it has several crews and they work fast. So far the City has not had any problems with this company.

Both Messrs. Jullie and van Wallegghem thanked the Board Members for their help and understanding. He further commented that they are very active in that area and very concerned about the heavy traffic, especially the people who disregard the area and could not care less for our families and our children. That is why we are actively trying to stop the speeding. We are not going to give up until we stop the speeding problem.

Mr. Morrison: "Last year your area had 40% of the funding and this year your area is getting the bulk of the funds and you have the commitment of the Board that we will continue until we are finished."

Mr. Jullie: "Thank you; anytime we can return the favor, please let us know and he reiterated their willingness to assist in getting the residents in other areas of the City to agree to the calming device installations. He mentioned that they were ready to assist the Board's efforts with the Columbus/Greenway circle over which the residents were split evenly eight in favor and eight against, but he never heard anything more about it. The Zone 1 Representative, Ramon Irigoyen, was not in attendance to comment.

BOARD RELATED COMMISSION ITEMS

There are no Board-related Commission items.

Mr. Morrison inquired whether we had heard anything from the City Manager as to the Board's request for an audit. Mr. Delgado noted that we had nothing to report, as yet.

Mr. Delgado reminded the Board Members of the Boards and Committees Reception to be held at City Hall on December 13, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. The Development Department will be sending invitations to the Members.

CITY UPDATES

No City updates.

TRAFFIC CALMING PROJECTS – update

Public Works is working on the calming devices at Hernando and Madeira, which is the last project for this Fiscal Year. The survey was done and the streets marked. It is expected construction will commence next week.

Mr. Morrison asked that a bar chart be prepared and presented at the January meeting, similar to the one we had for this year's projects, showing what Public Works is planning to do over the course of the year and go ahead and schedule all \$360,000.00 worth, even though we know that a couple of the projects will not take place due to budgetary constraints.

Mr. Morrison asked if there was any action on the Segovia median at Coral Way and Mr. Delgado informed him that we are still trying to convince the County that it is a capacity improvement and as such can be paid out of the Impact Fees.

Mr. Kries inquired if we had any idea how long before the County approved the Segovia median, so that the City does not end up paying for it. Mr. Delgado noted that the median will be completed before the project is finished. In fact, if the median is not completed, the City will not issue the CO (Certificate of Occupancy.) Mr. Delgado also informed the Board Members that the developer is moving along with the traffic calming devices on Hernando.

Mr. Kries wanted to know if the intersection on Valencia was going to be part of the median on Segovia, but Mr. Delgado noted that it was not. The developer for that area is supposed to do it.

600 Block of Valencia

Mr. Kries inquired about sidewalks. It seems that with new projects in the area, the sidewalks in some cases are being extended to the street and in other cases they are not. Mr. Delgado asked him to clarify whether he meant the extension or the widening of the sidewalks. Where the townhouses have been built, the sidewalks have been widened. When there are townhouses, the County requires six

feet sidewalks instead of the five feet. Mr. Kries noted that the developer built the sidewalks, but did not connect them to the street. Mr. Delgado to check on this.

OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Morrison asked Dr. Elbadrawi if he had checked with the County on the Loquat signalization and found out what they intend to do. Flash part of the day or be a working signal 24/7? Dr. Elbadrawi noted that he had asked, but would check again. Most probably the County will leave the light work the whole day and having it flash from 11:30 p.m. to 5:30 a.m.

Mr. Morrison: “I recently saw surveyors at the intersection of West Ingraham Terrace and Le Jeune. Does it have anything to do with the new crosswalk?” Dr. Elbadrawi does not know, but Mr. Delgado noted that the County was also going to start on Bird Road and Granada but they have not done so yet.

Mr. Delgado informed Mr. Morrison, and the members, that landscaping was being planted on the Hardee circles.

Mr. Morrison: “When they finish the Bridge will they move on to San Vicente?” Mr. Delgado: “Yes. They already have irrigation.

SIGNS

Mr. Morrison: “And the redundant signs at the Hardee circles we keep talking about are still there...and, the flashing lights.”

Mr. Delgado to check with the County. He informed the Board that the City had removed the 20 MPH signs.”

Mr. Morrison further noted that when approaching Granada, on Hardee, there are still signs noting reduced speed ahead on either side of the street. Very redundant. “We don’t need them.” Mr. Delgado to follow-up with the County

Dr. Elbadrawi confirmed that the signs on the circles are not reflector signs, such as the yield signs. Pedestrian signs are painted and they are not recommended any more. Within a year or two they lose the markings completely. Another thing, the marking on the Maynada Circle/South Alhambra and Maynada/Alfonso, most of the pedestrian crossing markings are gone. They are not

Thermoplastic and we will check to see if they can be re-painted, Maynada/South Alhambra and Maynada/Alfonso are also fading. He does not know if it is because of the downgrading or upgrading of the cars, but he doesn’t feel they are Thermoplastic. Dr. Elbadrawi was at a workshop a couple of months ago and learned that now they don’t require pedestrian signs on the exits of the circles. As you enter the circle they need to be there but not when you exit, so they can be removed. This also applies to the roundabouts.

Mr. Morrison: "Two comments on the circles I continue to hear from residents: Why are there so many signs and where is the landscaping?" Mr. Delgado noted that the consultant and himself will check with the County on the signs, and the landscaping, which Public Service handles, although it has taken long, is already going in.

Mr. Kries: "I want to thank someone because the stop signs have been installed at Valencia and Anderson so now there are stop signs on Anderson and it is now a four-way stop. With the traffic flow on Valencia that will help that intersection. Thank you."

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Quesada inquired as to the Douglas Entrance intersection which has been a concern of his for a while. It is where Galiano and Ponce intersect. For the drivers going north-south there is no stop sign, but for the drivers going east-west there is a stop sign. There is also parking on east Ponce de Leon and Galiano and typically there are cars on those spots, making visibility even more difficult. Add the fact that there is a trolley stop, this is a dangerous intersection

He suggested maybe Lt. Diaz could check this intersection out. He also asked if there had been any accidents there. Lt. Diaz will check.

Dr. Elbadrawi noted that if it is a sight-distance problem we can recommend a four-way stop. Discussion ensued. Mr. Morrison asked Dr. Elbadrawi to report back to the Board.

The Chairman reminded the Board Members that there will not be a meeting in December. The next meeting will be January 15, 2008. The business meeting will be held in Classroom #222, at 5:30 p.m. and then we will adjourn to the Auditorium to hold the Hammock Lakes community meeting at 6:30 p.m.

Mr. Kries questioned whether or not it is a requirement of all City of Coral Gables' boards and commissions, including the Traffic Advisory Board, that each hold an Annual Meeting at which time certain business will be conducted including the election of a chairman and vice-chairman. Mr. Kries requested that Mr. Delgado consult with the appropriate City personnel and advise the Board members. Mr. Martinez had noted at a previous meeting that of all the boards he has served on, this is the only time that he attend the City Attorney's orientation meeting, which he found very informative.

Mr. Morrison: "It has been my recommendation that every new member that has not been through the orientation, should attend. It is a very enlightening seminar".

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 6:25 p.m.