

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting

Agenda Item D-1 and G-2 are related

November 18, 2008

City Commission Chambers

405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Donald D. Slesnick, II

Vice Mayor William H. Kerdyk, Jr.

Commissioner Maria Anderson

Commissioner Rafael “Ralph” Cabrera, Jr.

Commissioner Wayne “Chip” Withers

City Staff

Interim City Manager, Maria Alberro Jimenez

City Attorney, Elizabeth Hernandez

City Clerk, Walter J. Foeman

City Clerk Staff, Billy Urquia

Public Speaker(s)

Mari Molina, Executive Director of the Business Improvement District

Dr. Chuck Bohl, University of Miami School of Architecture

Brad Rosenblatt, President of the Business Improvement District

D-1 [Start: 10:5:00 a.m.]

Mari Molina, Executive Director of the Business Improvement District of Coral Gables to present the Miracle Mile and Giralda Restaurant Row Design Program.

Mayor Slesnick: Mari, are we ready yet? We have with us today the Business Improvement District, Mari Molina, Executive Director, and I know she's got with her some of her Board members with her, to talk about the new look for Miracle Mile that's going to be proposed for us to consider.

Ms. Molina: Thank you, and I rode the trolley twice yesterday, so I can tell you that I was trying to contribute to the “go green” efforts. First of all I'd like to thank you Mr. Mayor, Commissioners, City Attorney, City Manager, City Clerk, for allowing us to come before you this morning at a time certain. As you've mentioned, a lot of our Board members are here, and also our streetscape committee, and they've been working on this for almost a year now, and I'd really like to acknowledge them. I'm about to introduce them in a moment, but I want to let everyone know why we are here this morning, and as you know the Business Improvement District our mission is to foster the growth of the Downtown as a commercial and cultural center; and to that end our B.I.D. Board of Directors earlier this year passed a resolution to assist a team of voluntary members made up of design professionals. They asked them to focus on the following five objectives. Number one, to articulate the necessity of a new streetscape for Miracle Mile; to review the existing Giralda one hundred block restaurant row streetscape to determine its functionality within the Downtown corridor as it is a very important part of our

district; to determine the proper parking and sidewalk scenario and its design including landscaping, retail kiosks, dining pavilions, trolley stops, furniture, and bike racks; and to review financing ideas that will be researched by the B.I.D. and the City staff together with possible repayment options; finally, obviously to recommend timing and implementation. We had many public sessions during the summer; these were advertised, they were attended by owners, by residents, by a lot of City staff; and I will pause and tell you that even though the committee was not made up of City staff, every single one of your department heads, and departments have been involved, and I thank them for their time and their efforts. This has really been kind of a big snow ball of ground swell and we are so excited to be presenting it. At every turn we've had a lot of competing view points; at one point we didn't think we could all come to agreement, and we are sitting here before you today with pretty much a unanimous consensus from every group that we visited. Since October when the final recommendation was presented and accepted by the B.I.D. Board, we went out and presented these to many of our City Boards, and also to the Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce, which I want to acknowledge, a lot of those Board members, I saw them here today from the Planning Board Mark Trowbridge, President of the Chamber, and I thank them for coming here today as well. We went before the Board of Architects, the Planning Board, the Landscape Beautification Committee, the Economic Development Board, jointly with the Parking Advisory Board, which I know have a resolution before you today; and as I mentioned the Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce their Committees and their Board. I'd also like to thank each and every member of that Streetscape Committee. These guys are professionals and experts in their field, and all of their time to us was voluntary, and without them we couldn't have done this. With that, I'd like to introduce that team, those members that are here today, a few more walking in; Mr. Burton Hersh from Burton Hersh Architects, he's on the B.I.D. Board of Directors; he's our Chairperson for the team; he's also a member of the Coral Gables Board of Architects, he's been practicing architecture here for more than twenty years...

Mayor Slesnick: Mari, Mari, even though we know everyone maybe other people...

Ms. Molina: Come up as we introduce you, Mr. Burton.

Mayor Slesnick: Burton.

Ms. Molina: Jaime Correa of Jaime Correa and Associates; he's a professor of suburb and town design at the University of Miami. He was a co-founder of Dover Cole, and is the recipient of numerous urban planning awards. Mr. David Plummer, founder of David Plummer and Associates in 1978, steps from all of our meeting places in the Downtown. As we know David Plummer and Associates is a progressive transportation, civil engineering consulting firm with offices located in Coral Gables and Fort Myers. David got to kind of referee a lot of our parallel parking discussions, alleyways and everything; I really thank him for all his help. We have Matt Bukolt, a landscape architect from Kimley-Horn/URG, I don't believe he could make it with us today; Mr. Glenn Pratt, also an architect he's with Bellin and Pratt, he also serves on the Board of Architects. We had John Fullerton of Fullerton Diaz Architects. We all know him for notable buildings such as the Coral Gables War Memorial Youth Center, and most recently he won this year's City Beautiful Award for exterior design right in our district, and I believe he may be in Dubai, so he couldn't be with us today. Of course Mr. George Hernandez, a professor of architecture at the University of Miami. He's currently designing the art and history museum for

our City, and also the Master Plan for the Old Spanish Village. All of these things obviously integrated in the streetscape. Mr. Kerry Newman, I believe is here today, with Koniver Stern; once we build this beautiful street, are we going to be able to continue to lease it as a commercial and viable district?- he's been brokering real estate transactions here for over ten years on the Mile. Mr. John O'Rourke, co-owner of Montica Jewelry, he was our merchant representative; he is at 75 Miracle Mile since February of 2006, and is also a recent winner of the City Beautiful Award for interior design; and finally Mr. Martin Lynch, co-owner of our favorite watering hole, John Martins, who will be celebrating twenty (20) years on Miracle Mile next year.

[Applause]

Mayor Slesnick: Just a cautionary note, Mari is not speaking for the Commission; we do not have a watering hole for the Commission. (Laughter).

Ms. Molina: Well, we have many of our breakfast meetings there, so we did have water there in the form of coffee; and finally the gentleman who will be presenting our presentation today and I'm very excited to introduce Dr. Chuck Bohl, he is also at the University of Miami School of Architecture; he's the director of the Knight Program in Community Building; he is the author of the book "Place Making Town Centers Main Streets and Transit Villages", published by the Urban Land Institute who we recently hosted here in Downtown Coral Gables; and with that said, I'd like to turn it over to Chuck. Thank you.

Mr. Bohl: Morning Mr. Mayor, Commissioners; thank you for having us, I believe we have a short PowerPoint to wiz through. Can you tell me when that's up?- OK here we are, thank you. So the work on the streetscape proposals began back in spring of 2008 with the team and the Steering Committee you've seen here. I'm here to help present and also endorse these proposals as both a Town Planner and Designer, as someone from the B.I.D. Steering Committee and a long, fairly long time for me, resident and someone that works in the City, so let's have a look at...this is a snapshot of some ideas that were discussed in this presentation, given earlier to the public. Over at the...past half dozen years Downtown Coral Gables has evolved into an increasingly attractive and dynamic urban destination. We've seen new shops, new restaurants, arts and entertainment offerings; the redevelopment of surface parking lots into attractive mixed use buildings; the successful introduction of the trolley system, and most importantly the introduction of new residents, the attraction of new residents choosing the Downtown as a place to live, work, and enjoy urban living in the City Beautiful, all very positive transformations, and the City deserves a lot of credit for helping to make these changes happen at a time really maximizing the boom we just went through; and now just as the real estate industry is entering a time that we are referring to more as an asset management phase, as opposed to a development phase, I think the City can also look to the streetscape improvement as an asset management phase for the streetscapes in the Downtown. We looked at precedents, examples of great urban retailing streets, shopping districts. These included a whole variety of here and abroad; these are small shots, but this shot isn't go give you the ideal, but to show you that great streets are not rocket science; good street trees adequate with the sidewalks, you can accommodate street cafes and other activities; still accommodate on-street parking in traffic, and you can create great streets without massive changes in investments, but with good management. We've seen it happen throughout Florida; we've seen happen in places like Naples, with a dramatic

transformation of Fifth Avenue south over there; we've seen...well Rodeo Drive is kind of a brand; I think we can think of Miracle Mile as sort of a brand that is still aspiring to reach the level of a Rodeo Drive or a Worth Avenue; and you can see on these streets parallel parking as well as diagonal; Worth Avenue in fact was originally angle parking as you see in the post card shot, now its parallel parking and...[inaudible]...and its still a great shopping street; lots of discussion about parking that we'll touch back on. That one rule that we introduced; one rule of thumb looking at great streets is something Professor Correa talks about, the 50/50 rule. When you look at a street you wonder why its such a pleasant accommodating street, what you find when you look at enough precedence's there is about fifty percent (50%) of the space roughly given over to the vehicle and about fifty percent (50%) of the space given over to the pedestrian, the streetscape, the amenities. That's a rough rule of thumb, and when you look at our own, the two streets we were asked to look at, the first being Giralda Avenue, the one block of restaurant row, there you have a split of about seventy five percent (75%) given over to the vehicle, to parking and cars passing through, and twenty-five percent (25%) to the pedestrian. Some of this analysis dates back even to the 2002 Charrette, which I helped organize, and we've known for a long time, we've heard from the shop owners, we've heard from the residents back in that process as well as this process, these are really inadequate sidewalks, especially for a dining or street like this; I can't even walk side by side with my children down that street on the sidewalk, we end up in the street. On Miracle Mile, this is our premiere urban boulevard or shopping street, our main street for Coral Gables. Currently we have an 80/20 split, and that includes the median, which is not a pedestrian space, but it's a thin part of the vehicle realm; we've got a couple of lanes of traffic; we have very deep angle parking, this is a big part of the discussion, those are eighteen feet each strips for the angle parking along each side of Miracle Mile, it is an overly wide dimension for a main street, and when you look at this kind of a breakdown, eighty percent (80%) of the right-of-way given over to vehicles and only twenty percent (20%) for pedestrians and streetscape, you see we've got room to work with. We talked a lot about details; street furnishings, lighting, urban landscape. I'm not going to spend a lot of time on this because I know we are pressed for time, but I'll just give you some of the visuals talking about how to improve the amenities of the streetscape, the actual furnishings for benches, for street lighting choices, and also for landscaping. We make a lot of mistakes in downtowns and urban settings with landscape choices, with tree choices, you can see it with a lot of the bushes along Giralda that really frustrate rather than enhance the value of the street and the usefulness of the street, and you can look to ideas like container plants, container gardens that are very beautiful, but also very movable to create an urban landscape, and then textures and details we can talk more about when we have more time. One idea that really captured the attention of the B.I.D. members and the public was to unlock the potential of the sidewalk realm of the streetscape realm for dining pavilions for more activities; and this is the gain, this is the big net gain, not only in terms of public realm, but this is usable, economic, viable space, and we can show you some quick examples; these are shots of more permanent looking dining pavilions, these are in the streetscape, you can enclose them, they can be climate controlled, they can be opened up when the weather is nice, they can be closed up, they can be air conditioned, they can be half opened, and then you can be much simpler in terms of creating a canopied-type dining pavilions like these which would really transform the Mile and do actually a magnificent job of marketing the Mile much better than you can ever do with just street signage and lighting. These just really captured the attention of people and said we can do this; these are simple; these are not expensive; we can come up with simple design standards and still allow a lot of creativity for

those. You can do the same thing with newsstands, of course we have the newsstands over by Starbucks, and actually if you were to regulate it and say they must be in a stand, you can make that a more interactive space. Pedestrian passages – now a lot of the discussion around parking centered on the fact that there will be some loss of parking spaces, and how to maximize and improve the degree to which the garages and existing spaces are used. It's not that there is a lack of parking in the Downtown; we know that; there have been enough studies that show the under utilization of parking garages, of parking spaces within very easy walking distance of all of the shops and restaurants on the Mile and Giralda. So we've seen a lot of introduction of valet parking, but the idea here is to improve the quality of the paseos, the connections to the garages, the lighting, the textures, and the appreciation that these are safe spaces. So here's an existing one, one that goes way back that is not attractive, and examples of just simple changes to texture, to lighting, to some of the details, the ability to open up on the sides of some of these buildings to extend the storefronts, which has been done in some places on the Mile; and you've seen it introduced in new buildings actually with some very good paseos coming through that are used more, and by doing this as part of the streetscape improvement connecting especially to those connective parts of the garages where people enter and leave, that they are well lit, that they are attractive, we believe you can improve the use of the parking garages; you still maintain parking in these scenarios on the street, as well. The scenario for Giralda; here's the existing conditions, the shrubs, the very narrow sidewalks we've mentioned earlier. This is a planned view looking down at it. Currently seventy-five percent (75%) for vehicles, twenty-five percent (25%) for pedestrians. We are proposing a shared street design; this is a one block area; this was discussed by the merchants going all the way back to the Charrette, they actually proposed possibly closing the street; we propose a shared street, which is to make it a level surface all the way from the storefronts across the street, so there is no harsh curb cut and you can extend out; there are plenty of examples of these that we looked at; you can handle the drainage, it's all handled through engineering. This is actually Rodeo Drive; so here's an example of the shared street concept; you maintain the ability to have on-street parking cafes, maximum flexibility for this block; you can introduce...you can put in the metal bollards, take them out when you want; so if you wanted to close it for an event it would be very simple, and then you can continue to have it open the rest of the time. Here's the proposed design, there are no trees on Giralda; there are trees being proposed. It's a better view from above; you can see the café in the lower left; you can see that there still are parallel on-street spaces. This is essentially working like a valet street already, when we come to the Mile we drive down the street just for kicks to see if there is a spot, but we typically park in a lot or we'll use the valet, or we'll park around the corner. So this isn't...there was actually no outcry about parking on the street. This was a very well received concept, and you move from that earlier balance of vehicle and pedestrian space, to having about thirty-five percent (35%) for vehicles and about sixty percent (60%) for pedestrians, thirty-five to forty and then sixty percent for pedestrians. Here is the rendering, now you have space for the cafes; the bushes are gone; you have trees; you have some relief from the sun; you still have vehicles moving; you still have parking. Miracle Mile, our main street; there's been a lot of scenarios and discussions over the years for Miracle Mile. Existing conditions – we have seen a great transformation in the buildings, the properties, the surface lots and so forth, we waited, I guess, on doing anything more with the streetscape, and it really is the time for those of us who are down there everyday and walking it; you see it and it's really dated at this point and it's time to improve this. There is not enough space for decent street cafes right now, and even the way that planning strip is done really doesn't allow for much use. Here are the current conditions; we

decided not to do anything with the median because the median was an important part of the negotiated streetscape in the prior scenario with DOT, so that remains; this is the existing 80/20 split between vehicles and pedestrians. Here's the proposed 60/40 split; now the main change is to go from angled, from the deep eighteen foot angled strip on both sides of the road to parallel. You still have on-street parking in front of the stores, but you've gained a tremendous amount of space along the sidewalk, enough so that you can see two rows of trees if you wanted to maintain the current trees, add another row; a lot of this has to do also with climate as well. We had a lot of discussion with shop owners about the importance of maintaining the trees, so that there is good visibility to the shop fronts. This is a premiere urban retail shopping street, it needs to have good visibility; and here you can see it from above; you can see there is still parallel spaces on both sides; there is still two lanes flowing freely both directions. So the street itself is essentially as it was; we propose pinching the lane maybe a foot, you've got enough room to go from twelve to eleven foot lanes; the effect of that is to slow traffic maybe just a little bit more. The friction of parallel parking is good, actually much safer in terms of pulling out into traffic than backing into traffic as we currently do; and then the importance of the paseos and the connections. Here is one rendering view of on-street parking; deeper sidewalks, potential for two rows, alley of trees along each side of the street for the cafes to be there, or the pavilions themselves; and you can bump out at certain spots, we already bump out at certain cross walks along the Mile, so you can have even more generous spaces for the cafes along here. I think I'm going to leave it there; I think that's enough detail. I'll close with my statement; I'll pass this on to you. Miracle Mile I think is the right point in the evolution in the streetscape; we've got a lull, a serious lull in the real estate market at this point, so it is kind of this asset management time for the Mile and for Giralda. This is not a strip mall; Miracle Mile is not a strip mall; it is not a generic state road; and it is not a project, it is really the beating heart of the City Beautiful; it's a place to do business, to enjoy shopping, dining, theater and galleries; it's the place to hold community celebrations and holiday events; it's the civic heart of the community and it deserves a well planned and well cared for public realm that clearly illustrates how important it is for our citizens, for our corporate citizens whose workers populate the City by day; and for our visitors and guests we want to encourage them to stop, park their vehicles, and spend time in our Downtown. It's an outdoor room; it's really the living room of Coral Gables, and its time to furnish it in the manner it deserves. I strongly urge you to support the streetscape proposals for Miracle Mile and Giralda Avenue and usher in the next step forward in completing a Downtown that reflects our City Beautiful motto. Thank you for your attention.

Commissioner Anderson: Thank you.

Mayor Slesnick: Chuck, thank you. I would like everyone to know that we are very lucky to have Charles Bohl as a member of our community. He is nationally recognized in urban design and urban matters. Madam Manager, what is it that is before us today? Is this just a report?- and...

Interim City Manager Jimenez: I believe so. They wanted to share the whole presentation with our Commission, and are you looking for some conceptual approval of the ideas? I think funding is probably a topic that needs to be addressed in the future.

Mayor Slesnick: Well, let me suggest what I think that this Commission may or may not be ready for; I think that we've seen it, we've digested it; I know that the B.I.D. has come to each of

us and talked to us about it, this is the public's...well I mean not the public's, but the greater public's chance to have seen it for the first time to digest it. I would think that now, you as the management team need to decide your recommendations and present to us a proposal in a future meeting where we know that we are going to be considering something for approval or disapproval; we need your recommendations.

Interim City Manager Jimenez: We can do that Mr. Mayor.

Ms. Molina: One of the things I wanted to point out which staff knows is that right now there is about one point four million dollars (\$1.4M) available for Miracle Mile under the Miami-Dade County Building Better Communities GOB program, and I believe there is a sense of urgency that if we don't start using some of that funding we may lose it. There are other municipalities obviously that are "chopping at the bit" for that money. So one of our greater urgencies was to get to you before the end of the year so that perhaps we could readily tap it, if not, we will lose that money.

Commissioner Anderson: Did you as a group...first of all congratulations for having the foresight of doing this much needed project and assembling a great team. We've talked and I know that you all have established maybe some priorities that you would do first, are you willing to share that now?

Ms. Molina: Something that became very evident through the process, and it kind of mitigated, it became a priority and it also mitigated some of the issues with parking, was that right now even before we work on the sidewalks we have to improve the connections between the garages and Miracle Mile. There is already some funding in our capital budget that is kind of sitting there, that we haven't used completely for our alleyways; we've met with Public Works, we've met with Waste Management, and certainly there is elements of that, there is no reason to wait; we all know that it needs fixing; we saw pictures. So we can certainly start with that and that's a priority for us; that's a main priority to getting the project done, so perhaps we'll have the ability to move forward. The other thing is a lot of folks, and I left these brochures outside, and here in City Hall, people can contact our office for them. On the back page there are five frequently asked questions. They are about parking; they are about funding, priorities and just basic construction how it affects businesses. So one of the things we want to make sure is that we know how much it's going to cost, and unfortunately without taking the next step and starting a work program to determine how much these things will cost, it's kind of hard to answer a lot of the questions that people have about funding. At the end of the day the B.I.D. is out there looking for resources. I would be remiss to not introduce three more people that are here, one of them who is chairing our funding effort which is our President of the Board, Brad Rosenblatt, and also Gus Fonte another Board member, and Judy Weissel, who is a property owner. As property owners we are looking obviously to minimize any ultimate assessments to our owners. So we would really...we are kind of chopping at the bit to get going so that we can get a little more detail. We have such great work and we don't want it to kind of sit around too long without some immediate attention.

Commissioner Cabrera: I'm just very impressed with the work and Ms. Anderson and Mr. Slesnick already outlined that. I think that what I'm looking for now though is the next steps, and

I heard you say that there is possible funding that could be lost if you don't move quickly. Well, obviously, I think you need to move as quickly as you can, but the one thing that I would ask you to continue to do is to reach out to the public, the stakeholders on the Mile, and around the Mile, the Business Improvement District to ensure that there is a ground swell of support for your project, and I think you've all done a phenomenal job of communicating, of setting our priorities. The one issue here is where do we go from here? I heard your answer and I heard about the funding that could be lost, at the same time I think you are still in the process of educating and informing the public about this initiative, and that's one of the reasons you are here this morning. I'm just wondering, are there things that you can do transitionally to get started that are probably going to gain the support and confidence of everyone involved in this project. So, I heard you talk about the areas that connect the Mile to the parking. Well if there are some things that we can start now with that funding that enhances the area that will eventually help the process as it unfolds, I see no reason why the City would not be supportive of something like that.

Interim City Manager Jimenez: OK sir.

Commissioner Cabrera: I mean, the reality is it's been needed for many, many, many years and if the money is available; I mean, I don't know if that's the approach you want to take, if you want to take little baby steps as you move forward; I don't want to give you the impression that at least...we've had a private meeting together and you know what my concerns are, and as long as you all can come back to me with quantifiable information that supports what you are trying to do, empirical data, then you have me; and even if you were not able to prove to me that parking shortcomings can't be addressed, I'm still of the frame of mind that we need to do something, and the work that these gentlemen have done, I want to make sure that it continues along in a fast moving process without it stalling in the next three months, and then we do this again in five years and I watch you on TV. So I think that's a concern.

Ms. Molina: If I may with your permission, perhaps suggest maybe can we ask Public Works Director Delgado what...because I know there are some things....

Interim City Manager Jimenez: What I'd like to suggest if I may, is let us staff-wise put together a team to start working with the B.I.D. and others to put together this work program that I'm hearing that the Commission would want to see in the near future. Sort of like the steps that we would want to consider in order to have you all consider something in the future.

Commissioner Withers: I think the most important thing is to figure out the funding mechanism on this because...

Commissioner Cabrera: I agree.

Commissioner Withers:...before we start putting a lot of our staff time in it, before we start looking at design, streetscape because I heard you in a five or six word sentence that you are looking at little or no impact to the owners, the property owners on Miracle Mile. Well, I don't think the one point whatever million dollars is even going to come close to beginning this transition, I mean, we are probably ten-fifteen-twenty million dollars probably more, at least that's what it was back in 1989 or 1990 when we did that whole study on transversing through

the parking lots through the alleyways, I mean, there was like a six step, I think there was a six or seven steps from paving alleys, to cleaning alleys, to doing paseos, doing pedestrian amenities, and it was millions of dollars back then. I'm not in favor of really putting a lot of our staff time and design time and all that, until we really understand who the stakeholders are, who is going to pay for it, what our participation is. I think that's the first step in my mind.

Mr. Bohl: I speak to just a couple of the remarks. One, first Mari Molina and the B.I.D. had lead the efforts of really property owners and merchants are represented in the effort, and you've gotten the unanimous endorsement of everything from the B.I.D., to the Parking Authority to you can kind of list the...so there has been actually tremendous work on their side to build support and to bring it forward. I think there is a timing issue; we see it in the discussions in the newspaper everyday in terms of budgets, available funds to do projects like this. At this stage what could really help move it just to the next step is to leverage the funds that are available before they are lost, the process that continues can include a public process element, a community process to continue to engage the community as the design is refined. So there is design, engineering, planning work that needs to be done to move it forward which will include community input, and then that leads toward hard numbers and can feed into a capital improvements program down the road, but right now I think the issue is to leverage this funding that's available or it will be lost and we won't see it again.

Commissioner Cabrera: Would you be able to, given your commentary about the sense of urgency, would you be able to do some of the planned improvements now that are not necessarily controversial, and (b) exceedingly expensive?

Mr. Bohl: I think that has always been part of the discussions, the phasing of what elements could be done with the least amount of expense. Until I think we get into the actual designing and engineering phase of this to get some hard numbers on the table, then we can look at can this piece be done as part of the money that is available.

Commissioner Cabrera: Commissioner Withers, I know what you are saying and I know exactly where you are going with this whole issue, I mean, I understand in fact I think you understand it better than I do because you've dealt with this in the past, at least once that I can recall. I think what I am concerned about is that over the years we get these great ideas and these conceptual frameworks come before us and we like them, and we get excited about them because they look like they are really going to improve the area and they are going to bring back some of the lost customers on the Mile, and then for some reason nothing occurs, and the reason nothing occurs is because of funding, and that's where you are going. I hear you, I hear you, but in the same breath if we don't move on something now, any funding that is available is pretty much gone, and that's my ultimate concern; and I know where you are going with this, and I remember years ago, we went nowhere because the property owners did not feel comfortable in being true stakeholders from a financial standpoint, and we went nowhere; and the sidewalks looked terrible and people continually fall on them and all kinds of stuff happen on the Mile, and so I just would hate...I hear what you are saying, and I'm not trying to disagree with you because your comment about allocating staff resources is very appropriate; at the same time if we did something that was exploratory, or if it was something that did not create a lot of undue effort, capital effort, economic liability.

Commissioner Withers: I mean, I don't know exactly what the cost is, but I'm assuming its \$10 million-\$15 million; is the City willing to put \$10 or \$15 million in Miracle Mile?

Mr. Bohl: I think the question for this morning though is the City is willing to go forward now that a stakeholder process has been convened and an initial design to tap the money that is available to take to the next step. It will be a phased process...

Commissioner Withers: We would love to see this happen. There is not one person up here that wouldn't say, boy this would be great if Miracle Mile tomorrow could develop into that, but we've been to this exact "dance" before; I mean, we had these same projects and it always comes down to \$10 or \$15 million, the absentee landowners don't want to... they'll just pass it on to the poor folks that are leasing the shops; they come up here, they go out of business because they can't afford the assessment, and they are saying the City, come in and put [inaudible] to pay for it, and I don't know that this Commission is willing to pony up \$10 or \$15 million....

Commissioner Cabrera: I'll answer you. If your question is, are we willing to pay a hundred percent of this?- no. I think this has to be a partnership.

Commissioner Withers: And what I'm saying is when you ask her to go back to her stakeholders like a minute ago, you need her to go back to her stakeholders by the way, your portion of this is going to be twenty-five percent (25%) of fifteen million (\$15M), and there response might be totally different than if they say a hundred percent City, and that's all I was trying to get the point across.

Commissioner Cabrera: And I'm OK about telling them, but no, I'm not going to...I as one of five is not going to support paying one hundred percent of this tab, but at the same time, we need to step up and pay some of that. Now, whether it's two, three, five, eight, I don't know what the number is, but I think we need to...at some point in time we need to say we have a responsibility to make the main street look the very best we can.

Commissioner Withers: I agree with you; it's our backbone, it's our image, I agree with you.

Commissioner Cabrera: But I'm glad you are doing what you are doing, because what you are saying to the B.I.D. and those that are involved in the B.I.D. and those that are here watching is, you know, we really need to have that dialogue now rather than much later as to what if anything there is to partner up on.

Commissioner Anderson: As the B.I.D. representative from the Commission, I know they work really hard, I fully support that we get at least an idea of where we need to go. I'd hate to lose the funds that are available and get a work program; see where we can start in bits and pieces. I totally agree that we can't afford the whole thing; I think we can figure out a partnership, but if we don't move with some of the leverage funds that have become available via the GOB, or the half penny ser tax, I forget many of the funding sources, we won't know; and I think by working with staff; staff has been terrific in dialogue and the group, the working group. So I would support a report back as soon as is possible from staff.

Mayor Slesnick: It seems to me from the discussion, that one of the things that we can agree on is, we can all agree that we want to improve clean up and make the alleys better, and make the pass-throughs that exist better; and I need to know if this one point two million can be used for that, because if we've got Waste Management on board and we are on board, we can use the one point two million to start there, it goes to what Commissioner Cabrera is saying; what Commissioner Anderson is saying and that is, let's see what we can afford now and let's spend it as soon as we can on what we can afford that we all agree on, and that is that program which...

Commissioner Cabrera: I'm just happy to move it forward. There's been just way too much effort...

Mayor Slesnick: It may not need to come back to the Commission for that except to report back to us that you all can use the one point two to do the programs we've said that are good, which is alley improvement, alley beautification, paseo beautification, whatever it is, and that's going to take one million.

Commissioner Cabrera: And you have people like Martin Lynch and John O'Rourke, Gus Fonte somewhere in the audience and Judy Weissel, people that are very acquainted that live in the B.I.D. that can go out and give this message to the rest of their colleagues and co-owners, and understand that the time has come that we need to move this process in one direction or another. You know, I take it back, there is no going back; we need to move this project forward.

Mayor Slesnick: There are also alternate methods of funding that we can participate in looking for, grants and various kinds of programs, and we should, I mean, I just found out...we are a "Preserve America City", we are one of the few around, although our sign was lost during the construction of LeJeune Road and has never been found or returned, and there are grant programs for "Preserve America" for downtown development for "Preserve America" cities. So there are different things that we need to start looking for.

Commissioner Cabrera: But I mean, we need to do so aggressively and not allow this thing to get away from us. I mean look at us, we have spent money on other projects in the City that have taken us nowhere, I mean big money, four million dollars, and yeah, we have an asset there, a non performing asset in the Country Club, but we still spent four million dollars and we are paying it back. We have an obligation to do something about Miracle Mile and a responsibility and so if its ten million maybe we do four, maybe we do three, maybe we do five, I don't know.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: You know what is a little different than what it used to be, we have one owner that owns a good percent of the Mile now, not a fifty percent stakeholder, but a twenty or thirty percent stakeholder. So it's not an assortment of small owners, there is more accumulation of bigger owners on there. So if those stakeholders buy in to whatever the proposal is at some point, it helps the process along a little bit more, but I will tell you that I've heard the same thing that you came up here and talked about; I think you've done an excellent job, your team has done a great job, but I've heard for several years its always, let's bifurcate each block, let's push the parking in the back, let's clean up the alleyways, allow people to feel good when they are walking from the parking lot into the front of Miracle Mile, and that will enhance the overall

environment, and you are right Commissioner Cabrera, its time that we get it done or Commissioner Anderson, its time we get it done. So maybe these stakeholders, getting back to my initial thought, maybe these stakeholders that hold the big portion of the Mile are buying into this project, and you say they are buying into this project, even though I had a conversation this week, and I don't know exactly if this eclipses what you said, but if they are buying into it, then I think it will propel this to where we need to go; and I'm a firm believer that we should go ahead and expend the one point four million dollars (\$1.4M) and do what we need to do to get the place looking good. Thank you.

Ms. Molina: I'm going to give you just a quick example, and I have a list here of funding sources and none of them are a done deal, but we are working on them with the same vigor that we were doing the design project, we have been doing a parallel look for funding, because we know at the end of the day that we are the property owners and we represent them and those merchants, and they cannot afford an assessment now. So if you permit us to go ahead and get this work program, we will continue to do what we are doing. Just last weekend the City of Coral Gables submitted a worksheet for a potential main street federal stimulus package. Now we know there are all these federal stimulus programs floating around, and one of the criteria for the one we submitted said, that the product had to be ready to go. Now, what if low and behold we actually got a main street package that ended up in Coral Gables, and we were not ready to go, we would really be remiss to not be ready to pull the trigger.

Commissioner Anderson: Absolutely.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: I just have one technical question for you, if possible. What is the optimum width of the sidewalks?- what would be the optimum width?- twenty feet?

Mr. Bohl: The direction that this streetscape would go; you are going from, Craig can correct me, I think we are in the eight foot to ten foot range on existing sidewalks, and then the planting strip edge a few more feet, with the reconfiguration from angle to parallel, remember we are not getting rid of parking on the Mile to parallel....

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: No, no, no, of course not.

Mr. Bohl:...you would go to the twenty to twenty-five foot range on both sides of the Mile, and that's enough space, that's that fountain space, not just public realm, but it is economically viable space to put to use, it can also be bringing in revenues and a few other great things. There is a trade off, but I think it is a very positive trade off for both the City and the businesses, the property owners.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: Let me ask you a question, in the zero to one hundred, one to two hundred, and two to three hundred, that is true because the building sit more on that cusp, but on the three hundred block it looks like they step back five feet there, and I don't know if that's an easement or if that's...if they can end up building out to that five foot easement, but there is a substantial difference between the three hundred block and the two and all those other blocks there; why is that, and why should we do that block if that is an easement there?

Mr. Bohl: We did have quite a discussion about this as well, and at the end of the day it's the need to have a consistent streetscape. So if you are go on Alhambra, for instance, and you are going by the office buildings, and you come to the area near the Hyatt and it zigzags, the consistency of the streetscape is important.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: Is that an easement, do you know?- I don't know that question.

Mr. Bohl: No, its not.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: So they could build out that five feet right there, it's just that nobody has built out to that point right there.

Mr. Bohl: And you could also allow as well as the kind of dining pavilion structures, you could allow encroachments and also extend the usable space out.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: Right, right, very good.

Commissioner Anderson: I'd like to, well I know there might be other comments, but I'm very supportive of creating that work program with staff, and moving it as expeditiously as possible, and whatever can get done, and keep identifying sources of revenue. So I'm good with that.

Mr. Rosenblatt: Just very quickly. Good morning, I'm Brad Rosenblatt, I'm the President of the B.I.D. One thing that I just wanted to add in conjunction with that one point four million dollars, I just checked with Alberto is in order to come up with pricing so that we can come up with pricing so that we can back into numbers, and say hey City, this is where we are able to get money from the County, this is where we were able to generate some other revenue, this is what we'd like you to help us with. As part of that, one of the things we'd like for you to give us permission to is to spend some of that money on coming back with renderings, plans, engineering drawings, so that we can actually back in to the exact number and say hey, this is what this project is going to cost, this is what we are prepared to do, this is where we are getting some other revenue, and this is what we'd like your help with. So as one part of that help in putting money in the alleys and other things we can start now, that's one of the things that we can do with that one point four.

Mayor Slesnick: Maria, would you be prepared by next month to bring us back a proposal that we can consider of some kind, some shape, some form, based on the discussion of the Commission here today?

Interim City Manager Jimenez: A proposal...?

Mayor Slesnick: Well, the proposal could be that we take the following baby steps and we use the one point four million dollars to do the following projects, which Alberto has priced out and so forth.

Interim City Manager Jimenez: We can give it a stab Mr. Mayor; I'd have to...

Mayor Slesnick: You may also want to lay out a program of future projections of how you intend to approach, bringing us different pieces of this as we go along.

Interim City Manager Jimenez: OK.

Commissioner Cabrera: And then finding resources, and then include any and all resources available to us.

Interim City Manager Jimenez: We'll certainly give it a shot.

Mayor Slesnick: OK.

Commissioner Cabrera: I know this is a far-fetched and we always reach out to them in our time of need, but could be somehow bring the University of Miami into this process and use some of their talents to assist us in some of the...well I know, I know they are, but I mean on a more active basis, on a complete partnership basis, is what I'm looking at because so far what we've had is participation from...

Mr. Bohl: The answer is yes. There is faculty here who teach graduate level students, as well as directing a new real estate program.

Commissioner Cabrera: And I realize that, it's just that I'd like to formalize it so that it becomes a true working relationship. I think President Shalala would certainly welcome something like this, and I would like to take advantage of it, you all have so much talent.

Mayor Slesnick: Commissioner Cabrera is saying that the City of Miami will pay for it.

Mr. Bohl: The University of Miami.

Mayor Slesnick: The University of Miami....

Commissioner Cabrera: My sales approach is a little softer, believe it or not, than what you just did, but it's a start, it's a starting point. Thank you sir.

Mayor Slesnick: Thank you all, and we will...Liz, can the B.I.D. issue bonds?

City Attorney Hernandez: I don't believe that the B.I.D. can issue bonds, they are not a governmental entity, but I will look into it.

Mayor Slesnick: I mean, maybe if that was available to them people would like to invest in the future of Miracle Mile and where they actually get paid back over a period of time.

City Attorney Hernandez: Mr. Mayor, I will look into that issue, but I'm hesitant to advise you that they are.

Mayor Slesnick: If they were a CRA.

City Attorney Hernandez: That's a different issue.

Mayor Slesnick: Yeah. OK. Well, there are some issues to think about. We'll come back and ask the citizens and merchants and everybody else that's interested that I guess, we'll be prepared possibly to take some action next time and we'll invite comment at that time.

[End: 10:52:35 a.m.]

BREAK

G-2

Mayor Slesnick: Before we get to Hammock Lakes, we are just going to do a couple of things, should take no more than a couple of minutes, that's all. We had on G-2, G-3 – G-2 and G-3 are resolution from the Parking Advisory Board and the Economic Development Board supporting the program that we just hear; they are on the agenda for us to accept them, I'm not quite sure what the purpose of that is, but I have to take a motion to accept those two resolutions.

Commissioner Withers: I'll move G-2; do you want to do them together?

Mayor Slesnick: Yes.

Commissioner Withers: and G-3.

Commissioner Anderson: I'll second.

Mayor Slesnick: Mr. Withers moves, we accept the two resolutions given to us by the Boards, G-2 and G-3, and Ms. Anderson seconds. All those in favor please say aye.

All: Aye.

Mayor Slesnick: Opposed like sign.