

MIAMIBEACH

Mayor's 41st Street Committee
4:00pm Tuesday, September 4, 2018
Iberia Bank
400 41st Street, Miami Beach

MINUTES

Committee Members in Attendance:

- Seth Gadinsky, Chair
- Betty Behar
- Michael Burnstine
- Yechiel Ciment
- Francisco Diez-Rivas
- Jerri Herzberg Bassuk
- Jeremy Wachtel

Committee Members Absent:

- Eric Hankin
- Robin Jacobs

City Staff Present:

- Mildred Majoros, Staff Liaison/Economic Development Specialist
- Eva Silverstein, Director Tourism, Culture and Economic Development
- Heather Shaw, Assistant Director Tourism, Culture and Economic Development
- Jay Fink, Assistant Director Public Works
- Saul Frances, Parking Director
- Jose Gonzalez, Transportation Director
- Captain Mildred Pfrogner, Miami Beach Police Department
- Officer Carlos Cuellar, Miami Beach Police Department

Seth Gadinsky opened the meeting at 4:08 p.m. and welcomed all in attendance.

Approval of the Minutes: Francisco Diez-Rivas opened the discussion about the minutes by inquiring whether the bike lanes presented in the Gehl Urban Design Report at the July 31, 2018 meeting would be located along 41st Street and how they would be protected. Jeremy Wachtel asked how feedback would be obtained from residents on the efficacy of protected bike lanes, and Kathie Brooks, Assistant City Manager, explained that the design will be tested by looking at user/ridership numbers. Seth Gadinsky followed this by stating that Eric Hankin would be able to provide more information on this issue. Jeremy Wachtel asked whether the Committee had adopted Option 1 from the Gehl report (reduce lane widths, remove sidewalk clutter, re-program on-street parking, keep four travel lanes with one turn lane, protected bike lanes) as the preferred option. Seth Gadinsky confirmed that the Committee had not formally voted on this issue. Kathie Brooks suggested that the Committee make a motion to this effect

once Jose Gonzalez, Transportation Director, was present to provide feedback. Jose Gonzalez was later able to provide confirmation that Option 1 of the Gehl report is closest to and aligns most with the recommendations of the Transportation Master Plan. Yechtiel Ciment made a motion to adopt Option 1 as the preferred option for protected bike paths as presented in the Gehl 41st Street Urban Design Plan. Francisco Diez-Rivera seconded the motion and the motion passed 7-0.

Jerri Herzberg Bassuk inquired as to whether the renaming of Arthur Godfrey Road is being discussed by the City Commission. Kathie Brooks, Assistant City Manager explained that while this could be brought to the Commission for discussion, 41st Street is a State Road, Seth Gadinsky recommended that this issue be discussed first at the Committee level in a thoughtful way, looking closely at the issues that could prompt a renaming of the street before bringing it to the Commission.

Yechtiel Ciment made a motion to approve the July 31, 2018 meeting minutes. Seth Gadinsky seconded and the motion passed 7-0 to approve the meeting minutes.

Activating Storefronts:

The first item on the agenda was a discussion about vacant storefront activation. Eva Silverstein, Director of Tourism, Culture and Economic Development informed the Committee that the issue of vacant storefronts will be discussed at the next meeting of the Finance and Citywide Projects Committee. She explained that Code Enforcement performed an inspection of empty storefronts to create an inventory of the number and location of vacancies among major corridors (8 vacancies were reported on 41st Street). She further explained that under the current code of ordinances, opaque coverings are allowed for empty storefronts; this includes brown paper. Kathie Brooks further explained that this issue is being presented to the Finance and Citywide Projects Committee at their next meeting with the intent of amending the code so that brown paper will not be allowed as an acceptable covering. Eva Silverstein continued the discussion by explaining that currently there are several options being considered for storefront activation, including displays by local cultural anchors and displays by local artists commissioned through the City's Art in Public Places program. Jerri Herzberg Bassuk inquired whether this would include organizations outside of the City of Miami Beach. Yechtiel Ciment commented that displays should only highlight local arts and culture organizations. Michael Burnstine suggested that priority be given to local groups first before considering outside organizations. Francisco Diez-Rivera inquired as to whether storefront activation will be enough to bring life to the street, and suggested that infrastructure needs to be in place first to provide incentives. Seth Gadinsky suggested including a discussion about façade renovations to the next meeting.

Mildred Majoros, Economic Development Specialist informed the Committee that Eric Hankin is coordinating a project with DASH students this semester, guided by the work of the 41st Street Committee. Students from architecture and graphic design will be paired together to develop a unique symbol of unity, and the symbol will be used as inspiration for parklets and for vacant storefronts. The students will design concepts for modular, prefabricated and transportable parklets, which will be temporarily set up in parking spots along the street. A graphic design component will also be developed for installation in vacant storefronts. The intent will be to coordinate parklet installations adjacent to vacant storefronts for maximum visibility. Students will be ready to present their concepts in November. Seth Gadinsky inquired about how funding could be obtained from the Finance and Citywide Projects Committee for parklets and storefront activations. Eva Silverstein responded that currently there is \$100,000 budgeted in FY 18 for pilot projects along 41st

Street (pending Commission approval) and that a portion of these funds could be used for storefront activation and parklets. Seth Gadinsky suggested that \$40,000 of this funding be used for this purpose.

Betty Behar suggested that the City also consider an art competition with local schools, with the winning displays used in empty storefronts as a way of building a sense of community. Kathie Brooks suggested following up with Dr. Leslie Rosenfeld on coordinating participation from local schools. Yechtiel Ciment suggested that loading zones be explored as a possible location for parklets, and further suggested that a parklet be considered in front of Tasty Café given the busy nature of this business. Jay Fink, Assistant Director of Public Works, informed the Committee that installation of parklets will have to meet transportation requirements, and installations in specific locations will have to be explored further. Seth Gadinsky suggested that at least one parklet be installed along 41st Street, and another be installed along a side street. He further suggested that members of the Committee bring two potential locations for consideration at the next meeting, which would then be shared with Eric Hankin for potential installation of the student-designed parklets. He further recommended that the Finance and Citywide Projects Committee consider funding for storefront activations and remove brown paper as an acceptable covering for empty storefronts.

Discussion of the Conditions of 41st Street:

Yechtiel Ciment commented on the increased traffic on 41st Street. He also expressed that the problem is further aggravated by the difficulty of turning onto 41st Street from the side streets due to the short timing of lights. Jose Gonzalez, Transportation Director explained that lane closures from the construction of MacArthur Causeway add to the increased traffic along 41st Street. He agreed to explore the issue of signal changes/patterns during peak times, and will present possible solutions at the next Committee meeting.

Discussion on Public Safety Concerns:

Jeremy Wachtel opened the discussion by stating that the homeless issue on 41st Street is mainly due to patients being released from Mount Sinai in the early morning hours, causing a nuisance to customers of Taste Café. Jerri Hertzberg Bassuk further added that the problem also affects families walking along the corridor, many times feeling threatened by homeless individuals. Middle Beach Police Officer Cuellar informed the Committee that Mount Sinai is the closest receiving hospital for Baker Act patients, and that many of the homeless individuals are Baker Act patients. He suggested that City staff meet with management staff of Mount Sinai hospital to discuss possible solutions. He agreed to reach out to the City's Homeless Outreach Team. Kathie Brooks explained that while the City has beds available for homeless, in many cases homeless individuals do not want to use the service. Captain Mildred Pfrogner agreed that while receiving facilities receive funding for providing beds, they are not able to enforce use. Jeremy Wachtel stressed that the homeless problem is primarily a daytime issue. Office Cuellar informed the Committee that the area behind Walgreens has been cleaned up, but corporate management has refused to put a gate at the ramp. Yechtiel Ciment inquired about who the Committee should contact to request additional appropriations for public safety and more police presence on 41st Street. Captain Mildred Pfrogner committed to adding a watch order for the next two weeks, including during the Sabbath. Michael Burstine offered to reach out to Mount Sinai as a way of opening communication about possible solutions. Yechtiel Ciment made the following motions:

1) Thank the Mid-Beach Police Department officers for initiating a “watch order” for the 41st Street corridor. The motion was seconded by Jerri Hertzberg Bassuk and passed 7-0.

2) Recommend that the City explore increasing Police Department presence on 41st Street to mitigate the homeless issue. The motion was seconded by Betty Behar and passed 7-0.

Discussion on Parking:

Seth Gadinsky opened the discussion by clarifying that P63 is located behind Roasters & Toasters, P60 is located behind the Roosevelt Theater, and P62 is located behind Starbucks. He gave an update on his discussions with City staff to try to activate the P63 & P60 lots, with a ground lease being a good option for these sites. He informed the Committee that Publix is interested in building a new 2-story store, with discussions ongoing about parking and dedicated loading/drop-off zones. Francisco Diez-Rivera commented that while Publix will provide a much needed amenity to the neighborhood, he is concerned about increased traffic along 41st Street. Seth Gadinsky explained that a traffic study will be performed as part of the approval process. He further informed the Committee that iPic is interested in the Roosevelt Theater site if properties could be assembled to provide sufficient parking, and that discussions with the City about a possible private-public partnership are taking place. With regard to the lot behind Starbucks, Terranova was the only responder to the RFP issued by the City, but negotiations were not concluded. He further explained that residents would still like to have this parking lot developed. Jeremy Wachtel made a motion to request that the City reopen negotiations with Terranova to explore development of the P62 Parking Lot. The motion was seconded by Jerri Herzberg Bassuk and passed 7-0.

Pilot Project Prioritization & Community Outreach Plan:

Eva Silverstein, Director of Tourism, Culture & Economic Development reviewed the proposed pilot projects in the Gehl report. She informed the Committee that creative shade structures - is one of the recommendations for pilot projects - are being considered by the Finance and Citywide Projects Committee at the September 14th meeting. She further explained that 41st Street could be one of the possible locations for installation of a creative shade structure. Yechtiel Ciment expressed his concern that the proposed pilot project involving decorative/painted crosswalks could make pedestrian crossings less safe. Seth Gadinsky recommended that pilot project activation be concentrated on the park located at the eastern end of 41st Street, with smaller parklets installed at the western and central sections of the corridor. Activation of the park could include multi-purpose uses including food truck nights and daytime activities for children and families. Kathie Brooks, Assistant City Manager informed the Committee that staff could provide programming options available with the \$60,000 of the \$100,000 budgeted for pilot projects.

Public Comments

Diane Camber, former Executive Director of the Bass Museum informed the Committee that local residents are suffering from the increased traffic on 41st Street. She suggested that the City consider using the parking lots behind the commercial buildings as a potential fly-over for vehicular accessing, leaving the 41st Street corridor more accessible for pedestrian uses.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 6:05 p.m.

Minutes Approved by the Mayor’s 41st Street Committee

on: _____

Seth Gadinsky, Chair