TOWN OF PALM BEACH

Office of The Town Clerk

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, JANUARY 16, 2007

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The Special Town Council Meeting was called to order on Tuesday, January 16, 2007, at 9:30 a.m. in the Town Council Chambers. On roll call, the following elected officials were found to be present:

Mayor Jack McDonald
President Denis P. Coleman
President Pro Tem Richard M. Kleid
Council Member William J. Brooks
Council Member Susan Markin
Council Member Allen S. Wyett

Others present for all or a portion of the meeting were:

Town Manager Peter B. Elwell
Deputy Town Manager Thomas G. Bradford
Town Attorney John C. Randolph
Jay Boodheshwar - Recreation Director
Paul Brazil - Public Works Director
Veronica Close - Director Planning, Zoning and Building
Charles Langley - Public Works Assistant Director
Michael Mason - Law Enforcement Major
Michael Reiter - Police Chief
Susan Eichhorn - Town Clerk

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by President Coleman.

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III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Agenda was approved through motion of Council Member Brooks and seconded by President Pro Tem Kleid. On roll call, the motion carried unanimously.

IV. RESOLUTION NO. 4-07 A Resolution of the Town Council of the Town of Palm Beach, Palm Beach County, Florida, Declaring the Results of the Town Caucus; Naming Therein the Candidates Nominated and Named in this Resolution; Declaring That a Municipal Election Shall Not Be Held.
[Susan A. Eichhorn, Town Clerk]

Town Attorney Randolph read Resolution No. 4-07 by title, as printed above.

Motion made by Council Member Brooks, seconded by President Pro Tem Kleid to approve Resolution No. 4-07. On roll call, the motion carried unanimously.

V. TRAFFIC AND PARKING IMPROVEMENT PLAN
[Thomas G. Bradford, Deputy Town Manager]

A. CONSIDERATION OF STRATEGIES FOR THE MID-TOWN AREA.

Brian Mirson, principal of American Consulting Engineers (ACE), provided a Powerpoint presentation, recommending the following four elements for improvement areas:

1. Enhancements of the intersections on the roads for safety improvements;

   Public Works would be implementing minor adjustments in the intersections of County Road and Chilean Avenue and Royal Palm Way and County Road.

2. Increase parking inventory;

   Modifications were proposed for several locations for on-street parking. Diagonal parking was recommended opposed to parallel parking.

3. Implementation of parking management strategy; and

4. Potential introduction of valet parking.

Several suggestions for the following commercial areas were:

Worth Avenue

- Reconfiguration of parking on Worth and Peruvian Avenue;
- Implement paid parking on the street;
- Improve directional signage to parking facilities; and
- Consideration of redeveloping the Apollo Lot;

Mid-Town Area

- Modify the Police Department parking lot on Australian Avenue;
- Reconfigure parking on Brazilian Avenue;
- Introduce paid parking and valet parking in the commercial area of Mid-Town; and
- Discussion of the Gray's Sunoco area, and the Australian Avenue Town Employee Parking Lot;

Town Docks Area

- Reconfigure the parking along Lake Drive and introduce landscaping along the median, extending the parking into the roadway, and additional property would be needed in order to accomplish it;
- Retain the existing paid parking for those spaces; and
- Implement valet parking.

Responding to President Coleman, Town Manager Elwell noted that, as the parking inventory of approximately 150 spaces on South Ocean Boulevard was related to the state funding for Mid-Town Beach renourishment project, there was less flexibility to make modifications on South Ocean Boulevard, than on other streets.

Worth Avenue Area

It was the consensus of the Town Council to start traffic and parking improvements with the Worth Avenue sector.

Mr. Elwell indicated that changing parallel parking to angle parking on the streets that were wider than normal would narrow the streets and reduce the speed, which was an on-going goal of the Town.

President Pro Tem Kleid commented that he would like to hear the residents' input about angle parking, as well as information from the consultant regarding the accident rate of angle parking versus parallel parking.

Mr. Mirson's responses to President Pro Tem Kleid were:

- Narrowing the street and providing diagonal parking caused reduction in speed and traffic calming;
- Experience of implementing diagonal parking throughout the state had been successful;
- In the commercial area on Worth Avenue, parallel parking provided a buffer between a pedestrian walking on the street and cars driving by;
- There was enough space for diagonal parking on only one side of Worth Avenue, which was why parallel parking was recommended on both sides for the remaining portion of the street; and
- The aesthetics of diagonal parking provided more ability for landscaping in the corridor.

Mr. Mirson responded to Council Member Brooks that diagonal parking produced a net gain of approximately 40 to 50 % parking spaces.

Police Chief Reiter responded to Mr. Brooks, regarding diagonal parking versus parallel, indicating that he had experience with diagonal parking on Royal Poinciana Way, and agreed that it was easier to pull into and out of the parking spaces, than to parallel park, and if designed appropriately, was worthy of consideration.

William Diamond, 220 Wells Road, formerly a resident of 425 Worth Avenue, asked if Mr. Mirson consulted with the manager of the Villas Apartments, Peter McDonald, as it would substantially affect them, and the number of permit parking would be increased.

Mr. Mirson responded to Mr. Diamond that he had not received any local input from the apartment owners, however, several general meetings had been held. He affirmed that the size of the vehicles had been taken into account in determining the size of parking spaces.

President Coleman called attention to several issues:

- Parking was only part of the issue on the 100, 200 and 300 block of Worth Avenue;
- What does the Town want to do with the thoroughfare?
- Does the Town want to be more pedestrian friendly?
- Should the number of parking spaces be reduced as a tradeoff for valet parking and widening the sidewalks?
- What type of landscaping should be allowed when the opportunity was presented?
- Should the same number of parking spaces be maintained by implementing diagonal parking on one side and creating a whole new experience on Worth Avenue?

Mr. Mirson noted that it was not being suggested to change the parallel parking on the remaining area of Worth Avenue, however, it was being suggested to remove some parking by providing valet. .

Council Member Markin said she supported the consideration of diagonal parking in certain sections of the Town, and she wanted to address it one case at a time.

Town Manager Elwell noted that diagonal parking on the 400 block of Worth Avenue and Peruvian Avenue was worthy of discussion today, but that the discussion should begin on Brazilian Avenue, as it had the most parking to be gained by narrowing the travel lane and affecting the speed of the drivers in that area.

It was reaffirmed by the Council to discuss the 400 block of Worth Avenue first.

Responding to President Coleman, Mr. Mirson indicated that the diagonal parking had a standard size, which encompassed the size of a Hummer.

Responding to Council Member Markin, Mr. Mirson stated that all the right-of-way and roadway that was needed for diagonal parking was available, so that there would be no modifications on either side of the street. The policy set by the Council would determine who would use the parking spaces.

Mr. Mirson indicated that, as the lot on Peruvian Avenue was not fully utilized, there was potential to lease the space for valet parking on Worth Avenue.

Council Member Wyett suggested that the employees of Worth Avenue businesses, park on the 400 block of Worth Avenue, while maintaining the number of permit parking for the residents. He commented that much could be accomplished if there was a way to provide employees parking. He said he was not in favor of valet parking.

Walter Ross commented that obtaining nine more spaces would only cause more congested parking in the residential areas for the sake of the commercial areas. He suggested utilizing the Apollo Lot by making it a double decked lot.

Norman Goldblum commented that Worth Avenue could have a shuttle system from West Palm Beach for their employees, around the clock, similar to The Breakers Hotel's shuttle system for their employees. Parking meters could be installed in order to prevent full-time employees from parking in the spaces.

Gail Coniglio, 1139 N. Ocean Boulevard, commented that parking improvements should be as least invasive as possible, and that adding parking meters on Worth Avenue would prevent the employees from going out every two hours and removing the chalk from the tires, and would provide a great turnover in use. She discussed the additional spaces on Worth Avenue and Brazilian Avenue, and offered suggestions for valet use, and the Apollo Lot.

Council Member Markin noted that the employee parking issue on Worth Avenue was one of procedure. The employers needed to enforce with their employees where they should park, and provide employees with parking spaces, and have a procedure in place with the employees that was enforced.

Responding to President Coleman's commented related to people parking for more than one hour, Mr. Mirson explained the method of electronically chalking the tires. An electronic digital photo of the license plate was taken, and was checked again later. The Town Council would have the ability to decide what the turnover time should be.

Discussion occurred among the Town Council regarding the length of time a vehicle should be parked, if there should be a charge for parking, whether the electronic chalking method should be implemented, employee parking, and the underused Apollo parking lot on Worth Avenue.

Mayor McDonald advised the Council to obtain input from the Worth Avenue merchants before taking any action.

Kathryn Grace Jordan commented that the first priority on Worth Avenue, should be the merchants and customers visiting the shops, second, the residents, and third, the employees.

Laurel Baker, Chamber of Commerce, commented that the businesses felt that they could work with the Town on an overall plan, and that Worth Avenue, in particular, was critical to the continued image of Palm Beach. She noted that, per the Urban Land Institute, a fee schedule should be created in order to make it a draw for people who want to be on Worth Avenue, a premier destination, for more than two hours.

Ed Kassatly, second generation resident, commented that the property tax base on Worth Avenue was astronomical, and that Worth Avenue brought in approximately 10% of the Town's tax roll. The Worth Avenue merchants were unable to finance themselves any longer and needed the Town's help with parking and street beautification, etc. He requested a police officer to be stationed on Worth Avenue in order to guide traffic during emergencies, and to keep the traffic flow steady. He said that the merchants would like valet parking.

Discussion ensued regarding the needs of the merchants, and Mr. Kassatly provided input and a brief history of what the merchants had done on Worth Avenue.

Responding to Mayor McDonald, Mr. Kassatly indicated that the three most important items that the Town could contribute to Worth Avenue were:

1. Eliminate employee parking;

2. Help with valet parking and provide a police officer for the street; and

3. Whole street beautification program.

John Maus, merchant of 312 Worth Avenue, Maus and Hoffman, stated that his view was the same as Mr. Kassatly's.

President Pro Tem Kleid commented that several recommendations in the report were directly related to the employee parking. He indicated that the Council should focus and begin voting on the particular recommendations.

Council Member Markin asked how the merchants felt about bussing employees in from another location.

Responding to Council Member Markin, Mr. Kassatly noted that if any of the three lots were full, there would be a valid reason for bussing employees. Many years ago, the merchants agreed to pay a fee to the Apollo Lot, which would enable the employee to pay a reduced fee, but it was not utilized. Today, there was parking available at Nieman Marcus, Saks Fifth Avenue, Esplanade, Apollo lot, and other street parking not located on Worth Avenue.

Council Member Brooks commented that it was not practical to bus employees, as there was plenty of parking.

Council Member Wyett indicated that there were too many loading zones on Worth Avenue, and that he made a personal observation that 10 additional spaces could be obtained by reducing the number of red lines, in the loading zone area.

Mr. Maus noted that during the season, December through March, there were often two United Parcel Service (UPS) trucks, and three FedEx trucks, and that they monopolized the loading zone spaces.

President Pro Tem Kleid commented that employee parking needed to be discouraged.

Motion made by President Pro Tem Kleid, seconded by Council Member Markin to institute electronic chalking, and limit the employee parking on Worth Avenue.

President Coleman suggested that the motion be made to direct the staff to return with specifics; a time frame addressing Council Member Wyett's question; whether there should different times; implement 15 minute spaces within a block, and bring back a format.

Amended motion made by President Pro Tem Kleid, seconded by Council Member Markin that staff be directed to return with specifics, in a format, with time frames regarding parking spaces on Worth Avenue.

Council Member Brooks asked if Mr. Kleid could be more specific on the motion to include that staff provide the cost of electronic chalking, and implementation schedule; then determine time frames for the spaces, put the mechanism in place, and decide how it should be applied.

Amended motion made by President Pro Tem Kleid, seconded by Council Member Markin that staff be directed to research and return with the mechanics of electronic chalking, the effect and cost, and how it would be implemented.

Town Manager Elwell clarified staff's direction that the specifics of timing for implementation of electronic chalking and cost would be brought back to the Council. If time allowed, information would be brought regarding potential modification of the policies, as related to the amount of time for each space, and variation along the Avenue, as a package; if there was not sufficient time to do the policy advising part, staff would bring the mechanics part first.

President Pro Tem Kleid stated that he agreed with Mr. Elwell's clarification. He responded to Mr. Wyett that he would not include the red line loading areas in the motion, as it was part of the policy discussion.

Upon roll call, the motion carried unanimously.

Motion made by President Pro Tem Kleid to direct staff to bring back recommendations for changes in policy regarding handicap parking. Motion seconded by Council Member Markin.

Responding to President Coleman, Mr. Elwell explained that it was entirely appropriate that the recommendations related to handicapped parking be included in staff's report. There were pros and cons in the issue and the Town may preclude legitimate uses of the handicapped permits for people who need to have the convenience of being able to park near a store. He further explained that what was being discussed was using handicapped permits to park for an extended period in a non-handicapped space, which was a legitimate issue that fell more to the Town's policies and enforcement.

Council Member Markin suggested a requirement that employers on Worth Avenue obtain the license plate number of each of their employees and that the list then be submitted to the Town, so that enforcement could be pursued.

Town Attorney Randolph advised that an employer could require that, however, there were some concerns, from a legal standpoint, with the government requiring that information.

Gail Coniglio, 1139 North Ocean Blvd., commented that those parking illegally should be charged electronically, which was the only equitable way.

On roll call, the motion carried unanimously.

Town Manager Elwell advised that staff believed that valet parking was a key piece of the puzzle. The vision was that there would be multiple drop off and pick up locations out of the travel lanes, utilizing some of the existing on street parking in order to provide the drop off/pick up locations. There was a convenience factor for the user that would reduce congestion, and the off-street resources that now existed would be utilized. The Town would franchise the valet operation, and would oversee it as a business function franchised by the Town.

Mr. Mirson advised that the key was to ensure that the valet areas were properly laid out; the rules of engagement with the franchisee would need to be clarified.

Mr. Mirson responded to the following concerns:

- There would be a charge for valet parking.
- Validation was a critical component.
- From 6 to 12 parking spaces in the Worth Avenue corridor would be utilized.

Town Manager Elwell clarified that the concept of valet parking was being dealt with in a very different manner than it had been dealt with in the past. In the past, it was for the benefit of a particular business, and one of the goals had been to keep the drop off/pick up areas as limited as possible for those sites. Regarding the validation question, it had been the understanding of staff that the business community supported the concept.

Mr. Kassalty commented that validation stamps were used, and worked very well, however, the restaurants off Worth Avenue did not use valet parking in the daytime. He noted that the traffic congestion seemed to occur at night.

Mrs. Amy Shaughnessy, President of the Royal Poinciana Way Association, commented that the Association had held discussions regarding valet parking at the Association meetings, and that other business areas, other than Worth Avenue, would be interested in the concept.

President Pro Tem Kleid moved approval, in concept, of the valet parking on Worth Avenue, with direction that staff return with details. The motion was seconded by Council Member Markin. On roll call the motion carried unanimously.

Midtown Commercial Area:

Discussion took place regarding the renovation of the Town Hall. Town Manager Elwell advised that the Landmarks Preservation Commission would be dealing with the north facade of Town Hall, and could consider the associated parking issues, etc. He noted that there had been a number of proposals made over the years for the use of the Gray's Sunoco station area.

Discussion took place regarding the Brazilian/Australian area.

President Pro Tem Kleid moved to consider, in concept, angled parking on the 100 and 200 block of Brazilian, the 400 block of Worth Avenue, and the 200 block of Peruvian Avenue and that staff return with a more definitive plan with respect to those streets. The motion was seconded by Council Member Brooks. On roll call the motion carried unanimously.

Town Docks:

Council Member Brooks moved that discussion of the Town Docks, even in the conceptual phase, take place after the Master Plan was available. The motion was seconded by Council Member Markin. On roll call the motion carried unanimously.

B. PLANS FOR THE MEETING ON FEBRUARY 12, 2007

Town Manager Elwell clarified that additional discussion was scheduled, for February 12, 2007, to further address traffic and parking, and to give some order of magnitude financial numbers to give consideration to the longer term approaches for the Seaview/Seaspray area. He suggested that the items addressed conceptually today would be addressed in a more definitive manner sometime after February 12, 2007.

Town Manager Elwell advised that the consultant's work had gone past the initial scope of work, and there would be a proposal at the February 12th meeting to continue their services.

Deputy Town Manager Bradford commented that he had heard strong consensus regarding ways to control employee parking on Worth Avenue, however, he had not heard any discussion regarding the concept of zoned parking.

Mr. Elwell clarified that motions had been made today regarding electronic chalking, addressing the handicapped parking, and implementation of policies. Staff would take that direction to mean that further information would be provided as to broadly defined effective policies.

VI. ANY OTHER MATTERS

There were none.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the Special Town Council Meeting of January 16, 2007, was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

APPROVED:

Denis P. Coleman
Town Council President

ATTESTED:

Susan A. Eichhorn
Town Clerk