



City of Miami Beach, 1700 Convention Center Drive, Miami Beach, Florida 33139, www.miamibeachfl.gov

Mayor’s Blue Ribbon 41st Street Committee

4:00 p.m. Thursday, September 8, 2022

Hybrid Meeting: Miami Beach Chamber of Commerce and Zoom

MINUTES

Committee Members

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

P = Present; A = Absent

City Officials and Staff in attendance

- Steven Meiner, Commissioner
- Robert Novo, Commission Aide
- Herman Fung, Capital Improvement Projects Coordinator
- Colette Satchell, Senior Capital Projects Coordinator
- Rickelle Williams, Economic Development Director
- Heather Shaw, Economic Development Assistant Director
- Diana Fontani Martinez, Redevelopment Specialist
- Maria Hernandez, GO Bond Program Director
- Thais Viera, GO Bond Program Assistant Director
- Gray Crow, 1st Assistant City Attorney
- Kevin Pulido, Neighborhood Affairs Division Director
- Milos Majstorovic, Transportation Assistant Director
- Jeff Huber, Brooks + Scarpa
- Pedro Munarriz, Brooks + Scarpa
- Mason Millner, Brooks + Scarpa
- Van Le, Brooks + Scarpa
- Jeff Crews, Stantec

Community Members in attendance

- Seth Wasserman
- Michael Goldberg

Yechiel Ciment, Chair, opened the meeting at 4:05 p.m. and welcomed all in attendance. He thanked the Miami Beach Chamber of Commerce for hosting the Mayor’s Blue Ribbon 41st Street Committee (the “Committee”) meeting.

1. **Approval of June 8, 2022 Minutes** - Motion made by Marcela Novela and seconded by Bonnie Crabtree to approve the June minutes. Motion passed.

2. **Member Attendance/Sunshine Law** - Gray Crow, 1st Assistant City Attorney, reminded the Committee of the importance of the State of Florida Sunshine Law. Sunshine Law can be found in Chapter 286 of the Florida Statutes. Enacted in 1967, these statutes establish a basic right of access to most meetings of boards, commissions and other governing bodies of state and local governmental agencies or authorities. There are three basic requirements: 1) the meetings must be open to the public; 2) reasonable notice of such meetings must be given; and 3) minutes of the meeting must be taken. The Sunshine Law applies to all Committee discussions or deliberations as well as the formal action taken by a board or commission. The law, in essence, is applicable to any gathering, whether formal or casual, of two or more member of the same board or commission to discuss some matter on which foreseeable action will be taken by the public board or commission. The state attorney has the statutory authority to prosecute alleged violations.
3. **Quality of Life Funds Update** - Diana Fontani, staff liaison to the committee, informed the Committee that \$33,826.46 remains in Quality-of-Life funds. It was requested that the Committee members come up with ideas on how to allocate the funds and this will be discussed at the October 2022 meeting.
4. **City Update**
41st Street Corridor Brooks + Scarpa (A&E) Agreement for GO Bond Project Update - Prior to the Brooks + Scarpa PowerPoint presentation, Herman Fung, Office of Capital Improvement Projects (CIP), stated that Brooks + Scarpa conducted and finished the survey of 41st Street.

Jeff Huber, Brooks + Scarpa, stated that they also brought a physical model of 41st Street so Committee members could identify any issues or concerns on the model. Jeff stated that he would like the discussion to be informal and to feel free to ask questions. He mentioned that due to the rise of construction costs, the team needs to be innovative to deliver this project. Jeff discussed historical data from 41st Street. Based on the survey they conducted, Royal Palm Avenue and Prairie Avenue have major northwest underground utility issues that need to be addressed. In addition, a new water main will be installed on 41st Street during the construction project.

Jeff stated that they will try to avoid removing any on-street parking spaces. The Miami Beach City Commission approved the removal of up to 18 parking spaces, but the goal is to avoid removing any parking spaces. Seth Gadinsky, Committee member, shared his concern about the project focusing on parking versus pedestrian activity. Jeff shared that focusing on parking is not the intent, parking is just a key element of the plan. Seth also shared that the Committee spent months discussing the 41st Street G.O. Bond project and he is concerned the project has not moved forward. Seth stated that the Committee recommended, for years, that the pedestrian experience is more important than saving parking spaces.

Betty Behar, Committee member, shared that the priority is to open the sidewalks. Jeff stated that underground utilities will create challenges with the 41st Street corridor. The focus is on walks and oasis. Jeff showed proposed pavement, landscaping, and lighting.

Seth stated that the 41st Street Committee spent many years discussing this project and that this is not the same plan previously discussed. Colette Satchell, CIP, shared that this is not the final design, and that these are just concept plans. Seth states that the Committee had

reviewed concept plans before and he thinks that there is a whole new design team with a new plan and the plan they recommended, years ago, was not reflected in the Brooks + Scarpa plan. Jeremy Wachtell, Committee member, agreed with Seth. Jeremy stated that the focus in the past plan was the sidewalk expansion and not the oasis. He feels that the oasis will cut into the budget.

Eric Hankin, Committee member, stated that he does not think these plans deviate from the plans previously shared with the Committee. Eric states that the goal is to create an identity for 41st Street. Collette stated that these are not plans but ideas that came from the AECOM report. Collette also stated that the designer finished the 41st Street survey and they are incorporating their findings into the design. Collette stated that these are just ideas and the oasis is a new concept, that the designers brought up to see if they can attract more drivers to stop instead of being stuck in traffic and visit the oasis.

Seth stated that he is not saying that he does not like new ideas, he just wants the ideas from the old plan to be incorporated or discussed again in comparison to these new ideas. Yechiel stated that the Committee thought there would be a presentation of the evolution of the past design ideas, and it is no fault to the current designer. Collette reminded the Committee that the construction budget for this project is \$9 million.

Bonnie Crabtree, co-chair of the Committee, stated that she liked this approach, but she has concerns as to whether the plan will be approved by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT). Jeff stated that Stantec has done many projects with FDOT in Miami-Dade County and they want to work with them to come up with strategic ways these ideas can be implemented. Bonnie is concerned because in the past FDOT has rejected many ideas, including the expansion of sidewalks.

Michael Burnstine, Committee member, stated that in the past, 41st Street has been treated as an evacuation corridor instead of a neighborhood main street and that is what we are trying to accomplish here. Yechiel asked about the timeline for the project. Jeff stated that this is the initial part of the process and he understands the importance of the initial ideas. He wants 41st Street to have an identity. Collette states that the Committee should look at the model and focus on the opening of the sidewalks.

Eric is still trying to understand what the Committee feels is missing from the AECOM plan. He feels that we need to give specifics that the consultant can work on. Eric likes the street image, and he can envision that happening. Seth shared that his feedback is not an attack on Brooks + Scarpa, but he feels that the AECOM plan is not reflected in the new plan. Seth feels that four (4) years of work is not incorporated in the current plan/ideas. Seth states that Brooks + Scarpa stated that they walked the 41st Street corridor and that was already done by AECOM and the Committee. Seth would like to see a comparison of what AECOM did, what can be done with Brooks + Scarpa under current budget conditions, and for the Committee to review and comment.

Jeremy stated that he agreed with Eric on some of the features presented today. He would like to see the actual details of how the sidewalks would look and the sidewalk cafes. He is concerned that the budget has shrunk and that the majority of funds would go to the oasis with little left for enhancement of the sidewalk. He stated that in the past they had discussed shade canopies at crosswalks. Jeremy is also concerned about the maintenance of traffic (MOT) to be done during construction and would like to see this as well. He likes the oasis, and wants to see the actual experience of walking down the street and how it enriches the

experience of the restaurant owners, pedestrians, visitors, etc. Jeff stated that all the above was duly noted, and that next time they present, these concepts will be reflected. Jeremy also asked how much of the budget would be for the oasis portion of the project.

Bonnie asked about the timeline for the plan. Jeff responded that their goal is to have a plan by the end of October, but that is not necessarily the final plan. Michael asked if something can be done to alleviate the traffic situation on 41st Street as the main issue on 41st Street is blocking the box. Yechiel inquired about what the consultants need from the Committee to move forward. Jeff stated that they need specific recommendations and opportunities from the Committee and with to reference the physical model.

Yechiel referenced the model and gave the following recommendations:

- 1) family-friendly street - The intent of the project is to have 41st Street become a family-friendly main street. In addition, to activate the streets to bring in more family friendly activation near Henry Liebman Square and keep the main elements of the square intact;
- 2) elimination of fragmented sidewalks - As you walk east to west along the sidewalks, you have these fragmented sidewalks with many impeding structures. It would be ideal to give pedestrians a clear holistic path. In addition, this would provide more opportunity for outdoor seating;
- 3) additional tree canopies;
- 4) public seating; and
- 5) widen of the sidewalk near the following restaurants/cafes: Taste Café, Roosters and Toasters and Café Avanti.

Yechiel asked what the Committee can expect for the next meeting, which is set for October 13, 2022. Collette stated that they would be contacting business owners for feedback on this project, and Yechiel expressed frustration that they do not need to do this, and this was done in the past. Rickelle Williams mentioned that communications with businesses would still be needed. The consultant agreed to provide a progress report for the October 13th meeting.

Transportation Update - Milos shared that Yechiel had been in contact with the Transportation Department over the summer to discuss transportation issues on 41st Street. Milos is pleased to report that Miami-Dade County Transportation Department will be conducting counts for the south side of Chase Avenue and 41st Street to develop a crosswalk on the south side of the street. Yechiel informed the Transportation Department about issues with two traffic signals at Royal Palm and Prairie Avenue. Milos shared that the traffic engineer made some adjustments to these lights. This is a short-term repair, and Miami-Dade County will be evaluating this issue for long term solutions. Another issue that was discussed was the “no turn on red” sign located at 40th and Prairie Avenue. Yechiel feels that anything that can be done to alleviate traffic should be done. Marcela Novela asked Milos what is the point of the red lights that are turned on even if there is no pedestrian crossing. Milos stated that the lights should only be on demand when a pedestrian is crossing.

Artisanal/Farmer’s Market Update - Diana informed the Committee that staff is still trying to locate a vendor for a possible holiday market (as the vendor for the Lummus Park Artisanal Market is not yet able to expand to an additional location). Marcela stated that she had a great idea and was speaking to Isabella Acker who has experience with markets and engaging Michelin star restaurants for pop-ups events in parking lots. The idea is to create a

family fun pop-up event with great food, lighting, and music. Marcela to set up meeting with Isabella to obtain additional information and report back to the Committee.

Betty asked if anyone knew about the fact that the Forge was sold to another owner. Diana to investigate and report back. Betty also mentioned that a sports memorabilia/smoke shop opened up on 41st Street. Marcela stated that she already spoke to Code Compliance and they are handling.

Status of Request for Letters of Interest for Mixed- Use Development Near 41st Street -

Diana informed the committee that this is moving forward, and a release date will be announced sometime soon. Seth inquired about the 41st Street Business Improvement District (BID) update and Heather Shaw responded that the staff is pending a meeting with the City Attorney's Office for next steps. Staff will provide additional information at the October meeting. Bonnie illustrated the catalog from the Coral Gables Business Improvement District and Committee members agreed that eventually they would like the same catalog. Heather shared it was best to wait until the BID was formed as most BIDs have a marketing budget.

5. Chair Update -

Discussion on in-person meeting moving forward- The committee would like to move forward with in-person meetings. Yechiel confirmed that Michael Goldberg stated that his conference room, at First Horizon Bank, is available.

6. New Initiatives - Love 41st Street Campaign- Diana stated that staff is working on a flyer and will be ready by the October meeting.

7. Public Comment-

Seth Wasserman- Seth stated that he has been following the 41st Street G.O. Bond project for many years and would like to assist the consultants with his experience as he served on the Parking and Transportation Committee. His concern about today's presentation, regarding the 41st Street G.O. Bond project, is that nothing was mentioned about life safety. He is concerned about the mid-block crossing on 41st Street. He would like the consultant to address his concern. He is also concerned about where they are going to replace the current parking spaces.

Meeting Adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

Next meeting date: Thursday, October 13, 2022 - First Horizon Bank 400 Arthur Godfrey Rd, Ste 210