

**APPROVED**

**BEACH REDEVELOPMENT BOARD  
100 NORTH ANDREWS AVENUE  
1<sup>st</sup> FLOOR CITY COMMISSION CHAMBERS  
FORT LAUDERDALE, FL 33301  
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2012 – 10:00 A.M.**

MEMBERS	FEB 2012/JAN 2013				
		REGULAR MTGS		SPECIAL MTGS	
		Present	Absent	Present	Absent
Bradley Deckelbaum, Chair (arr. 10:21 a.m.)	P	7	0	1	0
Mel Rubinstein, Vice Chair	A	5	2	1	0
Anthony Abbate (left 10:30 a.m.)	P	7	0	1	0
Jordana L. Jarjura	P	6	1	1	0
Ina Lee	P	7	0	1	0
Dan Matchette	P	6	1	1	0
Melissa Milroy	P	6	1	1	0
Judith Scher (arr. 10:19 a.m.)	P	6	1	1	0
Tim Schiavone	P	7	0	1	0
Aiton Yaari	P	6	1	1	0

**Staff**

Lee Feldman, City Manager  
Don Morris, Beach CRA Manager  
Earl Prizlee, Engineering Design Manager  
Lisa Edmondson, Recording Secretary, Prototype, Inc.

**Communication to the City Commission**

**Motion** by Chair Deckelbaum, seconded by Ms. Lee, that if this proposal works well and meets our needs, we would like to have it. We (the Board) would like to see the City staff and professionals design the next level (be it 30% design, etc.) along with the traffic studies and cost estimates before making an intelligent view on it. The Board likes the plan idealistically. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

**I. Call to Order/Roll Call – Ina Lee, Acting Chairperson**

In the absence of Chair Deckelbaum and Vice Chair Rubinstein, Ms. Lee called the meeting to order at 10:18 a.m.

Roll was called by Ms. Edmondson.

- **Quorum Requirement**

As of this date there were 10 appointed members to the Board, which means 6 would constitute a quorum. It was noted there was a quorum at the commencement of the meeting.

## **II. Approval of Minutes - Ina Lee, Acting Chairperson**

**Motion** by Mr. Abbate, seconded by Ms. Milroy, to approve the minutes of the October 15, 2012, minutes. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

## **III. Discuss Las Olas Boulevard Realignment Proposal - Donald Morris, Beach CRA Manager**

[Ms. Scher arrived at 10:19 a.m.]

Mr. Feldman, City Manager, reviewed that the sum of \$41 million (which was generated by the CRA) has to go back into the CRA over the next seven years. At the October 16 meeting of the City Commission, concerns were voiced on several projects that were presented and the City Commission asked staff to discuss alternatives with them at a Conference Meeting on November 6. Mr. Feldman continued that he would review that meeting with the Board at this time.

[Chair Deckelbaum arrived at 10:21 a.m.]

Mr. Feldman began by discussing the Alhambra Street Parking Lot Project, which includes improvements to the pedestrian-vehicle interface. He remarked that it is a "pedestrian nightmare."

Mr. Feldman stated they are moving forward without the acquisition of the condominiums. There was a great discrepancy between the market value of the property and what the condominium association wanted.

Mr. Feldman continued that the City Commission had several questions about the traffic analysis and sidewalk with The Streetscape Project, both on the west and east, but it is still moving forward.

Regarding Almond Avenue, the City Commission brought up technical questions, such as turning radiuses, but Mr. Feldman reported that overall there was consensus on that project.

The City Commission agreed that something memorable should be seen as traffic comes off the bridge at Las Olas/SR A1A.

As far as the Marina expansion was concerned, Mr. Feldman reported they are still waiting for the market study, to make sure that the revenues will be sufficient for an expansion.

Mr. Feldman stated that the City Commission was not in favor of the Oceanside lot project. There was concern about visibility coming off the bridge, and how the area would “work together.” He showed the existing plan and pointed out that the view coming off the bridge now is trees, traffic lights and a road. He said the current thinking is to shift Las Olas Boulevard so that there is an ocean view. He described the design, which included a wide sidewalk, one lane of traffic going east to SR A1A, and two lanes going out. The idea would be to direct vehicles down to Seabreeze and back up SR A1A to minimize traffic and create a “grand concourse.”

Regarding the parking lot, Mr. Feldman said they are considering a surface parking lot with 129 spaces and an open plaza. Any features are to be determined, but the concept is to make it a place for events and for people to interact during the day. Mr. Feldman continued there would be twin three-story parking decks flanking the Las Olas Bridge. He added there would be net zero parking loss on the beach. Mr. Feldman noted they would be losing proximity to the beach, so they proposed a free tram between the parking area and the beach.

Mr. Feldman also said that the City may have to acquire some of the land at the fishing boat marina site to accommodate the realignment of Las Olas Boulevard.

Regarding Channel Square, Mr. Feldman remarked there is no potential use for that site, although it could be a water taxi stop. He added that the idea of an office building there does not work from a market standpoint.

[Mr. Abbate left at 10:30 a.m.]

Mr. Feldman listed the suggested order of the projects:

- Sebastian parking lot
- Streetscape
- Almond Avenue
- Las Olas Boulevard Realignment

Mr. Schiavone wondered how many spots on the Oceanside surface lot would be given up to the public area, and Mr. Feldman replied approximately 90-100 spots. He noted that the lot is mostly vacant during the weekdays.

Mr. Yaari felt that one lane on Las Olas Boulevard for eastbound traffic would create a bottleneck, and suggested a modification to allow for two lanes. He predicted people would not want to use the tram because of the bottleneck. Mr. Feldman commented that they are trying to keep traffic moving north and south on SR A1A and allow for more pedestrian flow. Secondly, he pointed out that more pass-by traffic would be created for retail.

Ms. Jarjura was curious if there would be a viewing deck at the Plaza, or if it would be an open plaza. Mr. Feldman responded that features such as temporary viewing stands could be brought in later, but basically it would be an open plaza.

Ms. Lee was also concerned about traffic flow on Las Olas Boulevard. Further, she felt it was important that infrastructure is built into the flex space to make it easier on people doing events. Mr. Feldman commented that preliminary discussions indicated that the space would be geared toward that, so that they will plan for water, electrical and so forth.

Chair Deckelbaum also expressed concern about traffic flow, both coming down Las Olas and also traffic through Las Olas Circle and back up through the northern part of the neighborhood. Mr. Feldman stated they would conduct an analysis to see if Las Olas could handle the traffic, but he cautioned against spending too much time on studies.

Chair Deckelbaum brought up parking, noting that all indications are that the area needs more parking, but the proposal calls for a net equal change in parking spaces. Mr. Feldman responded that if the Marina expansion does not happen, there will be a surplus gain in parking. He felt that the current proposed parking combined with the private parking would be adequate.

Chair Deckelbaum wondered if staff would have confidence to move forward with the Marina if the "numbers are right" from the economic study. Mr. Feldman said they would decide whether it goes forward when the study is complete.

Mr. Matchette was concerned with the economic benefit (or lack thereof) involved in building two parking structures, re-routing SR A1A and building a pavilion versus the net zero difference in parking. Mr. Feldman commented putting a value on public space is difficult, but much of that already occurred with the adoption of the master plan. He added that the value probably would not be known until 20 years from now.

Mr. Matchette commented that two separate garages are more expensive to build than one, and he did not see it would be possible for that to be revenue-neutral. He said an Alhambra lot would solve the problem for pedestrians and parking. He contended that use of a tram would invite more problems such as liability and limited use during the week.

Mr. Feldman responded that the preliminary numbers on the garages are that they will be self-supporting. He noted they will operate the tram during peak hours, not all the time.

Mr. Yaari thought it was important to have more of an opening at Almond Avenue to create the "village feel."

Ms. Jarjura brought up the possibility of having a parking garage on the Sebastian lot in order to spread out the parking. Mr. Feldman said they had looked at that option before, but it would have required a "heavy subsidy" from the CRA. Ms. Jarjura remarked by concentrating the parking in the one area, the bottleneck traffic would continue.

Chair Deckelbaum asked if the twin garages would be paid fully by parking bonds, and Mr. Morris answered it would probably require some CRA subsidy. Mr. Feldman said that the financial analysis showed they would be "pretty close" to self-supporting, but more study is required.

Mr. Schiavone wondered if there was another way to achieve the desired bridge view without making such drastic and costly changes. He added that the traffic right now with two lanes is bad, and going to one lane would be much worse. He also expressed concern about encroaching into the existing parking lot for the proposed changes, and suggested temporary fixtures for special events. Mr. Feldman advised that flex space in parking lots are difficult to manage due to code requirements such as wheel stops and landscaping requirements.

Mr. Schiavone suggested making a limited number of design changes to capitalize on the ocean view.

Mr. Matchette proposed blocking off one lane on Las Olas Boulevard as a test to see how it would work, rather than relying on modeling.

Mr. Morris said that Mr. Abbate had asked him to relay the following comment for the record: Mr. Abbate is in favor of the Las Olas re-alignment. Mr. Abbate wanted to know whether the marina expansion could be phased, and if the land side improvements could be done before the water side improvements were done.

Mr. Feldman replied that the land improvements on the Intracoastal could be made even without a marina expansion.

Mr. Matchette asked about the proposed restaurant, and Mr. Feldman said the green space area would be kept open for restaurant development.

Ms. Lee remarked that the tram idea would be essential for traffic flow around the beach, and people would need to be re-educated. Mr. Feldman thought the tram would be funded from the parking revenue from the garages. He shared that they had discussed having another tram in an outer loop connecting to the Aquatic Center. Mr. Feldman remarked that the Sun Trolley was a good link up SR A1A.

Chair Deckelbaum observed that the proposed twin garages would increase traffic on Las Olas Boulevard and the north neighborhood, as that would be the only way to

access them. Mr. Feldman explained access would be available to traffic coming north on A1A.

Mr. Feldman brought up having iconic features on top of the parking decks to emphasize the entrance to Fort Lauderdale Beach.

Mr. Schiavone was curious how drivers would know if the surface lot was full before they would pass by the twin garages. Mr. Feldman explained they are planning to use automated sensors in the garages and at the parking lots that would be accessible via a smart phone app so drivers would know what spaces would be available.

Ms. Lee was in favor of the concept, but wondered if there was a way to take the existing lot and somehow make it work better for the kind of events when they happen. When no events are occurring, she suggested having the space available for surface parking, without building the twin garages. Mr. Feldman commented that the real issue would be the degree of flexibility desired in a flex space.

**Motion** by Mr. Yaari, that time is of the essence, to proceed as soon as possible and as fast as they can with all the projects and take a closer look at the concept and fine tune better or other solutions if it's two-way flex-space.

It was pointed out that the rest of the projects are not being held up by this debate. Mr. Feldman noted, however, that there is some interaction between the projects.

Chair Deckelbaum wondered if Mr. Feldman could present traffic studies, costs and results of the marina study at the December meeting. Mr. Feldman replied staff would want to review the marina study before presenting it.

Mr. Feldman continued that the Las Olas Re-Alignment project is a broad concept that needs work and the next stage would be to develop plans and concepts to a "30% level." He proposed putting out an RFP to get a design team on board to do the traffic studies, parking analysis and so forth. Mr. Feldman elaborated that the RFP would allow for the design team to consider various alternatives to the one-lane traffic proposal.

Mr. Yaari withdrew his previous motion.

**\*Chair Deckelbaum opened the floor to public comment at 11:19 a.m.**

Shirley Smith commented that making Fifth Street a two-way street would help alleviate traffic. She also said there was lots of parking on the beach.

Chris Ianoff stated there is too much traffic in the area, and the City needs to decide if they want to make the area pedestrian friendly. He said it is presently dangerous for pedestrians. He favored an open esplanade and open areas for pedestrians.

Jack Newton complimented the Board for thinking about the projects so thoroughly. He referred to the November 2011 traffic study, which recommended remote parking and transit. He foresaw "Spring Break" year round at a proposed pavilion. Regarding the parking decks, he was in favor of one, but said the other overlaps his property.

Chuck Black suggested a closed loop tram system with defined lanes. He also suggested that they close the area between SR A1A to Seabreeze to traffic so that it is walkable, and commented that the open venue could possible go there.

**\*Chair Deckelbaum closed the floor to public comment at 11:29 a.m.**

Mr. Schiavone asked about the timeline for work to begin on the discussed projects, and Mr. Feldman thought they might realistically break ground in 2015-2016 in this area. He pointed out there will not be a music pavilion. Chair Deckelbaum envisioned an attractive open space that could be used for events, but also for everyday use.

#### **IV. Communications to the City Commission**

**Motion** by Chair Deckelbaum, seconded by Ms. Lee, that if this proposal works well and meets our needs, we would like to have it. We (the Board) would like to see the City staff and professionals design the next level (be it 30% design, etc.) along with the traffic studies and cost estimates before making an intelligent view on it. The Board likes the plan idealistically. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

#### **V. Old/New Business**

Ms. Lee commented that the City did a "mammoth job" cleaning up after Hurricane Sandy. She noticed damage to the fiber optics on the wall, and wondered how much time it would take to get the wall fully repaired in time for peak winter season. She also wanted to know the status of the fiber optics and of the RFP for replacing the fiber optics.

Mr. Feldman replied that the RFP is currently on hold while they estimate the damage. If the City is eligible for federal aid, that will slow down the process slightly (due to paperwork), but will increase the ability to get the work done. However, they do anticipate all the clean-up work from Sandy to be done in a four-month time frame.

In the case of a major disaster, Ms. Lee was concerned about the ability to rebuild being hampered by newer codes. Mr. Feldman stated there is no grandfathering, and under the Florida Building Code, if a property is damaged more than 50% of its value, it has to be brought up to new code. There are no exceptions or variances allowed. He added they need to develop a plan for the beach/Barrier Island. If there was a maximum event and 75% of the structures had 50% or more damage, consideration must be given to

how the City wants the beach to look. There needs to be a long-term strategy in place prior to an event.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Schiavone, Mr. Feldman clarified that he was referring to the building code (electric, plumbing, etc.), not the zoning code insofar as rebuilding. Exceptions to the zoning code would be up to the City Commission. He remarked that having the long-term strategy in place would be valuable because it would specify the rebuilding conditions.

Mr. Feldman informed the Board that staff has plans to start work on the long-term strategy for rebuilding on a citywide basis. Ms. Scher added that it should be looked at from both commercial and residential buildings standpoints.

Mr. Morris reminded the Board of the Light-Up event on November 21 at 5:30 p.m.

Hearing no further business, Chair Deckelbaum adjourned the meeting at 11:47 a.m.

[Minutes prepared by J. Rubin, Prototype, Inc.]

List of attachments:

November 2011 Traffic Study

PowerPoint presentation: Fort Lauderdale Beach Master Plan Projects, November 6, 2012