

MIAMIBEACH

Mayor's Blue Ribbon 41st Street Committee

4:00 PM Thursday July 30, 2020

MINUTES

Committee Members in Attendance:

- Seth Gadinsky, Chair
- Robin Jacobs, Vice Chair
- Jerri Hertzberg Bassuk
- Betty Behar
- Eric Hankin
- Yechiel Ciment
- Bonnie Crabtree
- Marcella Novella

Elected Officials in attendance

- Commissioner Steve Meiner

City Staff in Attendance

- Eric Carpenter, Assistant City Manager
- Amy Mehu, Interim Economic Developer
- Gedel Merzius, Economic Development Specialist
- Allison Novack, Community Information Manager
- Amadeus Huff, Aide to Commissioner Meiner

Seth Gadinsky opened the meeting at 4:05 p.m. and welcomed all in attendance of the meeting.

Approval of May and June Minutes

Modification of the May minutes: Robin Jacobs states that there was an error done in the May Mayor's Blue Ribbon 41st street minutes. Robin stated that the minutes should reflect that Michael Goldberg stated that the Blue Development is at the entrance of Miami Beach, while taking the Julia Tuttle causeway west bound from Miami Beach. It is also not a new development as it was built in 2005. The statement from Michael was a comparison to the proposed project on 4000 Alton Road as far as height was concerned. The height of the Blue development was 425' ft.

The May and June Minutes were moved for approval and seconded by Bonnie Crabtree.

Designers working for a community

Eric Hankin introduced this idea to Chair Seth Gadinsky who began the discussion of the Portsmouth design concept. The design concept was created by the Portsmouth Design Professionals Alliance. The design is predicated on local architects, planners, engineers, graphic designers, and economic development experts to help the economic recovery of their respective downtown area.

Eric Hankin stated that this may be a very basic solutions to the problems going on with corridor. The community got together and developed a plan on how to utilize specific commercial space by placing tables in parking spaces and putting barriers up to keep people safe. Eric Hankin emphasized the Portsmouth project as a way for the 41st street business residents to come together to improve the business community. The committee and those in attendance viewed the Portsmouth plan and asked Eric Carpenter, Assistant City Manager what would be the specific roadblocks with getting this done. Eric Carpenter mentioned a couple of components that came to mind off of his first review of the plan, the first would be the restaurant expansion program that could be used for businesses to take full advantage of. Eric Carpenter also mentioned that the City will take a look at the retail component of placing the establishments on the sidewalks.

Betty Behar said that restaurants were able to put tables outside but some of the retail stores wanted to bring in sandwich boards but the City of Miami Beach has told those businesses to return them back inside. Betty emphasized that these restaurants need help. Eric Carpenter, Assistant City Manager, City of Miami Beach stated that the sandwich boards are prohibited under our zoning code, and the manager emergency authority does not circumvent the zoning code.

Seth asked if there is any specific way to circumvent the zoning process temporarily to bring in sandwich boards. Eric Carpenter replied that there is no necessary way to circumvent the zoning code process but he will take a look at if there any short options.

Amadeus Huff, Aide to Commissioner Meiner stated that they past legislation to extend outdoor seating. Amadeus asked Eric Carpenter if there is a possibility to use this piece of legislation for the purpose of implementing sandwich boards. Eric Carpenter stated that they don't have any Commission meetings for the month of August but if there was a special commission meeting focusing on the COVID pandemic response it would be something they could target.

Jerri Hertzberg Bassuk asked about the possibility of returning the Farmers Market back to the 41st street corridor. Eric Carpenter stated that they are focused on finding a balance of helping the businesses without risking the help of the businesses. Eric Carpenter stated that there may be provisions in the county order that restricts specific gatherings.

In an attempt to curb the increase of leasing space in the area, and to combat storefront vacancies, Yechiel Ciment pointed out that the City should not make accommodations or make sure they make deals with developers with clauses or commitments in place to make real time improvements to fill their vacancy quickly, and not just try to up-zone their property or make it more attractive.

Gedel Merzius, Economic Development department referenced a discussion the committee had at a previous committee meeting, asked Yechiel and other members of the Committee about their appetite for a business improvement district (BID). Yechiel stated that at the time the majority of the committee felt like property owners would not be in favor of a BID, but if a Economic Development professional from the City of Miami Beach would build a package that would push forward the BID concept.

Bonnie Crabtree stated that 9 months ago she orchestrated the search for the Downtown Development Authority's (DDA) Executive Director position. In the course of doing so, she stated that she interviewed 12-15 Executive Director candidates from across the country. Bonnie stated that in every single case, each Executive Director candidate improved the district

they represented with improvements in commercial viability, community engagements, small business attraction, activation of arts and culture spaces. Bonnie emphasized that the business community is doing themselves an injustice by not exploring the opportunity of creating a BID.

City Update

Gedel briefed the committee on an AECOM tentative timetable, for the Action Plan meant to focus on improvements for the 41st street corridor. Gedel stated that there will be three schematic level site plans with order of magnitude-level costing and design options that will emphasize the corridor needs.

Allison Novack, Community Information Manager stated that her GO bond team has been in close conversations and meetings about the development of the plan with AECOM every week, and will have an extensive community outreach before the community presentation of the AECOM plan.

Gedel gave an update of the Mid Beach Trolley route, he stated that if the trolley is ready to go a staff member from the Transportation department will give a more in depth presentation of the possible Trolley service.

Yechiel posed a question of the prevalent amount of buses on 41st street. Gedel stated that those buses those are additional vehicles that the County has placed in service on a temporary basis to operate County bus routes in order to compensate for loss of capacity due to social distancing on-board their buses.

Public Comment

Mariane Siegal stated that if businesses want to change the nature of their business to encourage new tenants they have to go to the City of Miami Beach and incur a mitigation fee. Mariane that a moratorium on mitigation fees such as a pause on change of use fees to be installed to assist business.

Seth welcomed Eric Carpenter to give his expertise on the suggestion. Eric stated that this initiative falls in the area of incentives, and if there is an appetite for any specific mitigation fee it can make a recommendation for a motion so that Commission can review it.

MOTION

The city adopt waving mitigation fees, specifically change of use fees to allow for businesses to more efficiently to adapt their properties.

Motion made by: Yechiel Ciment

Motion seconded by: Betty Behar

Motion passes 8 – 0

Tony Ruiz, stated that there is an incentive for property owners to improve their storefront. Tony asked if there may be an opportunity for business owners to do something with storefront with the City of Miami Beach help. Tony also pointed out the importance the elimination of parking impact fees for change of use.

Gedel stated that this should be an Economic Development initiative and it is something he will reach out to staff to begin the conversation. Yechiel stated that there is a need to take a look at the area holistically to change the area. Yechiel expressed his frustration of how the homeless situation on the 41st street is being handled. Commissioner also expressed full agreement with Yechiel on the importance of addressing concerning needs.

MOTION

The City of Miami Beach responds to the Mayors Blue Ribbon 41st street committee request for a status update on the homeless situation on the 41st street corridor.

Motion made by: Yechiel Ciment

Motion seconded by: Betty Behar

Motion passes 8 – 0

Meeting with AECOM adjourned at 5:28 PM