

City of Fort Lauderdale

City Hall
100 N. Andrews Avenue
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301
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Meeting Minutes - APPROVED

Monday, September 23, 2013

7:00 PM

Joint Workshop with Beach Redevelopment Advisory Board

Commission Conference Room

CITY COMMISSION WORKSHOP

FORT LAUDERDALE CITY COMMISSION

JOHN P. "JACK" SEILER Mayor - Commissioner
BRUCE G. ROBERTS Vice Mayor - Commissioner - District I
DEAN J. TRANTALIS Commissioner - District II
BOBBY B. DuBOSE Commissioner - District III
ROMNEY ROGERS Commissioner - District IV

STANLEY HAWTHORNE, Assistant City Manager
JOHN HERBST, City Auditor
JONDA K. JOSEPH, City Clerk
CYNTHIA A. EVERETT, City Attorney

Meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m. by Mayor Seiler.

ATTENDANCE ROLL CALL

Present: 5 - Mayor John P. "Jack" Seiler, Commissioner Bruce G. Roberts, Commissioner Dean J. Trantalis, Commissioner Bobby B. DuBose, and Commissioner Romney Rogers

Also Present: Beach Redevelopment Advisory Board: 9 - Chair Bradley Deckelbaum; Members Anthony Abbate, Daniel S. Matchette, Andy Mitchell, Jordana Jarjura, Shirley G. Smith, Ina Lee, Melissa Milroy and Tim Schiavone

Absent: Beach Redevelopment Advisory Board: 1 – Judith Scher

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

BUS-1 13-1299 CENTRAL BEACH MASTER PLAN PUBLIC IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS AND PRIORITIES

Introductions were made.

Economic Reinvestment Administrator Don Morris reviewed slides that were provided with Commission Agenda Memorandum 13-1299, which are attached to these minutes.

Engineering Design Manager Earl Prizlee continued with an overview of the improvement projects, as shown in the slides.

Sebastian Lot Expansion

Prizlee advised this was anticipated to be less than \$2 million. A commissioner requested a green roof. Depending on whether the project evolves into more than a surface parking lot, it could go to the consultant under contract or a new CCNA (Consultants Competitive Negotiation Act) process.

Aquatic Complex

Prizlee noted the developer's agreement with RDC (Recreation Design & Construction) and notice to proceed on the design phase will be issued soon.

Streetscape Projects of State Road A1A and Almond Avenue

Prizlee advised that these projects went through the CCNA process. Kimley-Horn & Associates was selected. The landscape architect is EDSA. The scope of services will be decided based on Commission direction.

Intracoastal Promenade and Las Olas Boulevard Improvements

Prizlee indicated EDSA was selected through the CCNA process. EDSA teamed up with Kimley-Horn as their civil engineer.

Prizlee advised that projects yet to be determined are the marina expansion and marina access dredging. He continued review of the slides.

Sebastian Lot Expansion – Green Roof Concept

It was noted that Commissioner Trantalis had suggested the parking be covered with green space on top. Prizlee indicated for a trellis the cost would be in the range of \$1.7 million and \$2.5 million for something that would be concrete. There would need to be an ADA-compliant elevator, stairwells, lighting and irrigation. Some discussion followed about the net gain of parking spaces and how the City would work with Casablanca Café. Although she did not have specific data, Transportation and Mobility Director Diana Alarcon thought that revenue for the City would be greater with strictly metered spaces and no shared arrangement with the restaurant. In response to Mayor Seiler's concern about an expense of roughly \$2 million for a net increase of 23 parking spaces, Alarcon explained when improvements are made, the area would have to be brought up to current code.

In response to Commissioner Trantalis, Board member Jordana Jarjura said staff did an economic feasibility study in anticipation of constructing a multi-story parking garage and found that it was not economically feasible. Discussion ensued on the economic feasibility of a parking garage. Both Mayor Seiler and Commissioner Trantalis felt a garage is economically feasible. Prizlee advised this was reviewed by the original consultants. Alarcon said the analysis was very conservative. Although use is maximized on the weekends, it is quite low during the week. On average, the occupancy was calculated at 72 percent. Commissioner Rogers questioned whether the City can afford to pay for such a parking structure for essentially weekend use. Board Chair Bradley Deckelbaum said thought was given to building a parking garage from the parking bond fund, however, it could not be justified with regard to underwriting. Also, it is not possible to build an efficient garage because of property on the north side owned by a condominium to the east. With a land swap, it would provide a footprint for a garage when it can be justified. Mayor Seiler questioned a \$2 million expenditure now that would have to be demolished when a garage is built. He favored a two or three-story garage with a green top. Deckelbaum felt the goal was to use CRA (Community Redevelopment Agency) dollars toward this project because they will not be available in the future. Vice-Mayor Roberts was open to something for the future, however, in total there is a shortage of \$7 million. Commissioner Trantalis was concerned about it taking likely two or three years for a garage to be built if authorized today, therefore he did not want to delay because of the demand. The beach is the City's biggest economic engine and parking is the lubricant. He encouraged the Commission to look at the parking challenge holistically. Abbate agreed there is a need to reprioritize.

Morris noted that the \$2 million is for the parking and does not include the other amenities (restroom facility, etc.) on A1A.

State Road A1A Streetscape (west side)

Prizlee explained Slide 12 and advised that Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) is amenable to the variance shown that the trees and light poles will be closer to the roadway so as to allow for sidewalk cafes and a pedestrian walkway that is protected from the roadway by the trees. Alarcon added this variance is planned for the entire corridor and staff is finalizing the process with FDOT now. In response to Vice-Mayor Roberts, Prizlee advised that the tree planting area of 4 feet will be sporadic. Vice-Mayor Roberts wanted more pedestrian space if possible. Jarjura commented that she would like as much unobstructed pedestrian corridor as possible on both sides. Prizlee indicated they will work to widen the pedestrian way as much as possible.

State Road A1A Streetscape (east side)

Prizlee indicated the expense to do the same streetscape on the east side was taken into consideration. As there is an upcoming resurfacing project, narrowing of the travel lanes and widening of the bike lane are suggested. However, the BRAB wanted to know the cost. Moving the trees and replacing the pavers within the CRA would be \$1.7 million. Outside of the CRA, the cost would be about \$1 million north of Alhambra. These numbers have been included in the overall schedule of values. This is a priority of the BRAB. Prizlee noted that the bike lane would be 5 feet plus a gutter. Both Board members Andy Mitchell and Daniel Matchette emphasized the importance of improving both sides of A1A. It was noted that this is the consensus of the BRAB, to maximize the pedestrian experience on the east side.

Almond Avenue

Prizlee advised it would be changed to a one-way street. After morning deliveries, it could be closed so that events could be held. Mayor Seiler did not see this area becoming a gathering point when people can gather a block away and see the ocean. Abbate felt great cities have depth. It would not be advisable to go with one line of A1A and Las Olas. Mayor Seiler thought there may be only one block of businesses that would want to face Almond while the others will not and the residences will not want their emphasis to be to the west. Matchette advocated for improvements to be made to this area. Discussion ensued about the cost and whether the project could be toned down. Prizlee suggested undergrounding the utilities, improving the sidewalk, resurfacing the roadway at State Road A1A Streetscape (west side) and perhaps adding some lighting. Abbate said part of the BRAB's vision is to connect the ocean to the Intracoastal. Chairman Deckelbaum indicated that the BRAB looked at the east/west road, but it is all private property with back-in parking so there is not much that can be done. He was a minority on this project as he does not see it as a priority. Mayor Seiler did not think the existing businesses are the tenant mix of the future. Chairman Deckelbaum felt the larger projects will have enough impact that the Almond Avenue area will get addressed by private enterprise. Jarjura explained that the Sasaki master plan speaks about improved connectivity. The idea is to have unified connectivity for pedestrian/bicycle movement. Her priority is A1A, Intracoastal and Las Olas. Vice-Mayor Roberts felt some improvements to that area are needed; otherwise it will stand out. Mayor Seiler favored some scaled-down version. Commissioner Rogers supported the one-way idea. Morris indicated the proposal is for the roadway to be northbound. Alarcon offered to study the traffic pattern to determine which direction would be best. Prizlee advised that the undergrounding would be at least \$200,000. Mayor Seiler agreed with the undergrounding.

Las Olas Boulevard Plaza; Intracoastal Promenade With or Without Marina Expansion

Prizlee indicated the thought was that this would be tied with whatever happens on Las Olas. In response to Mayor Seiler, it was noted that no one on the BRAB is advocating for Las Olas roadway to be shifted. Mayor Seiler asked why the idea continues to come up. He thought it had been disposed of several times. He opposes any shifting. Prizlee confirmed that the \$29.2 million cost estimate for the Las Olas Corridor project (Slide 21) includes the roadway realignment of about \$4.5 million). Matchette explained the history of the realignment having to do with the parking garage design. One reason this concept has survived is that it forms a visual picture of the beach as one comes over the bridge. With the parking garage no longer being contemplated, he agreed with the Mayor.

Continuing with highlighting plans for this project, Prizlee advised that the mast arms be changed to post design. Electrical would be addressed along with pavers for a holistic look. Mayor Seiler asked if the plaza could be enlarged. Commissioner Trantalis asked if there could be any expansion onto the

beach. Prizlee indicated that staff has asked the Department of Environmental Protection, but the difficulty is this being a turtle nesting habitat sanctuary. The idea is to keep the same footprint, but move the trees behind the wall to recapture as much space as possible with the same footprint.

Prizlee described the Intracoastal Promenade design. In response to Mayor Seiler and Commissioner Trantalis, Prizlee advised there are now 513 surface parking spaces and the two garages are planned at 290 each (Slides 9 and 10). This includes the spaces being consumed on the south side of Las Olas. In general, it will be a green, open space. The promenade will occur with or without the marina expansion. With respect to the identified restaurant site (Slide 17), Prizlee indicated it could be a public/private partnership or left as an open area. Jarjura indicated the BRAB thought the restaurant could generate revenue for the City.

Board member Shirley Smith questioned the need for additional parking garages when more parking spaces will be added at the Swimming Hall of Fame.

Matchette said there are not enough restaurants along the Intracoastal. In Fort Lauderdale, there is only Coconuts. Some discussion followed where other restaurants were mentioned. Commissioner Trantalis said there are concerns related to noise and traffic and the placement of the restaurant. Abbate noted the slides today are not designs, but merely sketches. Also, parking is being consolidated to recover public space for pedestrian bicycle use. If that is not done, the real estate is wasted. The fact that there are so many parking lots and areas dedicated to parking is somewhat wasteful. The goal of the presented concepts will illustrate a way out of that and improve quality of life. Mayor Seiler agreed.

Board member Lee felt the most pivotal discussion this evening is whether to expand the marina. Mayor Seiler pointed out that it has not yet been decided whether it is a major economic benefit. He did not think that answer can be found tonight. Alarcon responded to Commissioner Rogers as to expansion of the water taxi planned at Sebastian. Mitchell emphasized the need to activate the area for people arriving by boat. Commissioner Rogers was interested in the Channel Square with bicycle rental, water taxi and a visitor center. Lee pointed out that the garage could become the focal point for activation features suggested by Commissioner Rogers. Deckelbaum explained that besides not having a viable tenant, Channel Square was a pretty big dollar amount. He returned to the question of marina expansion. Although he felt the entire Commission has been supportive of expanded marinas and dock space, Mayor Seiler did not want to delay the entire beach redevelopment for this item. The numbers on the expansion are all over the place. There are other questions like dredging and generally the difficulty in working through environmental things with the state and federal government. He wanted the parking garages and the promenade to go forward with or without the marina expansion. He did not think it could get approved before the CRA sunsets. Abbate suggested the designer of the promenade take into account the future possibility of a modification for the marina. Lee noted that with the marina expansion decision, money is freed for other things.

Jarjura said no matter where the parking garage is built, there will be residents in opposition. She does not want to waste money on design work if the parking garage will not be built. She believed that Smith's opposition is in the minority. The master plan was properly vetted through several public meetings, calls for 2,271 public parking spaces. Prizlee noted that the CCNA solicitations issued by the City included design work for parking garages.

Intracoastal Waterway Dredging

Prizlee said the dredging project is separate from the marina expansion. The Florida Inland Navigation District is dredging the Intracoastal Waterway and in order for vessels from the dredged Intracoastal to be received at Bahia Mar, the marina access needs to be dredged. He went on to review Slide 18 relating to dredging for Las Olas Access and Marina Basin and Aquatic Center relating to the boat show.

Las Olas Boulevard Corridor Improvements

Prizlee reviewed Slide 20 and noted that the parking garage is to the west. In terms of the request for qualifications (RFQ) that was issued, Channel Square is about the marina and cleaning up the area to make the corner useable and pedestrian friendly.

Alarcon said it is essential to have a pedestrian corridor in order for people to park and get to the beach. Mayor Seiler preferred to enhance this as opposed to Almond Avenue. Both Mayor Seiler and Commissioner Trantalis felt private enterprise will address Almond Avenue. In response to Mayor Seiler, Chairman Deckelbaum said the board did not ever reach a consensus on Channel Square. There was consensus to find another space for a visitor center should that project come to fruition. Abbate commented that anything that can be done to enhance alternative transportation. This is another alternate route to the beach. Although he understands there are issues with finding a tenant and so forth, the original concept is brilliant. He supported a preliminary concept with the thought of going forward when the tenant issue is settled. He was not aware of the discussion being vetted to the board. Matchette said his vision for Channel Square is no dredging other than for depth purposes. He would like there to be a trolley stop to move people from the parking areas to the beach, along with bike racks and a water taxi stop. He was opposed to a trolley dedicated to the beach. He hoped the project could work but not at a price of \$2.5 million. Mayor Seiler preferred to not take any action that would prohibit a future use. He also was opposed to a trolley dedicated to the beach because it defies the walkability philosophy. Alarcon said staff is working with the Downtown Fort Lauderdale Transportation Management Association (TMA) on identifying designated stops. Commissioner Rogers requested an expert opinion during the design phase with respect to Channel Square.

Chairman Deckelbaum raised the idea of converting the parking lot at the marina site to a park and questioned of how active or passive should it be. Mayor Seiler preferred it be passive until the marina concept is known. There was agreement from the Commission.

Paul Kissinger of EDSA reviewed slides for Las Olas Boulevard corridor improvement project that are attached to these minutes. The contractor should be brought on board as early as possible. EDSA suggests that should be toward the end of Stage 2. This will be helpful with constructability, budget and phasing. He responded to Commissioner Trantalis' question about the project timeline. Mayor Seiler suggested a target of three months (Phase One). Mayor Seiler wanted EDSA to consider an alternative use of parking when the Oceanside Plaza area is not being used otherwise. Kissinger thought it should be able to facilitate parking, but not look like parking. What is put in the space that draws people is important; elevation may be something. Mayor Seiler emphasized the concern for there being enough parking.

Matchette felt the Medjul trees have taken away from the view corridor. He preferred native plants in public projects. Lee suggested the project be viewed and considered holistically even though it is being developed in pieces.

Prizlee reviewed the slide titled "Beach Master Plan Project Summary – Preliminary Cost Estimates." At Mayor Seiler's request, Prizlee expanded on what is intended with the \$2,450,000 for Channel Square. Comments were made to determine what other options are available and get consultant input. With respect to the \$27.3 million (approximate) for the marina expansion, Mayor Seiler said he would only favor proceeding if it pays for itself; a break even at a minimum.

Continuing review of the same slide, Prizlee noted that the dredging could be reduced by \$2 million if the marina basin is not done.

Mayor Seiler said he would like to see enhancements at D.C. Alexander Park and not give up oceanfront property. He wanted to preserve the entire block. There was some discussion about making D.C. Alexander Park a more family-friendly area. Vice-Mayor Roberts raised positive features of what was done in Pompano Beach. Mayor Seiler was concerned about parking not being on the same side of the road.

The City Auditor noted that there will be some challenges associated with issuing bonds to pay for parking garages. It does not appear that the revenue streams will support debt service as the projections go out into the future. He went on to mention that converting the surface parking lot at the marina will cost the parking system about \$400,000 in revenue.

Mayor Seiler opened the floor for public comment.

John Weaver, representing Central Beach Alliance (CBA), said this information has not yet been presented to the CBA. Mayor Seiler encouraged him to assemble the CBA in October to discuss this information and get feedback and Weaver agreed to do so. Weaver said that among his personal observations is that he would like to see some parking spaces near the Yankee Clipper in the south lot. There should be signage letting motorists know when lots are full. He suggested that 5 Street be made two-way. He asked whether the marina could be redesigned to have 300-foot docks without expansion. He believes a multi-story parking garage is needed near Sebastian. He suggested first-floor retail space along Alhambra and a sculpture garden at D.C. Alexander Park.

Fred Carlson, 625 Orton Avenue, said during the week tourists are being served by the Sebastian Parking Lot, but on weekends, residents are being served. Money should be spent to take care of residents who want to visit the beach. He believes trees should be aligned with street signs along A1A and they should not be of a species that has great foliage. He thought private enterprise would address Almond Avenue.

Art Seitz, 1905 North Atlantic Blvd., believes the beach needs more parking. Residents are getting locked out. He was pleased that ESDA is involved. He referenced the Inspector General's report about the City's bidding process. He did not like the Aquatic Complex redevelopment design and urged that it be re-bid. Multi-purpose buildings are needed. Rooftops should be utilized. The promenade should be a key part of the A1A greenway. He enumerated amenities that should be included.

Lester Zalewski, 545 South Fort Lauderdale Beach Boulevard, advocated for the Sebastian lot to be transitional. He commented on features and amenities that could be added in the future. The lot, as presented by staff, is a realistic project but the footprint needs to be assembled in the future. He supported the marina expansion project. There is great value associated with being the yacht center of the world. He did not agree with the parking amenities contemplated as one crosses the bridge (Las Olas). If they go forward, he encouraged consideration of modern design concepts such as green

walls and green roofs. He also encouraged use of plans previously prepared for activating D.C. Alexander Park.

Jack Newton, Venetian Condo, distributed an analysis of the two parking garages proposed at the Las Olas bridge that was made a part of the record. He was opposed to an outdoor music pavilion at the end of Las Olas Boulevard. He agreed with Mayor Seiler with respect to the logic of adding 23 parking spaces at Alhambra for \$2 million not making sense. He was opposed to a water taxi feature at Channel Square. He also agreed with not realigning the Las Olas corridor. He did not think that parking garages make sound financial sense. He presented a rendering of parking garages and emphasized they do not belong on oceanfront property.

Steve Glassman, 2821 North Ocean Boulevard, felt that one of the most dormant projects that cannot wait any longer is the Sebastian Parking Lot. He likes the idea of creative uses and retail wrapped around the first floor. All of the proposed parking garages should be wrapped in retail. He would like to see greater involvement on the part of the artist community such as Almond Avenue being a place to escape the sun, sand and heat. He felt less expensive improvements could be made to Almond Avenue and called attention to what was done in Pompano Beach on Atlantic Boulevard as an example. He supported improvements to Channel Square and commented on how it could be utilized as a connector. He would like to see more restaurants and attractions that would activate the new public spaces.

Robert Dean, 3000 East Sunrise Boulevard, said he is a resident of the beach and a member of the Marine Advisory Board. He referred to the economic impact being in the millions and went on to say there is support for the marina (expansion); a workable solution needs to be found. He pointed out Florida Inland Navigation District's (FIND) financial commitment for dredging. He commented on working with the City Auditor on the financial aspect of the marina expansion. Mayor Seiler suggested the City Clerk be included on email distribution of such information so that she can forward it to both the Commission and the BRAB. He suggested the concept of a series of intermodal transportation hubs along the beach.

Barry Flanigan, 2712 NE 21 Street, chair of the Marine Advisory Board, said it has been almost 10 years since City leaders began talking about rebuilding the Las Olas Marina. He thanked those who have supported this project in furtherance of the City maintaining its image as the yachting capital of the world.

Dan Texera, president of Harbor House East Condominium Association, said he also is the director of sales for the Ritz Carlton residences. He felt the Almond Avenue improvements could be scaled back a bit. Residents of the Ritz Carlton believe improvements at Sebastian should be a parking garage of two or three stories and wrapped in retail. Ritz Carlton residents strongly support the marina project. Harbor House East would prefer the marina, and at a minimum maintaining the area as green space in hopes of expansion in the future. More attractions such as art walks and flower shows would be appreciated.

Ramola Matwani said there is a unique opportunity for the beach to have premium land and funding. She would like to see more creative work on the design phase. She suggested a pavilion that could be used for events. She agreed that the marina project is the future. However, the financial aspect must be worked through. She agreed with Mayor Seiler's comments with respect to timing and risk.

There was no one else wishing to speak.

Chairman Deckelbaum asked about the Sebastian site. Mayor Seiler said he expects the Commission will discuss that as a conference agenda item in the near future. There is a funding challenge. Commissioner DuBose felt this is about timing. Fort Lauderdale is a leader in the region. It is time to move forward. Commissioner Rogers said he would like the City Manager to provide a monthly status report. Mayor Seiler noted that funding can be diverted from other sources to expand plans for the Sebastian parking and D.C. Alexander Park. He supported multi-level parking with retail wrapping. It is time to move forward.

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 10:00 p.m.

John P. "Jack" Seiler
Mayor

ATTEST:

Jonda K. Joseph
City Clerk