

TRAFFIC ADVISORY BOARD
CORAL GABLES YOUTH CENTER
CORAL GABLES, FLORIDA
MAY 20, 2008

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

Guest:

Mrs. Luisa C. Mendoza, 740 South Alhambra Circle, CG 33146

Copies of the minutes of April 15 were distributed. Vice-Chairman Yoder informed those present that he would hold off any action items until we had a quorum. He asked Mr. Kinney if he was ready to give his report.

KEVIN KINNEY: Mr. Kinney distributed some informational material (copy attached and made a part of these Minutes.) He noted that anytime there is a commercial district next to a residential district along Eighth Street it creates havoc. He commented that there are about a dozen streets that come out of Eighth Street, where the first 100 feet is a commercial use and then goes into residential. His predecessor had No Parking signs installed but there are a lot of residents who need to park their own vehicles in the swale.

He informed the members that the Parking Department has a program which he feels is perfectly appropriate for this and that although he had never spoken with the Lisbon Street resident, there are a couple of ladies on Granada Grove and Alberca who are looking into the Residential Permit Program.

Mr. Kinney went on to explain the Residential Permit Program: Originally the program requires that 75% of the area residents request the parking program. He thinks 75% is too high, that it should be 50% plus 1. He noted that he has been in conversations with the City Manager to see if he could officially lower the policy to 50% plus 1. Mr. Kinney further explained that you can purchase a yearly parking permit for \$20.00, which allows you to park in those streets. This makes it easier for the parking enforcers to know what vehicle belongs there; otherwise they issue a citation.

He continued that right now it is really very difficult because the employees of the commercial buildings park there all day. The Parking Department does not manage those 100 feet of commercial property very well. So when someone comes to go to the doctor or one of those other commercial buildings, those four or five spaces that are on the commercial zone are all filled up so the customer has to go and park in the residential area in order to go to the doctor or to any of the other businesses.

Mr. Kinney explained that there are two ways: The parking enforcers go and write 20 tickets one day; then there are twenty people the next day which are not the ones that received tickets the day before. It is not a very efficient way to monitor, whereas if we had residential permit parking, it would be a bit clearer as to who belongs and who does not belong in the area.

The other thing that we have to look at is long term; whether we have to start trying to manage those first 100 feet which are actually in the public right-of-way and try to convince the neighborhood that they should go with the residential permit. Residents just south of downtown who have gotten into the residential parking program are very satisfied and they say it works much better.

Dr. Yoder: "I assume that the people who are parking there in order to go to the commercial facilities will go to the nearest available space. How far down the block would you typically go with ..." Mr. Kinney: "I have been monitoring that and the first 100 feet are typically commercial. We could probably get some people parking there..." Dr. Yoder asked if currently there were parking meters and Mr. Kinney informed him that "we are not doing anything. There are no signs."

Dr. Yoder asked if there were sidewalks adjacent --- . Mr. Kinney explained that there are few streets where the right of way is so narrow that there is not enough room for sidewalk, let alone parking. In some of these streets abutting Eighth Street, you could have a sidewalk and four or five parking spaces. What needs to be found is some way to keep the vehicles off of the green areas.

Mr. Goldsmith: "Is there any way to do some kind of curbing?"

Mr. Kinney: "When you are talking about one street, it is not so bad, but 12 streets is a major project."

Mr. Goldsmith asked whether the people who work in the commercial buildings have their own parking or use those parking spots too. Mr. Kinney noted that the parking in those buildings is

extremely limited. He has not been in the City that long and did not know the parking requirements when those buildings were built, but it is clear that they do not meet the parking that the State Code requires.

Dr. Yoder commented that he would assume they encourage the employees not to park in the parking spaces of the buildings.

Mr. Kinney observed that employees take 4/5 spaces on the street and leave the parking for visitors but it is two fold: One is we need to get our arms around how we are going to manage those first 100 feet into the neighborhood in the commercial areas, and then help the residential zones decide to go with the residential parking permit program. It is not that you can park anywhere. They have to live on a street in that zone.

Dr. Yoder noted that you could have to go in far enough, a block or two blocks, as to discourage people from parking there.

From Mr. Kinney's observations, the first 100 feet are commercial; he would add at least another 300 feet on most streets and more on some others, but at least, 300 feet. Those are typically 50 foot lots.

Mr. Delgado commented that the streets that had closures do not have that problem. He also mentioned that some of those streets have sidewalks and that some of the streets are only 32 feet wide, such as El Rado. Mr. Kinney noted that the residents on El Rado must have reached an agreement, because they only park on one side of the street.

Dr. Yoder asked if the Parking Department had been getting complaints from the residents. Mr. Kinney informed him, and the Board Members, that from Alberca and Granada Grove. He has not spoken to the homeowner on Lisbon Street. He knows there is a problem in that area. He has seen people go in, park, and walk back to the commercial buildings.

Mr. Goldsmith asked Mr. Kinney what he proposes to do. Mr. Kinney explained that typically the policy is for the residents to call and complain. He recommended the Traffic Board support the residential parking permit program reduction to 50% plus 1.

Dr. Yoder asked if that was not required in an ordinance somewhere. Mr. Kinney noted that there is no ordinance, that the City Manager actually has the authority to change the requirement from 75% to 50% plus 1. So they have decided to let the neighbors choose.

Mr. Kries noted that it sounded like a combination of residential parking permits with some meters, because otherwise what may happen is that people will park on the first 100 feet all day long and then cut off the parking in the residential areas to residents, only. Where will the rest of the people park?

Mr. Kinney: “In managing parking issues, the people that are most important are the short-time parking, the ones that make commerce happen, so I do want to take care of them and that is why I think we should manage that first 100 feet. The people who are parked some place all day, are in a better position to find alternatives than the short-term parker. Somebody is going to get squeezed in this and I want to make sure is the all-day parker and not the person who is going to see his/her doctor.

Dr. Yoder noted that he did not know if the merchants had an opinion on this, but they will conclude that this will put a squeeze on them.

Mr. Kinney reiterated that someone is going to get squeezed on this, but when you are dealing with single-family residential areas, their use is pre-eminent.

Dr. Yoder: “I agree. Is there anything in particular that you would want this Board to do? It is not quite so much a traffic issue per say, but ...”

Mr. Kinney: “I never heard from this gentleman from Lisbon and I would welcome him to take a look at this. Please show in the minutes that you support reducing the 75% to 50% plus 1.

Mr. Goldsmith: Moved that the minutes show that the Board is in support of reducing the 75% requirement to 50% plus 1%. Seconded by Mr. Kries, motion carried unanimously.

Vice-Chairman Yoder called the meeting to order at 5:45 p.m. based on the discussion thus far.

Mr. Kries: “I would like perhaps to report back to the gentleman (who lives on Lisbon Street) who came to us.”

The Board Members thanked Mr. Kinney for his presentation.

Item 1 of the Agenda:

Dr. Yoder asked for a motion to have an excused absence for Chairman Morrison. Mr. Goldsmith moved to have an excused absence for our Chairman; seconded by Mr. Kries, motion carried.

Dr. Yoder informed the Board Members that he had made a few syntax notations that did not change the substance of the minutes at all. Upon motion made by Mr. Kries, seconded by Mr. Martinez, the minutes were approved as corrected.

PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR REPORT

Mr. Delgado: Reported that although the residents rejected the project at South Alhambra and Veronese, one of the residents who rejected the project still wants the City to do something to slow-down the traffic. Our traffic consultant, Marlin Engineering, completed a survey proposing an alternate plan. There are four streets that converge at this intersection.

The previous plan was to split the island, which is not a park, it is right-of-way, but the residents were not in favor of that. He is proposing a new plan now that will be presented to the residents before bringing before this Board. Mrs. Mendoza, who lives in that area, wants to voice her opinion to this Board.

Luisa Mendoza, 740 S. Alhambra Circle resident since 1993.

She introduced herself and mentioned that she has two daughters, ages 15 and 12. She has seen many changes in the area since she moved in, but most specifically, the worst change is the volume of traffic that comes off of the Granada bridge where drivers make a right hand turn onto South Alhambra, and her house is the corner house on South Alhambra and Altamira Street. A block down from them is the Barquera Street circle which has a three-way stop sign and the circle. Most people who are cutting through their area do not want to deal with that circle, so everything comes down to our street. I have been the victim of speeding in that neighborhood.

“About the vote, she worked very diligently with the Riviera Neighborhood Association and went door to door for several days to come on board with approved votes for the Veronese circle. We were successful in doing that. There are two residents, one is Mr. Hornbacher, at 700 South Alhambra and the other one is Dr. Brown, 702 South Alhambra, who actually got together and decided to go back and re-address some of the people they had already receive approval from.”

“On April 22, 2006, our dog was hit by a speeding car driven by my neighbor and my, now 12 years old, was younger then, would have been hit by the car when she was running to get the dog had I not screamed. I screamed so hard that neighbors who were inside their homes heard me and came out. The puppy which we had gotten the year before, was killed. Gaby stopped dead on her tracks because of my scream. He did not realize he had hit my dog. He was traveling Saturday afternoon at 2:00 p.m. and he was traveling well above the 25/30 MPH. He actually ended up realizing by viewing in his mirror all the neighbors were outside and my daughter was screaming. That was the first incident.”

“Recently there was a woman driving at the normal rate of speed coming down off of Sunset, down Altamira and my garage leads out onto Altamira, so in order for me to get into traffic I have to exit back into Altamira to go in any direction. I was getting in my car, going to Public, and she came into my driveway because of a speeding car (a gentleman on a Porsche) coming down from the bridge and he was hauling all the way down to avoid the circle at Barquera and took the turn on my street. This poor woman, in order to avoid a head-on collision, veered into my garage, where my children play basketball. She very nearly hit the back of my car. She was very upset, I had to give her water.”

“We have had it. The reason that the vote was overturned was that there were a couple of neighbors that went back to the people that we have already gotten votes and they campaigned and were told (and I know because I went back to the neighbors that had originally voted yes, and then voted no) they were told point blank that the big beautiful oak tree was going to be chopped down and that the green space was going to disappear. I understand Mr. Hornbacher does not want the original design

was.”

“I went around to everyone that I got votes from with the picture that was sent from your office which was very well drawn out, so the people would know exactly what we were talking about. Mr. Hornbacher objected to the fact that having all the traffic come on Granada towards South Alhambra was now being diverted to the front of his house. He has a very, very large lot. He has a very, very large space between his front door and where the sidewalk is. Of course, he now has the little green area there. The traffic on South Alhambra circle where all speeding happens is on the other side. (She pointed to the house on the map.) The way they had designed it which was actually very nice, they had done a wonderful job, would put the flow of traffic on that street, only in one way. So of course, I can understand it. What bothered me tremendously was that someone went out talking to the neighbors and started telling them literally that the tree was going to be cut down and all this other stuff and a lot of people reversed their votes.”

Mr. Goldsmith: “If we are not going to cut the tree down and do all the things that these people are saying, how come they just sort of lied?”

Mr. Delgado explained that we understand that there is a problem that is why we are looking into the area. The tree is not coming down. The park (what they homeowners call the park, which is an island) was going to be enlarged in one section (east). It was going to be cut on in the west end and was going to add more green space to the rest, even to the south. The idea was that the traffic, which right now flows both ways, was going to be split, one way to the north and one way to the south, a little bit. We are still looking at the problem and hope to come back with a solution which will not split what the homeowners call the “park.”

Mrs. Mendoza further noted that she was at the meeting basically to appeal to the Board. One of the two residents looked at her and told her that his vote should count more because he was being impacted. Mrs. Mendoza replied: “Would my vote have counted more if my daughter had been hit by a car?”

She also noted that to add insult to injury, they went outside of the original number of houses that were sent the ballots and they got a petition on 19 letters with no votes.

Mrs. Mendoza: “I am here to ask you, please support doing something here. I’ll be more than happy if you put the circle right smack in front of my house I have no problems with the circle. The other day I walked out and I saw some surveyors there and when I asked them what they were surveying for, they asked me if I had any problem with that and I told them that if they needed to take part of my property, that was fine. I was very happy to see them.”

Mr. Delgado noted that the day before he had received an e-mail from Mrs. Mendoza’s neighbors asking what we were doing. He informed them that the City was still looking into the circle.

Mrs. Mendoza: “There has to be something done. Last year was my dog, and I guarantee you that if this is not taken care of, it will be child. My kids don’t run into the streets for anything. My daughters are now older but there are many kids between the ages of 7 and 10 that live on Altamira, on Camarin, and on Mendello. I know because they come by our house and I buy cookies from them. These children could be victims of an accident and I would hate to see something happen.”

Dr. Yoder: “All of the traffic data that we have supports the need for some action to be taken.”

Mr. Mendoza informed the Board Members that there are some new neighbors in the area and since they moved in, there are a lot of additional cars parked on the green space. She has called the Police Department a few times in the last two or three weeks to complain about it because there always seems to be two or three cars parked between 4:00 and 5:00 p.m. Instead of parking in the swale in front of the house, they park in the little park area, which is not meant to be. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Martinez: “Mrs. Mendoza you’ve made some good points and one is enforcement. I think the Lt. can address that issue and the other thing is possible future liability to the City because now we have been put on notice and it is officially on the record. Now we are on notice if one of these kids gets killed.”

Lt. Diaz noted that the police department gets many calls and they only have five motor vehicles in the day and in the afternoon. The Members discussed that the installation of signs would not slow anybody down.

Mr. Kries asked as whether there is going to be a revised plan and where are we in the process.

Dr. Yoder suggested that we should probably take it to the neighbors and re-initiate the process and Mr. Delgado informed him that we had sent letters to the neighbors informing them that the City was looking at an alternate plan and that is what prompted all the recent e-mails.

Mr. Martinez noted that it is a concern and if the Board could expedite the process because it has been alerted to possible liability.

Dr. Yoder reiterated: develop a plan, meet with the neighbors, and bring the plan to us. And we have to re-initiate the voting process. Mr. Delgado to bring it to the next meeting.

To Mr. Goldsmith’s question what did the 19 residents who objected and did not even vote, had to do with it? Mr. Delgado informed him that their votes did not count.

Mr. Delgado again explained to Mrs. Mendoza that the County only requires that we inform the residents one block each to the north, south, east, and west of a proposed installation of a calming device.

Mrs. Mendoza noted that the residents of Altamira, who are the residents who have to deal with the speeding traffic, were not notified.

Mr. Delgado informed her that the actual circle is in Camarin and South Alhambra Circle, and that she lived on South Alhambra and was covered under the one block west of Camarin. The residents on Altamira were not notified because they were not affected. The residents on Mindello were notified.

Mrs. Mendoza: “Mr. Delgado, with all due respect, the people on Altamira is affected because we get the spill of the speeding because people don’t want to go to the Barquera circle. So all of that speeding traffic comes to our street.” She questioned that if there is some kind of change it is only the four homes.

Mr. Delgado noted that just two weeks previous the County changed the rules for the requirements. The County now only requires approval of the residents living on the four corners (or three, as the case may be.) Mr. Delgado to bring the e-mail received from Mrs. Calas to the next meeting.

Mr. Kries asked what percentage is that and Mr. Goldsmith noted that it would be 100%. The four (or three) residents count as 100%. Mr. Delgado commented that we could not apply that to that intersection because it is weird.

Mr. Goldsmith: “Can we override that by saying that this is a hazard?”

Mr. Delgado informed him that the County feels this is much better now. Before, when they requested one block in each direction, if it was an apartment building, it was very difficult to obtain the votes. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Delgado made emphasis in the fact that the City always pays attention to the residents living in the four corners and we always try to get the consensus. If one says no and the other three are in favor, we could do it. But as he mentioned before, this is a very different intersection.

Mrs. Mendoza: “Most of those people reversed their votes; the people across the street, Mr. Hornbacher, Dr. Brown, my next door neighbor voted against it. The fact that Mr. Hornbacher did not want the circle in front of his house.”

The Board Members agreed to review the plans for the new design at the next meeting and Dr. Yoder invited Mrs. Mendoza to attend the next meeting, scheduled for June 17TH, to clarify the rules if this thing has to go back to the neighbors. Mrs. Mendoza will attend.

Mr. Delgado noted that since there are not four corners, he will go to the affected are and listen to the people who live closer to the circle and will report back to the Board.

Dr. Yoder: “Does the County rule on this, limits us to just the four corners for a typical circle installation?” Mr. Delgado, yes.

Mr. Goldsmith: “Are there any traffic violations, tickets that we can show to these people who are objecting?” Lt. Diaz will provide the information.

Mrs. Mendoza noted that one morning there was a police officer right after the Barquera circle and within the space of 20 minutes he must have written 35 tickets. Mr. Goldsmith agreed that this probably proves the point to the residents who object to this whole situation.

Mr. Martinez moved: That the Police Department research all the traffic citations/tickets for that area and possibly step-up enforcement; and that Public Works expedite the process and the surveys as quickly as possible. Mr. Goldsmith seconded, motion carried.

Dr. Yoder requested that the above information be incorporated into the report that the Board Members will get with the proposed new design. Dr. Yoder and everyone present thanked Mrs. Mendoza for attending the meeting and sharing her concerns.

Dr. Yoder: “I think we may want to clarify with the County Public Works whether we can continue to use a more expansive view because they made have done that to make their lives easier.

The County had complaints from a couple of residents who own apartment buildings, then the next thing the County wants is not the 100% of the affected area, but they even further stated that for traffic circles they only want to consider the four corners.

To Dr. Yoder’s question whether the County makes a distinction between traffic circles and roundabouts an other types of traffic claming devices, Mr. Delgado noted that on all of them. The only ones they still want 2/3 thirds is the diverters.

Dr. Yoder: “The voting members are the property owners of the affected area, aren’t they?”

Mr. Delgado: “Our criterion was a **non-vote was a no-vote**.

Mr. Goldsmith noted that now they are saying only the voting members. Dr. Yoder clarified the people who actually cast the ballot, because we had a situation where it was tied for a long time.

Mr. Delgado: “On the circles only the four corners. In that particular location it does not apply because it does not provide four corners; is 8 neighbors, three streets coming together.”

Dr. Yoder: “We may want have some continuing discussion of this change in the way the County is doing it so everybody in the Board is familiar with it. Maybe it would be useful to write it down, and then we may want to consider... My sense is that as long as we have a consistent process that we apply they will be willing probably to accept what we are recommending as being representative of what the City wants to do.”

Bacardi Project: Mr. Delgado informed the Board Members that at the next meeting Tim Plummer is going to make a presentation for the phase II of the Bacardi Project. He reminded the Members that the second phase calls for no left and no right turn signs, or diverters along Le Jeune Road and along Segovia. The consultant would like to make a presentation because right now it looks like the proponents of those improvements, Rhonda Anderson and Wendy Cook, who represent that area, do not think they are going to get the required 2/3's of the votes. When you are doing that type of a diversion not everybody is happy with it. They want to do some kind of temporary installation and that is why the consultant wants to come to make a presentation before the proponents come before this Board, and before we deal with the community. First Mr. Delgado will explain what is going on and which are the different options available.

Mr. Delgado: "We can go with signs only, which would have to be enforced by the police. The Police would have to deal with that.

Dr. Yoder: "Does this limit turning movements at all times or just during certain hours?" Mr. Delgado: During rush hour traffic in the mornings and in the afternoons. Will not require any road improvements/modifications. 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m; 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Mr. Kries: "Left hand turns and the opposite in the afternoon?"

Delgado noted that if they want the diverters, then improvements will have to be made along Le Jeune Road because the turning lanes will no longer be needed.

To Mr. Martinez's question of who is going to pay for the project Mr. Delgado informed him that Bacardi is paying.

Mr. Delgado noted that the proponents of the project want to go with the temporary installation of diverters (60-90 days) to see what happens. The cost involved with modifications to Le Jeune Road, striping, permits needed to be obtained from DOT, etc., will make this project very costly.

Mr. Martinez commented that DOT had recently opened Le Jeune Road officially after having been under construction for four years. He would vote against this project if it were to come up. Further, he noted FDOT would probably deny any requests to close Le Jeune Road after four years of construction.

The situation with the signs is also temporary because if they don't work, we just remove them. The problem is the enforcement.

Dr. Yoder: "Are they concerned the residents will no vote for the signs?" Mr. Delgado: They are concerned that the residents will not vote for anything, even for certain hours, certain dates.

Dr. Yoder commented that 2/3's of the people voting, that neighborhood has been fairly well activated.

The residents of Catalonia, Palermo, Salzedo, Sevilla, Almeria and Hernando will probably vote against the project. They do not want the traffic.

Mr. Kries noted that we would have to have right turn only on all the streets.

Dr. Yoder suggested that we could post certain of the streets for a number of months and other streets for a number of other months.

Mr. Delgado reported that we had already sent a letter to Esther Calas, Miami-Dade County Public Works Director, asking for the County's confirmation that the impact fee moneys could be used to fund the Segovia Median Project. Nothing we can do until we receive confirmation.

Mr. Kries noted that he could not quite understand why if the developer had agreed to pay for this project, why is the County willing to pay?

For the Segovia /Coral Way roundabout the bids are due back June 6. Bids for the Blue Road, San Amaro, and Blue Road and Alhambra Circle should be returned by July 15th. Dr. Yoder wanted to know how long between the award and the Notice to Proceed and Mr. Delgado informed him that we will try to expedite so that we can start moving early August. Those circles will be done quickly.

Dr. Yoder asked for any other business to come before the Board requiring action.

John Curry, Fire Department:

Officer John Curry reported that the Fire Department selected Alternative 2 for the proposed Galiano Street and East Ponce de Leon Boulevard intersection calming plan presented at the April meeting. This item will be brought back to the Board at the July meeting.

Mr. Delgado reported that on Bellavista, residents had requested the installation of only one circle first, so they could look at it. Construction of that circle starts this month.

Mr. Martinez heard a rumor that the street closure on Vilabella was going to be removed because of the new project being built behind Merrick Place. Mr. Delgado explained to him that removal of a closure is hard if not harder than the process to close a street. First of all you have to conduct a major traffic study that the County requires (and costs a lot of money) paid by the residents; 2/3's approval of the affected area residents is needed.

Mr. Delgado noted that this project involves a parking lot swap with another city property. The streets involved are Granello, Greco and Le Jeune Road. The developer has notified the residents in a 1000 foot radius. Right now the project is in the hands of the residents.

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 6:47 p.m.