



**ARCOM WORKSHOP FOR NEW PUBLIX STORE
355 SOUTH COUNTY ROAD
3RD FLOOR, EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER**

TUESDAY, JUNE 8, 2010, 9:30 a.m.

Please be advised that in keeping with a recent directive from the Town Council, the minutes of all Town Boards and Commissions will be “abbreviated” in style. Persons interested in listening to the meeting, after the fact, may access the audio of that item via the Town’s website at www.townofpalmbeach.com or may obtain an audio recording of the meeting by contacting Cindy Delp, Secretary to the Architectural Commission at (561) 227-6408. As a point of reference, you will find the recording times listed on these minutes at the beginning of each item.

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Smith called the workshop to order at 9:33 a.m. and welcomed all to the workshop devoted to the proposed new Publix store. Members present were as follows: Jeffery W. Smith, Chairman, William J. Strawbridge Jr., Vice Chairman, Members - Leslie C. Diver, Nikita Zukov, and Kenn Karakul, and Alternate Members Ann L. Vanneck and Peter I.C. Knowles II. Staff members present were John Page, Director of Planning, Zoning & Building, John Lindgren, Planning Administrator, and Cynthia Delp, Secretary to the Architectural Commission.

Chairman Smith announced that this is a workshop, and while the public was welcome to attend and listen, no audience participation or comment would be permitted. The workshop was set up as a venue to work with the Publix architects and engineers, and other members of the Publix team, having a free exchange of ideas to arrive at an improved design for the store to be presented at an upcoming meeting of the Architectural Commission. Any public comments will be entertained when the Publix project is heard again at a regular ARCOM meeting.

All persons stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. WORKSHOP FOR NEW PUBLIX STORE(9:31:34 a.m.)

Mrs. Delp administered the oath to all those who wished to testify today.

Attorney Maura Ziska, for Publix, thanked the commission for the opportunity to participate in the workshop, and turned the microphone over to the Publix architect, Brian Fisher. Mr. Fisher discussed the genesis of the project to construct a new Publix store to address the problems with the existing 40 year old store and respond to the needs and wants of today's Palm Beach Publix customers. After study, Publix determined the size of the store which was needed; purchased some adjacent properties to move the plan forward; and began the design process to place the mass of the store on the site, bring it up to minimum flood elevation of 7.5 ft. (currently at 5.25 ft.), provide for a generator, and address parking concerns. He noted that the parking, as last proposed, is approximately 25-30 cars short of the number which Publix normally requests.

In the midst of Mr. Fisher's remarks about the design intent and philosophy, and the progress of the project thus far, certain issues were interjected, i.e., recommendation to avoid the need for the proposed wider aisles (contributing to larger store) by using smaller carts; and, recommendation for more checkout personnel, rather than more checkout lanes as proposed (contributing to larger store). Mr. Fisher noted some reasons for the increase in the size of the store: Some additional merchandise aisles are being added to get merchandise off the floor, increased number of checkout lanes, increased square footage at the bakery and deli areas, additional display and storage areas for organic foods, additional space for cheeses, etc.

Mr. Fisher stated that rehabilitation of the existing store was not considered due to the need to address the slab elevation, the need for a generator, and the need to address parking concerns.

The first plan presented at ARCOM failed largely due to the concerns of the Palm Beach Hotel, a Sunrise Avenue neighboring building. The second plan presented in May moved the mass closer to Sunrise Avenue, and while it was not approved, the commission saw it as an improvement from the first design.

The commission began to focus on the size of the store, questioning whether the proposed 10,000 sq. ft. increase was warranted. Mr. Smith reminded the members that in a poll taken at the May meeting, all members present were in favor of a larger store, except Mr. Gruss who stated he would only vote for a larger store if the architecture was outstanding. Various members made similar comments to the effect that there is a sufficient amount of merchandise sold at the Palm Beach Publix which is inappropriate in a Palm Beach store, i.e., beach towels, chairs, and umbrellas, ping pong balls, watches, entire aisles full of sugary cereals, entire aisles full of paper products, pots and pans, just to name a few. If Publix were to discontinue carrying this merchandise, in theory, space within the store would become available, so perhaps such a large store would not be needed. Most members also felt that such merchandise (not being purchased by Palm Beachers) does not need to be carried in the store as an attraction for off-island customers. Another member acknowledged the fact that non-Palm Beachers patronize the store as well. Publix representatives responded that the products stocked are dictated by product sales supported by 40 years of collected data, and that the Palm Beach store is 70-71% Town-serving currently.

Members requested that the store be re-designed to be 10%-15% smaller. Publix representatives responded that such a cut would not permit the products that customers want to be added to the store, such as organic products, for example. Members re-stated that any decrease in size of the store would be welcomed. "Get the right mix of product for our community in a smaller box."

Hank Porcher, Publix Development Team, responded that Publix uses years of data to ensure that their stores are being run as efficiently as possible. Smaller prototypes have not worked, not only for Publix, but for other chains. He maintained that the proposed design (in development for 2-1/2 years) of the Palm Beach store recognizes the unique character of Palm Beach.

Members requested that an updated model be brought back for the next presentation.

Next, the discussion moved on to site planning issues. Mr. Fisher presented a new site plan showing a mix of angled parking and 90 degree parking which reduces the number of parking spaces from the former 207 to 201 spaces. The number of handicapped spaces will increase from 4 to 7. Driveways are primarily one way, with a minimum number of two way drives, very similar to the existing driving condition on the site. The pedestrian walkway in the middle of the parking area has been eliminated. Mr. Fisher also showed an option with all 90 degree parking with two way drives which would yield 217 spaces.

Let the record show that there was a short recess called at 11:19 a.m., after which the discussion related to the site plan resumed. (Back at 11:33 a.m.)

At this point, each of members weighed in relative to angled and 90 degree parking versus all 90 degree parking. All members, except Mr. Zukov, preferred the mix of angled and 90 degree parking. Mr. Zukov strenuously objected to mixing angled parking with 90 degree parking, based on his 40 years of work experience designing shopping centers. He maintained that 90 degree parking always provides a safer option.

It should be noted that in the midst of the site plan discussion, the Fire Marshal, Tim Pompos, questioned the applicant about ingress/egress for emergency vehicles. He also commented that the interior store aisles should not be too narrow, especially because of emergency situations where evacuation might be required.

Dave Taulbee from Publix commented regarding the interior function of the store. Having heard the earlier commission opinions relative to size and merchandising, Mr. Taulbee stated unequivocally that the store, in the size as proposed, is what Publix needs to make the store work to provide both conventional and green wise products, and they are not interested in decreasing the size of the store. This was the first time such a statement had been made by the applicant, and members saw this as "a line drawn in the sand." Publix representatives wanted the discussion to leave the subject of size and enter into architectural concerns. Mr. Taulbee commented that it is very difficult to move to architecture if the discussion dwells upon size. The commission reminded the applicant of all of the public concern relative to the new Publix store and the many e-mails asking that the store be kept small or kept the way it is. After more discussion, the commission strongly advised the applicant that they will need to do exemplary architecture to avoid the subject of size coming up again.

The discussion moved to architecture and materials. The commission advised the applicant to use "real" materials in order to get an approval. Other suggestions - move the mechanical equipment to the center of the roof to allow for changes to the towers; use the towers the way they come off the ground and use them as an entry; open towers; re-study the columns to make them true columns; the second floor arched windows are too close to the roofline; light fixtures are out of scale; do a carved Publix sign instead of the typical Publix sign; don't do segmented arches; look to the architecture of the Everglades Club, Via Parigi, Town Hall, and/or the 300 block of Worth Avenue for

examples to follow; look at the Public School as an example of disastrous architecture which was forced upon the Town and should never happen again; break up the Sunrise arcade; the articulation underneath the arcade is important; go for a European village look; break up the roofline; don't worry about the number of variances you might need to achieve exemplary architecture; it would be good to lower the box at spots; OK to give up a few parking spaces for more shade trees; look at the tiled architectural buildings in Portugal when considering tower treatments; and, try to make the interior exceptional as well for a great shopping experience.

In summary, the commission was happy with the progress made thus far...moving the building to the north was viewed as a positive change, and the parking for the site is likewise improved. The members attempted to impress upon the applicant how passionate the residents are about this project, so this process, though lengthy, is essential to arrive at the best solution for the Town and for Publix.

Mr. Fisher indicated that since the next ARCOM meeting is fast approaching, they will most likely need to request a deferral to the July meeting.

III. ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at approximately 12:06 p.m.

Members were taken over to the new Town Council Chambers for an orientation to the new equipment.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeffery W. Smith, Chairman
ARCHITECTURAL COMMISSION

cmd