**Mayor’s Blue Ribbon 41st Street Committee**

4:00 p.m. Thursday, February 10, 2022

**MINUTES**

**Committee Members**

* Yechiel Ciment, Chair (P)
* Bonnie Crabtree, Vice Chair (P)
* Jerri Hertzberg Bassuk (A)
* Betty Behar (A)
* Michael Burnstine (A)
* Seth Gadinsky (P)
* Robin Jacobs (P)
* Marcella Novela (P)
* Eric Hankin (P)
* Jeremy Watchel (A)

P = Present; A = Absent

**City Officials and Staff in attendance**

* Steven Meiner, Commissioner
* Amadeus Huff, Commission Aide
* Herman Fung, Capital Improvement Projects Coordinator
* Colette Satchell, Senior Capital Projects Coordinator
* Heather Shaw, Economic Development Assistant Director

Community Members in attendance

* Daniel Summer

Yechiel Ciment , Chair, opened the meeting at 4:05 p.m. and welcomed all in attendance. Yechiel gave special recognition to Seth Gadinsky for his service and advocacy as the past chair of this committee for many years. Yechiel stated that Seth would forever have the title of Chair Emeritus of the 41st Street Committee.

1. **Approval of January 13, 2022 Minutes-** Item deferred due to lack of quorum**.**
2. **Discussion of the Date and Time of Monthly Meeting-** Heather Shaw stated that this is a discussion about the committee meeting date and time. It was brought up by Jerri Hertzberg as this time is hard for her to make the meetings at 4pm because it is around school pick up. Heather suggested they wait for Jerri to have the discussion. Yechiel wanted to mention to the committee that he is thinking about the option to meet every other month as to on a monthly basis. Bonnie stated that she has been on boards that meet every other month, and she thinks that you lose engagement if you meet every other month. Bonnie would be in favor of sticking to the monthly meetings. Yechiel stated that he is fine leaving the meeting on a monthly basis but to try to make the meeting efficient. He does not feel that we need two hours. Seth agreed. Seth also brought up attendance and mentioned that Marcela Novela has been missing many committee meetings. Heather stated that Diana did reach out to Marcela and she stated that she still wanted to stay on the Committee. Yichiel stated that most city committees only allow for a number of absents before you are removed with the committee. Heather stated that Diana did check with City Clerk about Marcela and she was in good standing. Bonnie suggested that committee members be visible on the call and not be video muted.
3. **City Update**

* **Farmers Market - Tourism and Culture Department-** Heather gave an update on this and they are still finalizing the agreement. As soon as they finalize the agreement, we can move forward.
* **41st Street corridor Brooks + Scarpa (A&E) Agreement - Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) Department**- Herman Fung stated that they have reached an agreement with Brooks + Scarpa and the agreement is currently being reviewed by the Legal Department. Once the Legal Department approves, the agreement is executed by all parties. Once the agreement is executed, the Office of Capital Improvement Projects will issue a Notice to Proceed (NTP). The first task to be done would be to do the surveys and the geo- technical work. CIP will begin to meet with the affected businesses and also meet again with the committee for their feedback on the project. Seth asked that now that they eliminated the construction management, how will this project move forward. Herman stated that they would go out to bid and then choose a contractor.
* **41st Street Committee Budget - Economic Development Department-** Heather gave the update on the 41st Street Committee budget. She shared her screen and showed the Committee the budget that they have currently from the Quality of Life funds. She wanted to show the Committee what has been spent and what it has left. She showed the Committee that the budget started at 100,000 and what is currently left is $36,826.46. Yechiel asked when the remaining money has to be spent. Heather answered that this amount is for the remaining fiscal year. Seth asked when does the fiscal year end and Heather responded on September 30. Seth stated that we need to spend the money before then. Seth stated that hopefully they can spend the money on the Farmer’s market. Yichiel stated that they could also consider doing something in regard to musical performances similar to Ocean Drive and Lincoln Road. Yichiel suggested maybe having them on a Saturday night. Heather mentioned that the vendor that is chosen for the farmer’s market was not only responsible for the farmer’s market but also the entertainment component. Heather also mentioned that the City has an onstage fund in which the cultural participants provide pop up events throughout the City. Bonnie recalled that in the past they had requested to do a happy hour but that the Tourism and Cultural Department told them that they could not do it there. Yechiel stated that it was Police that said that they could not have the happy hour so close to Pinetree Drive. Heather stated that due to the size of the space where the past farmer’s market was done, it would be hard to sell alcohol because the space has to be fenced off for minors not to be allowed. Heather suggested that someone from Tourism and Culture come and talk to the Committee regarding community permitting similar to what is done on Ocean Drive and on Lincoln Road**.**
* **Pine Tree Drive - Transportation Department-** Heather requested that this item be deferred to the next meeting as Josiel is out of town.

1. **Chair Update-** Yichiel stated that there have been no new developments regarding Chase Avenue. Yichiel stated that he did want to discuss the 2am roll back alcohol sales. Commissioner Meiner gave an update on the 2 am roll back alcohol sales. He stated that the Commission is currently debating what exceptions there will be not having a 2am roll back alcohol sales. Commissioner Meiner stated that he took a hard line with this issue regarding 41st Street but still wanted to obtain community input. He stated that the Forge is currently undergoing new ownership. He stated that he is excited for the opening of the Forge but the question will be if it should be 2 am or 5am alcohol sales. Currently, the Commission can vote to shut everything down to 2 am on 41st Street and the Forge was grandfathered in to stay open until 5am but the Commission can change that law and have everything on 41st Street change to 2am. Since the Forge has not been opened for more than 183 days, they must go to the Planning Board. He stated that he felt that there was consensus that the majority of the Commission wanted to have the Forge cut off alcohol sales at 2am. Robin Jacobs thanked Commissioner Meiner for his support for 41st Street. Yichiel asked for the opinion of other Committee members in regard to 2am roll back alcohol sales for 41st Street. Bonnie asked if the Forge will be the same format as before. Commissioner Meiner stated that he is seeking to obtain that information and he stated that it is unknown at this time as the Forge has not presented anything to the city. The Forge has presented some construction plans but it is impossible to tell from those plans. Robin Jacobs stated that she feels that South Beach will be 2 am and that the Commission is always for the majority of the hotels in Mid-Beach to stay open until 5am. She feels that this will impact the traffic on 41st Street as this will be main entrance/exit for these hotels. She stated that we need to be discussing with the county different traffic patterns after 2 am and also need additional police staffing to monitor this new traffic. Seth asked if staying open until 5 am promote our mission on 41st Street. Yichiel stated that his point of view was that he thinks that the majority of the businesses on 41st Street will be closed from 2 am -5 am and that he does not see a reason for not allowing the Forge to stay open until 5 am. Seth disagreed with this and thinks the Forge should close at 2 am. Commissioner Meiner stated again that he felt that the Commission was in favor of keeping the Forge to 2 am but you never know. Commissioner Meiner also stated that there is an outdoor component of the Forge and that could be an issue if they stayed opened until 5am. Seth reminded the Committee that when they reached out to the owners of the Forge for input on the mission of 41st Street, they were not receptive at all. Marcela stated that she thinks the 2am alcohol cut off would be best for the Forge. Yichiel asked Commissioner Meiner what the Planning Board would have the capacity to do in regard to the Forge. Commissioner Meiner stated that the Planning Board would just issue an advisory opinion and that the Planning Board will be hearing about three different corridors regarding 2 am alcohol cut-off and 41st Street is included in one of those corridors. Heather stated that Eric commented via the chat that he agreed with everything that is being said.

Another issue that Yichiel wanted to bring up is the fact that 41st Street is a state-owned street and how the City can obtain ownership of the street. Recent incidents on 41st Street has made this issue problematic. Yichiel feels that the City has grown so much and that it is not right for the state to decide to take over one lane of traffic during rush hour and not inform the City on 41st Street. Yichiel stated that he knows that this would be an additional cost to the City but he feels that it is worth it. Commissioner Meiner stated that he has been addressing this issue and he stated that in the last 6 weeks there has been a lot of activity on this. The traffic has been bad due to the contractor working on Indian Creek Drive and the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) working on 41st Street. FDOT and the other contractor are not following their approved work schedules. For example, FDOT is supposed to stop work at 3:30 pm but they keep working until 5:30 pm to 6 pm. Commissioner Meiner has been working with the City Manager and reaching out to FDOT’s District 6 Secretary to address this issue. FDOT has not been receptive to the City’s request and FDOT is violating their own internal policy. For those reasons, Commissioner Meiner stated that he is placing a dual referral addressing this issue to the FDOT Inspector General and to the City’s Inspector General. Yichiel again addressed the issue of how we can take control of this main street. Yichiel stated that 41st Street is a main artery to the City. He feels that the resident’s voices are not heard. Yichiel stated that Commissioner Meiner has been the champion for this issue and thanks him for making this issue a priority. Commissioner Meiner stated that they have been successful with FDOT not working on a Friday in regarding to putting the construction barriers away. Commissioner Meiner also stated that they have had Police called in and start issuing citations. Commissioner Meiner stated that it is not right that the City does not have control of the roads and they we do not know when they are going to be shut down. He stated that we need a better system than what we currently have. Robin stated that it would be great to have more police presence during rush hour on 41st Street and Pinetree Drive. Yichiel stated that he has spoken to the Transportation Department in regard to the timing of the traffic lights during rush hours. He states that the city needs to do better in regards coordinating the traffic lights and police presence during rush hour. Yichiel states that this use to happen only during Art Basel but now it is a daily occurrence. Robin stated that the Committee a few years ago discussed implementing a pilot program for improving traffic on 41st Street. She is not sure what happened with that initiative, so she asked Heather to look into. Yichiel suggested removing street parking on the side streets of Pinetree in order to create two turning lanes. Heather remembered that there was a Letter to Commission that was issued regarding this and she would search for it and report back to the Committee at the next meeting.

1. **Sanitation Update on 41st Street-** Bonnie updated the Committee on the cleanliness of 41st Street. She met with Brad Kaine from the Sanitation department, and she was overall very pleased with their site visit on 41st Street. They walked 41st Street on both sides and Bonnie stated that they were shocked at how much trash and liter was on the Street. The sanitation supervisor for 41st Street is Alfonso Richie and he also walked the corridor with them. As a result of the meeting, the corridor has improved. The Sanitation department has put in an extra crew and first thing in the morning they are cleaning the street. Bonnie stated that she has noticed the difference in the appearance of the street. In addition, Bonnie mentioned that there is a certain part of the sidewalk in which the property owners are responsible for cleaning and maintaining. Some property owners are not maintaining their part of the sidewalk. Bonnie is addressing this issue with Sanitation as well. Bonnie also mentioned that in front of the Forge their trees and light fixtures are in terrible condition. She reported this to Code Compliance, and they are looking into this issue. Heather added that Sanitation has made some changes to improve the 41st Street corridor.
2. **Public Comment** - Daniel Summer stated that if the Committee has ever considered making a website for the 110 stores Seth stated that he did have an update from the potential formation of the 41st Street Business Improvement District (BID). Seth stated that when the BID is formed, they will be more responsible for the promotion of the 41st Corridor and would probably form a website then. Seth stated that 8 property owners have agreed, including himself, have agreed to fund the first phase of the BID formation which includes Amy Mehu’s proposal. Seth stated that part of the budget is that the BID would hire someone full time to work on 41st Street initiatives which would include a website.

Robin asked what the update for Publix was for 41st Street. Yichiel stated that Seth gave him an update/introduction to the individuals who want to bring Publix to 41st Street and they are still interested. Unfortunately, this initiative is moving very slowly. Seth also added that Publix will begin hosting stakeholders meeting and possibly obtaining a zoning lawyer. He agreed that it is slow but looking positive. Yichiel asked if Publix must go before the Board of Adjustment for a variance. Seth stated that Michael Larkin created a subzone like what they did for Target in Miami Beach.

Commissioner Meiner stated that he heard back from Jose Gonzalez, the Director of Transportation and he stated that it was possible to take over 41st Street but that both entities had to agree. In addition, Commissioner Meiner stated that he is working with the Joe Gomez, the Publix Works Director in regard to mitigating the bird nesting on 41st Street.

In closing, Yichiel tasked the members of the Committee to come up with some new initiatives that the Committee can work on for the future. Heather stated that the approval of the January minutes and discussion of time/date of the meeting will be deferred to the March meeting.

1. **Adjournment**

**Meeting Adjourned at 5:01 p.m.**

**Next meeting date: March 10, 2022**