



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

The Mayor's 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 PM Thursday October 15, 2020

MINUTES

Committee Members in Attendance:

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

Elected Officials in attendance

- Commissioner Steve Meiner

City Staff in Attendance

- Eric Carpenter, Assistant City Manager
- Maria Hernandez, GO Bond Program Director
- Amadeus Huff, Aide to Commissioner Meiner
- Amy Mehu, Interim Economic Development Director
- Gedel Merzius, Economic Development Specialist
- Allison Novack, Community Information Manager
- Kevin Pullido, Neighborhoods Affairs Manager
- Vanessa Veracruz, Neighborhoods Affairs Coordinator
- Thais Vieira, GO Bond Program Assistant Director
- Rickelle Williams, Economic Development Director

Seth Gadinsky opened the meeting at 4:04 p.m. and welcomed all in attendance of the meeting.

City Update

Gedel Merzius began city updates by formally welcoming Commissioner Steve Meiner to the meeting gave a brief update. Commissioner Meiner discussed the A frame signage and retail extension unto the sidewalk item that was previously a motion made by the 41st street committee. The item is scheduled to be heard at the November 24, 2020 Land Use Committee meeting.

Robin Jacobs suggested that a link be sent to the committee members so that they may listen to the discussion and opine on the item as they see fit.

Gedel spoke about the possibility of an upcoming farmers market happening on 41st street. Previously a Farmers market took place on the 41st street corridor, within the first three months of March 2020. The Farmers market was ultimately postponed due to COVID 19 regulations. Jeremy Wachtel stated that he doesn't believe placing an emphasis on starting a Farmers market would not be the smartest thing as of right now for the community. Jeremy stated as of right now businesses throughout the city are either closing down at an alarming rate or struggling to stay open on a day to day basis.

Michael Burnstine stated in agreement with Jeremy that one of the main reasons for starting the farmers market on 41st street was to generate positive foot traffic on 41st street and to provide meaningful activities for Middle beach residents. Burnstine stated that if the farmers market could open safely within the pandemic and getting the Middle Beach business community activated he would support it.

Yechiel Ciment suggested that we possibly pause the discussion for a later time. Marcella Novella stated that there should be additional consideration for the other vendor who was successful in doing multiple activations in areas such as in the area of Overtown. Adding that, if this is something to be successful we should take a look at all options.

Seth stated that the committee will discuss at this item at a future date.

Chairman's Update

Seth Gadinsky began this item by expressing that restaurant establishments are in dire need for help, Seth asked Jeremy to articulate the issue further. Jeremy expressed his concern for business establishments throughout the mid beach community stating that because of COVID 19 restrictions being placed on establishments, his biggest fear is those establishments will miss the peak season of sales which range from November to February. Jeremy asked that the City begin taking a look at ways to assist establishments.

Betty Behar, stated that she is alarmed by the lack of people on 41st street, she stressed the importance of relaxing specific measures and allow indoor seating with an emphasis of placing outdoor seating throughout the City.

Robin referenced the assistance that is being done in Wynwood. The Wynwood BID (business improvement district) has implemented outdoor seating spaces to help restaurants during this tie of need.

Under the City of Miami's Restaurant Reopening and Recovery Program. The Wynwood BID helped mitigate the state's dine-in capacity restrictions, the plan gives businesses permission to repurpose outdoor spaces for extra seating. Private walkways, parking, sidewalks and street parking spots can be used to set up tables and chairs as well as coverings with the proper permits. In Wynwood, the BID is helping make it possible by coordinating with the City and restaurant owners on the initiative and covering the cost of the spaces to support area businesses.

Robin stressed the importance of allowing tents over the seating area along with the proper aesthetic wrapping for seating areas.

Yechiel stated that this is an emergency measure that needs to be established within a week. Yechiel also reminded the committee of the presentation that was originally done by Alta Gehl, where the Alta Gehl consultants referenced simple implementations throughout the corridor that would enhance the quality of life of the whole corridor without deep construction.

Commissioner Meiner stated that he has been working with Jeremy and different stakeholders, staff members about this initiative and all parties have been receptive about this ask.

Eric Carpenter, City of Miami Beach, Assistant City Manager stated that they will take a look at what Wynwood has done in terms of seating expansion for restaurants. Eris stated that this may take more than a week but the initiative will take place.

Eric Hankin posed the question to Jeremy whether it would be prudent that the seating areas be close to restaurants as much as possible.

Eric stated that the City does have a restaurant expansion program that has been establishments since May. Eric stated that Rickelle Williams, City of Miami Beach Economic Development director will take the lead in establishing this initiative.

AECOM 41st street schematic presentation

Seth began this item by stating that City of Miami Beach staff and AECOM has met with various members of the community along with different stakeholders throughout the community. Essentially the presentation will not be a selection of scheme 1 and scheme 2 but a hybrid model. Seth stated public comment has been given, and this is not a presentation of wants and needs but it is more a presentation to review the survey results of scheme 1 and scheme 2 and their design elements.

Lauren Swan began the presentation by stating the intent of this presentation is to highlight specific design elements from both schematic design options and what a possible preferred alternative may look like.

AECOM consultant Sarah Bassett began the presentation by discussing the public survey results. Overall, there were 159 submissions from the public survey. The survey encompassed questions regarding parking where 43.31% of respondents preferred the removal of all parking on 41st street in comparison to 56.69% of respondents felt that parking would be better utilized if they kept some on the 41st street corridor. 57.89% of respondents were in favor of Widening the Sidewalk, 42.41% of respondents were in favor of flexible sidewalk parking. The widening of the sidewalk comes with a caveat that there will be a recommendation of widening the sidewalk in some strategic locations. 57.59% of respondents preferred branded paver designs over colored texture concrete. 61.39% of respondents preferred keeping the Royal palm trees over removing them and replacing them with shade trees. 57.14% of respondents preferred fix seating at midblock intersections over fixed seating throughout the whole corridor.

Sarah proposed specific design elements that AECOM has suggested to carry over from Scheme 1 and 2. Scheme 1 elements involve enhance materials, branded sidewalk pavement, colored texture crossing, some shade trees, lush multi-level plantings, gateway feature, bicycle parking on side-streets. Scheme 2 elements involve design boundaries, flexible parking on side-streets, some palms trees, fix seating at midblock, gateway features, bicycle parking on side streets.

Sarah further discussed slides that showed how the corridor will look if parking remains flexible on side streets, along with sidewalk material being placed with branded pavement. Sarah also presented to the committee the exact locations to where parking spaces are being proposed. Sarah noted that with the proposal there will be an availability of 620 parking spaces and 457 surface parking lot spaces. Sarah continued to present slides that visually encompassed elements of café seating, seat-wall concepts, bus shelter canopy seating, and extended sidewalks that widened by 12 feet. Sarah also spoke on the incorporation of city bicycle parking on side streets.

Seth stated that the biggest change from the Alta Gehl vision plan and the AECOM conceptual plan is the removal of parking. Seth stated that keeping some parking on the 41st street corridor will ultimately be a cost saving and would leave more funds for other aspects of improvement on the corridor. Jerri Hertzberg Bassuk stated that she enjoyed the presentation but did state that she was expecting getting rid of on street parking. Jerri stated her reasons, briefly mentioning that the parking garage near 41st street could substitute for on street parking, many of the street parking was used by employees working on the 41st street, it causes traffic, and it prevents the widening of the sidewalk throughout all of the 41st street corridor. Jerri asked that the AECOM consultants take a look at past notes highlighting the importance of the removal of the sidewalk and widening the sidewalk.

Bonnie stated that she was hoping for more attention towards the side streets, Sarah stated that those flexible spaces within the side street would be more of a adaptable option where a business would be able to change the functionality of actual spaces in the side street. Lauren stated that AECOM wanted to create connectivity options for residents on 41st street to access those businesses. Lauren later stated that the ability to consolidate planting areas they are able to create fold out space for walkability space. Yechiel expressed the same sentiments of Jerri about the emphasis on parking, he also commended AECOM and City of Miami Beach staff for their ability to hybridize both schematic plans.

Eric Hankin thanked the AECOM consultants for their presentation. Eric stated that we as a community do not know what are identity is. The street is a gateway to the historic, modern, sophisticated, casual, tropical urban and suburban mid Miami Beach neighborhood. The literal gateway sign presented, which is one of the major design components in the plan is misplaced and possibly wasteful. Also, there is no explanation as to maintaining or removing the royal palms. Lauren stated that ultimately in the design development stage those elements will be decided.

Eric Hankin also stated that enhancing the mid-block crossings is a good design choice but it questionable as to why the mid-block crossings exist. Eric asked if other urban commercial districts do mid-block crossings? Eric also posed if surface parking along 40th and 42nd streets were not considered part of the design.

Michael questioned whether the royal palm trees created the shade that is needed for the pedestrians and whether the royal palm trees were a safety risk as the branches tend to fall off and may hit pedestrians.

Jeremy stated that he is very satisfied with the fact that some parking will be taken away on the side streets of 41st street. Jeremy is in agreement with Eric about the use of surface lots, mentioning the implementation of electric car ports. Jeremy stated that fixed seating, lack of parking spaces, bike rack may be a deterrent to business spaces.

Eric asked whether there is a line item in this budget. Maria Hernandez, City of Miami Beach, GO Bond program director stated that lighting in the 41st street corridor is being addressed. Public Works department is set to complete new installations of LED lighting on 41st street that will be completed by February 2021. Maria also stated that any further implementations for lighting will come at the design development stage.

Seth asked whether all of these designs can be changed or tweaked during a workshop. Sarah replied that can happen during design development level.

Motion - To move all funds allocated toward G.O. Bond Project #40 to Tranche 2 with the intent of fast-tracking the 41st Street conceptual streetscape design plan.

Motion made by: Yechiel Ciment

Motion seconded by: Michael Burnstine

Motion passed: 10-0

Motion - To recommend the hybrid design for the 41st Street corridor with the recommendations discussed by the Committee, while having the final plan come back to the 41st Street Committee for final review before going through the next phase of design development.

Motion made by: Yechiel Ciment

Motion seconded by: Bonnie Crabtree

Motion passed: 9 – 1

Meeting Adjourned 7:13 PM