

The Mayor's Blue Ribbon 41st Street Committee ("Committee") is created pursuant to the Mayor's authority to establish Mayor's boards or committees under Section 2-27 (b) (2) of the City Code. The purpose of the Committee is to study and make recommendations as to how to improve the experience for residents and visitors on 41st Street, which is one of the major gateways to Miami Beach.

Mayor's Blue Ribbon 41st Street Committee

4:00 p.m. Thursday, April 29, 2021

MINUTES

Committee Members in attendance

- Seth Gadinsky, Chair
- Robin Jacobs, Vice Chair
- Betty Behar
- Michael Burnstine
- Yechiel Ciment
- Bonnie Crabtree
- Jerri Hertzberg Bassuk
- Marcella Novela

Elected Officials in attendance

- Commissioner Steven Meiner

City Staff in attendance

- Amadeus Huff, Aide to Commissioner Meiner
- Rickelle Williams, Economic Development Director
- Gedel Merzius, Economic Development Specialist

Chair of the Committee, Seth Gadinsky, opened the meeting at 4:05 p.m. and welcomed all in attendance. Gedel Merzius welcomed John Elizabeth Alemán, former Commissioner for the City of Miami Beach, to the Committee meeting.

Approval of March Minutes

Motion: Yechiel Ciment made a motion to approve the minutes from the previous meeting, seconded by Robin Jacobs. The minutes were approved unanimously.

41st Street meeting outdoors

Discussion about the possibility of meeting outdoors - City staff indicated the Committee could meet outdoors in a centralized location, however, they would need to broadcast the meeting for those who would still wish to attend virtually via Zoom.

Discussion about Tasty Beach Café as a possible location site, however, Tasty Beach Café does not have WiFi. Seth asked committee members for alternative venue suggestions with WiFi access. Robin Jacobs suggested the Committee could meet at her personal home outdoors as an idea.

Steps to create a Merchant Association

Seth indicated some property owners have taken measures to create a merchant association on 41st Street to prepare the business community for a Business Improvement District. Seth informed the committee Amy Mehu will be assisting to begin procedures to form the association. There was a call scheduled for Tuesday, May 4, 2021 to discuss forming the association.

City Update

Capital Improvement Projects department RFQ for the 41st Street streetscape plan

- The RFQ for Architectural/Engineering (A/E) Services is being finalized and will be released to the public the following week. Once the RFQ is released, the committee members recommended to participate in the evaluation committee will be contacted to schedule the evaluation.
- Commissioner John Alemán inquired about whether AECOM, the firm that assisted with the development of the conceptual streetscape plan, was precluded from bidding on the upcoming RFQ. Gedel replied stating that AECOM is welcome to bid on the upcoming RFQ for the A/E services.

Palm Tree Wrap Street Lighting

- Wrap lighting along 41st Street required more maintenance than previously anticipated by both the contractor and the City
- The City's Greenspace division contractor, BrightView, pruned the palms and strapped the palm fronds to keep loose fronds from falling and damaging the light strings
- This practice may reduce the amount of damage and keep the lights burning for longer
- Lighting contractor is performing repair maintenance on a weekly basis

Now Open - South Florals

Grand opening of South Florals at 948 Arthur Godfrey Road, including a grand opening red carpet event and invitation to Committee and community members to experience the new store with top of the line artisan arrangements.

Reopening – The Forge

The Forge at 432 west 41st Street, open since the 50s and the second-oldest restaurant in South Florida, is reopening after being temporarily closed since 2019. David Grutman, restaurateur, nightclub owner and newly minted hotelier, plans to take over The Forge. Seth asked Committee members if they could get in contact with Mr. Grutman. Robin stated that she believed Jerry Libbin from the Miami Beach Chamber may have his contact info. Yechiel Ciment stated that one of his associates had some dealings with him in the past and would do his best to contact Mr. Grutman. Seth emphasized the importance of Mr. Grutman or a representative of Groot Hospitality coming to a future Committee meeting to discuss any possible plans regarding The Forge. Discussion about The Forge being open for lunch and weekend brunch would benefit the community as it would make the corridor a destination. Robin added that it would also be beneficial to receive clarity on whether the restaurant would be open until 5 a.m.

Chair Update

4000 Chase lot behind the Roosevelt Theatre

- Seth is working with Commissioner Meiner's office to setup a meeting to discuss the possibility of development at this location
- In order for development to occur, it would need to go to referendum and would need a sponsor for the item
- Amadeus Huff, Aide to Commissioner Meiner, stated the Commissioner is exploring the idea of development and there is potential – the concept would activate the area

- Seth added that with the possible development happening on multiple lots on 41st Street, the street has the potential to be a bustling corridor
- A guest to the Committee meeting and property owner, Tony Ulloa, asked Seth for more clarification regarding the possible development and activation of the City owned parking lot behind the Roosevelt Theatre
- Seth explained that because the parking lot is City of Miami Beach owned it would need to go to a referendum vote if the city were planning to sell it
- Tony asked if the parking lot would be lost due to the pending development, Seth stated that the number of parking spaces would actually increase within the parking lot

Marketing

- Seth brought to the attention of the Committee a pamphlet he retrieved from the Coral Gables Business Improvement District that he believed carried great advertisement of all of the business attraction happening in the area.
- Specific pamphlets and dedicated marketing on behalf of the 41st Street corridor would make it a destination similar to Miracle Mile in Coral Gables or Cocowalk in Coconut Grove
- Seth discussed the possibility of Publix coming into the 41st Street community. Publix should be reaching back to him about a possible meeting by the end of month.

Public Comment

- Amy Mehu, incoming consultant for the possible merchant association, introduced herself and shared her contact information with all in attendance
- Tony informed the Committee on possible project that he is planning to bring to the 41st Street corridor along with upcoming plans on the 41st Street corridor. Bonnie Crabtree asked Tony about the possibility of technology firms coming to Miami Beach. Tony responded that the market has become increasingly more expensive specifically on Miami Beach on a per square footage basis.
- Robin emphasized the need for more Class A office space in the area and looked to form a motion regarding the need for more Class A office space similar to the Request for Proposal for Class A office space on Lincoln Lane. Rickelle reminded the Committee of the CBRE report summarizing a current zoning analysis of each surface lot along 41st Street.

Motion: Recommendation that the City of Miami Beach issues a Request for proposal (RFP) for repurposing the vacant parking lots adjacent to 41st Street for Class A office space.

Motion made by: Yechiel Ciment

Motion seconded by: Bonnie Crabtree

Motion passed: 8 – 0

Meeting adjourned at 4:47 p.m.

Next meeting date: May 27, 2021