

TRAFFIC ADVISORY BOARD
CORAL GABLES YOUTH CENTER – CONFERENCE ROOM
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2012 5:30 P.M.

- MINUTES MEETING -

| MEMBERS | J | F | M | A | M | J | J | A | S | O | N | D | APPOINTED BY: |
|----------------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----------------------------|
| | 12 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 12 | |
| Rene Alvarez | P | P | P | E | + | E | E | + | P | E | + | P | Jim Cason |
| Larry D. Kries | P | P | P | P | + | E | P | + | P | E | + | P | Maria Anderson |
| Deborah Swain | P | P | P | P | + | P | P | + | P | P | + | P | Rafael "Ralph" Cabrera, Jr. |
| Alex Menendez | - | - | - | P | + | P | P | + | P | P | + | P | William H. Kerdyk, Jr. |
| Jorge L. Arrizurieta | - | - | - | - | + | - | - | + | - | - | + | P | Frank C. Quesada |
| Donna Kupper | P | P | P | P | + | E | P | + | P | P | + | E | Commission-as-a-Whole |
| Elvira Escribano | - | - | - | - | + | - | - | + | - | - | + | P | City Manager |

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

STAFF:

Patrick Salerno, City Manager
Carlos Hernandez, Public Works Director
Ernesto Pino, Assistant Public Works Director
Walter Reed, Fire Chief
Scott Masington, Acting Police Chief
Ludwik Janiga, Public Works Civil Engineer
Jeannette Reyes, Public Works Clerical Assistant II

GUEST:

Mr. & Mrs. Felix Pardo, C.G. Residents
Mr. Aurelio Durana, C.G. Resident

CALL TO ORDER:

Mrs. Swain called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL:

- **October 16, 2012 Meeting Minutes**
Mr. Kries made a motion to approve the minutes with corrections, Mr. Menendez seconded the motion and the motion was unanimously approved.

MEETING ABSENCE:

Mr. Menendez made a motion to excuse Mrs. Kupper absence, Mr. Alvarez seconded the motion and the motion was unanimously approved.

SECRETARY'S REPORT:

The Street Resurfacing Project Phase I – approximately 95% complete, substantial completion is expected by January 2013.

The Street Resurfacing Project Phase II – project awarded October 2012. The notice to proceed is expected to be provided to the contractor by January 2013. This project will include streets south of US 1 and the downtown area.

Intersection Improvements at various locations project – project awarded on October 2012. This project includes (2) traffic circles, splitter island at (1) intersection and (4) intersection re-alignments.

Ponce de Leon Blvd & Alhambra Circle landscaping project – these projects were awarded and notice to proceed is expected to be provided to the contractor by January 2013.

Bicycle Master Plan – project was awarded to C3TS. The scope is to prepare a citywide bicycle and pedestrian master plan.

Mrs. Swain had a meeting with the consultant because of her interest in the bicycle master plan and they said they plan on having a public meeting next month to get input from the public and she asked that they keep the Board updated.

LeJeune Road Median improvement project – the project was awarded; the notice to proceed is expected to be provided to the contractor by January 2013. This project includes improvements to landscape the medians within the existing striping. This will not affect any left or right turns.

Mrs. Swain asked if Police & Fire had any concerns with the project. The response was no.

Resident Felix Pardo stated they have asked for the plans on this project to no avail. Mr. Durana, a neighbor who lives on the east side of LeJeune Road, was under the impression that safety crosswalks were going to be built from the east side to the west side of LeJeune Road. He also thought the landscaping was going to be different.

Mr. Pardo commented that the problem is that detailed plans for those improvements were never shown to the public. He said being one of the residents paying for this, he feels there is enough concern from a safety stand point. He added that although the Fire Department does not have an issue with this, but when he sees traffic bottleneck in both directions, and emergency vehicles going down the middle, and trees being put in the middle on certain areas, it does not make sense.

Mr. Pardo reiterated that there were no plans shown to neighbors being affected by this project. That was done seven years ago by FDOT where they had public hearings and showed exactly what the proposed modifications to LeJeune Road were. Once shown, neighbors expressed their concerns. He said City Commissioners, especially the ones who voted for this project, were unaware of the scope of the project. Mr. Pardo stated this should be brought up to the attention of the public and the citizens of the City of Coral Gables. He feels totally disenfranchised.

Mr. Pardo mentioned that Tim Plummer, an independent consultant, who is the same traffic consultant who said there is no parking issue at the Youth Center also said there are no safety issues on LeJeune Road. Mr. Pardo stated he has seen people killed and t-boned on LeJeune Road. He added he has lived at his residence for twenty-two years. Mr. Pardo feels the problem is that no one has looked at this project from a safety stand point and how it affects pedestrians. There were no crosswalk modifications made where the islands were placed.

Mrs. Swain asked staff to address the issue about the availability of the plans to the residents.

Mr. Salerno, City Manager, stated that many of the comments made by Mr. Pardo were also made during Tuesday's City Commission meeting. The Commission decided on November 13, 2012 to award the project. Mr. Pardo appeared before the Commission and raised his concerns. The Commission voted 3 to 2 to approve the project. No one was inclined to change their position one way or the other on that matter. Mr. Salerno further stated that this project was nothing like the project considered seven years ago. As far as the Commission not being aware of the project's scope, as stated by Mr. Pardo, Mr. Salerno disagrees because three Commissioners approved it. He further added that there have been discussions regarding this project and no one has voiced concerns about not being aware of the scope of the project.

Mr. Salerno added that Tim Plummer was there as the traffic consultant, not the design consultant. He clarified that this is a State road, not a City or County road. FDOT approved this project from all aspects: safety, traffic flow, and pedestrian crossings. In fact, there is a crosswalk in the project. FDOT determined, in conjunction with the design engineers and their traffic consultant, that one crosswalk was appropriate.

Mr. Pardo asked where the crosswalk would be placed. Mr. Pino answered on Mendoza, the northern end.

Mr. Salerno said the City went an extra step by attaining an independent consultant to review what was done by the other design professionals and FDOT. The consultant made a statement that he fairly supported the fact that the project was appropriate as designed, even making reference that it will improve safety along LeJeune.

Mr. Salerno was advised by the design engineers that there were about twenty accidents in over 3 years, as per FDOT records, and most were due to rear end collisions.

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Mr. Salerno added that as far as information not being available, the project has been a known City project for many months. The funds were approved in excess of 6 months ago. He said any time residents want to see project plans and upon request, they are made available.

Mr. Kries stated that for the past seven years he has the history of the project and understands the perspective of the citizens. He said it is true that the project that was proposed seven or eight years ago was going to impact the streets. As a member of this Board, attending all meetings this year except one, this has never been brought up to the Board. If it was being worked on, it was never presented or mentioned to the Board. Mr. Kries said there is a perception that this has been done sort of in a secret.

Mr. Salerno said regarding Mr. Kries' comment that this project has never been discussed by the board, he said that is incorrect. The project was discussed by this Board in the October meeting. He asked Mr. Kries to refer to those meeting minutes in which, the project was discussed before the City Commission awarded the contract.

Mrs. Swain stated that the October minutes stated *LeJeune Road Median Improvement Project* - bids were open today. Project includes curbing, landscaping and irrigation.

Mr. Salerno said that the project was discussed at the October 16th Board meeting and the contract to award the project was presented at the November 13th Commission meeting (a month after the Board meeting). Mr. Salerno added that if there were concerns or requests to see the plans regarding the project, this could have been addressed at the November meeting.

Mrs. Swain commented that the Board has had very little input on on-going City projects. She added they requested for a report on the paving project and one of those items was the LeJeune Median Improvement project. She said her notes on this meeting included: centerline median project and there was nothing relating to landscaping. She stated the Board has been discussing about hearing things after the fact. For example, the Board is sometimes not aware of projects until bids are being opened.

Mr. Salerno added to Mrs. Swain comments that at the discussion meeting on Tuesday it was described as a beautification project. The Director who was present and who oversaw the design of this project is no longer with the City and he's unable to speak for him. However, if the Commission considered the project, as described by some of the Board members who did not support the project as a beautification project, which may have had some impact in the way it was viewed.

Mrs. Swain addressed staff and Mr. Salerno and said the Board wants to know about projects before they are designed and money is spent. If there's a project, a road, or anything that is going to impact the use of a roadway, the Board wants to know about it before someone is hired and a design is done.

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Mr. Salerno stated that once the City Commission decides they are going to do a project, the City will proceed with the project, unless there is something overwhelming. Regarding the design aspect before money is spent; this is not practical because there is no design to review until the City hires a consultant.

Mrs. Swain stated there was a time when the City had its consultant do conceptual drawings and in the past couple of years the conceptual drawings has come from the city staff.

Mr. Menendez suggested for the Board to see the concept of a project before it's voted on and moving forward.

Mrs. Swain said the earlier in the process the Board is involved, the more input they can provide.

Mr. Arrizurieta asked Jeannette for a copy of the by-laws for the Traffic Advisory Board to become familiar with the roll and the responsibilities of the Board. He said Mr. Pardo made some strong statements relating to public safety and security and would like to hear some reactions to the comments made by Mr. Pardo.

Chief Masington said he has reviewed the plans. He said the side impact crashes that Police have experienced on LeJeune Road has never been a result of somebody that's in the middle, it's because they are trying to cross the initial lane of travel. A narrowing of a roadway slows people down, there are some traffic calming measures that have been put in place. These are the things that Police looked at and believes it will have no negative impact. Many years ago the discussion was about the lengthy medians that would prohibit people from entering or exiting LeJeune Road, exactly the way they can enter and exit now, this has no impact on it. Police took all those things under consideration.

Chief Reed also reviewed the plans. He said years ago, the original project was not acceptable because it was a solid median that ran from Bird Road to 8th Street. At that time, Fire had made recommendations that the islands be cut up so they could have access to and from streets. He said this project is better since the islands are not that large. There are smaller islands providing areas for people to pull off when the emergency vehicles are responding, which is a good thing for them. They also have the ability to go into the other lane in order to get to a street they can pull out. Fire evaluated all that and they also have to weigh not only vehicle access, they also have to weigh in when coming through, they don't want people in the center of the street trying to pull over because it creates other accidents so they looked at all the different things that could be impacted with the islands. He said they see this as something that really works for them. Therefore, they do not have a concern with it.

Mrs. Swain said that Mr. Pardo mentioned that Fire sometimes uses the center for emergency vehicles and if that was a concern. Chief Reed said they do not have a concern because they use other streets like Salzedo and a lot of the other roads. He added that on that road they have the ability to go outside and vehicles will be able to pull over and get out of the way so that the emergency vehicles are not going up the center lane.

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Mr. Pardo commented that the two Commissioners he spoke with, one voted against and one voted for and that neither one saw any plans. He added no plans were shown to the Commission on the concept of the beautification project. The Commission did not have a review of the drawings, the same way that this Board did not have a review of the drawings and he felt this is disturbing

Mr. Durana resident living at 322 Alesio Avenue, east of LeJeune Road, stated he supports these proposed improvements and commended the City Manager for finally wrestling-out of FDOT the consent to proceed with the improvements on LeJeune Road. He said he was involved 10 years ago when FDOT was trying to install medians and making LeJeune a limited access highway (an expressway through the Gables). He said this FDOT effort was defeated then and they asked FDOT to put the medians where the painted chevrons were. He said that what Mr. Pardo is suggesting, as a way for an emergency vehicle or for traffic to merge, is simply illegal. We should not be encouraging people to drive through the chevrons at all. Once the medians are in place, aesthetically, it will provide continuity for the Normandy Village which is right now truncated from the rest of the Gables. It will also allow residents from the east side of LeJeune Road to cross safely and access the Youth Center and the Library and the Summerset Academy where his granddaughter goes to school. He added a lot of people on the west side of LeJeune Road cross LeJeune east bound and takes the trolley to access Gallery night where the restaurants need the residents support. He also spoke with Mr. Springmyer, who confirmed that the palms to be installed will be Alexander Palms, Developer Palms, that any fire truck can ride over.

Mrs. Swain thanked everyone requested the Board be provided a copy of the plans next time so when the residents go to the Board they are prepared.

OLD BUSINESS:

Majorca & LeJeune – this project did not qualify for construction of any traffic calming device in the neighborhood. There was a mistake in the FDOT data reading because it was done for LeJeune Road and not Majorca. Once the LeJeune median project is complete, staff can request traffic data again for that neighborhood.

Valencia & Cardena – construction for that intersection is done

San Amaro and Alhambra Circle – this project is in the preliminary design stage.

Escobar & Anderson – currently in the voting process. The voting will be closed next month and so far every vote is a “yes” for the project.

Segovia Circle – this project was approved for a one-way exit.

Mrs. Swain went to the public meeting, alternatives were presented to members of the public and the Board has never seen or heard of this project. Ludwik mentioned this was presented to the Board a while ago along with several other projects. One suggestion Mrs. Swain had on this

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project, due to cut-through traffic, rather than spending all that money on realigning the street, what about signage. She said residents would prefer a one-way exit and one-way entrance but

why not try first with signage and “no entrance” between these times etc. Ludwig said it’s not just signage, there are cars speeding from Alhambra and they are not stopping at the stop sign. In addition, they cut in corners which are visible on the edge of pavement which the City is constantly fixing. Mrs. Swain suggested Police enforcement to help. Ludwik said they have tried different things and different options. Mrs. Swain said the work that is required to realign that whole thing is tremendous and asked for an estimate for that project. Ludwik responded an excess of \$12,000.00

Mr. Menendez said he doesn’t see what the problem is making the street a one-way street.

Mrs. Swain requested that before the plan moves forward for it to come back to the Board in details, to get recommendation and it needs to go on a list to be prioritized. Mr. Pino said the project is not currently funded and staff has met with the residents from the block, they have seen the plans they like the concept and are familiar with it. Mrs. Swain asked if the balloting was done and Ludwik replied yes (all fourteen voted “yes”).

Riviera & US1 – the construction fence is on private property, so it is outside our jurisdiction.

LeJeune & Riviera- the stop sign was reported to the County; they own and maintain traffic signs and signals.

Bird Road and University- spoke to the traffic engineer for Dade County who said “no” to the crosswalk. Mrs. Swain asked what the minimum length of the sidewalk had to be in order to put in a crosswalk. Ludwik replied, usually about one block.

Mrs. Swain stated a lot of the City has no sidewalk therefore there are no crosswalks because there are no sidewalks. At the intersection of Granada, Bird and University there is a sidewalk along the northern side of Bird Road without a crosswalk to get to University or Granada (the south side). She lives there and sees what people go through, particularly the UM students, who ride bikes and walk down that street and there is no safe way to cross and no crossing button. She said at least one crosswalk on Granada or University can get people across Bird Road safely.

Mr. Salerno introduced the new Public Works Director, Carlos Hernandez to the Board.

ADJOURNMENT:

Meeting adjourned at 6:33 pm