WORTH AVENUE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT REVIEW COMMITTEE
MONDAY, AUGUST 31, 2009, 10:30 a.m.
AT THE EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER
THIRD FLOOR
CENTRAL FIRE STATION
355 SOUTH COUNTY ROAD

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 Worth Avenue Improvement Project Review Committee 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 AND ROLL CALL (10:30:39 a.m.)

Chairman Strawbridge called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m. All members of the Worth Avenue Improvement Project Committee were present, excepting Mrs. Golino, whose absence is pending classification. Staff members present were Thomas Bradford, Deputy Town Manager, John Page, Director of Planning Zoning & Building, Chuck Langley, Assistant Director, Public Works Department, and Cynthia Delp, Secretary to the Worth Avenue Improvement Project Committee.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA (10:31:07 a.m.)

MOTION BY MR. PANDULA FOR APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA.
MOTION SECONDED BY MR. SMITH.
MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES (10:31:29 a.m.)

A) Minutes of Committee Meeting on July 20, 2009

MOTION BY MR. SMITH FOR APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES.
MOTION SECONDED BY MS. DIVER.
MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

IV. PRESENTATION OF UPDATED PLANS FOR THE WORTH AVENUE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT [Harvey Oyer, Shutts & Bowen; Mark Marsh, Bridges, Marsh & Associates; Jorge Sanchez, Sanchez and Maddux](10:31:44 a.m.)

Mr. Bill Diamond, 220 Wells Road, expressed his concern that the assessments for the project might fall on residential tenants as well. He felt this would be an unfair burden upon these residents. Mr. Bradford responded that they are looking into this issue in the hope to either significantly reduce or totally eliminate an assessment for this group of residents.

Attorney Harvey Oyer described the process of the project to date and thanked everyone for their valuable input. He noted that since the last meeting, in conjunction with input received, the project design has been refined. The end result is the design team's best option for most safety and aesthetics while keeping costs in line. The project is scheduled to break ground on May 1, 2010 and will be completed by the end of the summer. Mr. Oyer read certain portions of an August 26, 2009 letter from Bridges, Marsh and Associates to the Worth Avenue Improvement Project Review Committee which outlined the elements of the design plan.

Mark Marsh of Bridges, Marsh & Associates, Jorge Sanchez of Sanchez & Maddux Landscape Architects, and Kevin Shannon of Kimley-Horn Engineers presented the refined project. Ultimately, the decision was made for parallel parking on both sides of Worth Avenue along with two 20 ft. wide lanes of traffic. Mr. Shannon discussed the engineering aspects of the plan including safer and more attractive sidewalks and crosswalks, a reduction in the number of loading zones per block, improvements to fire hydrants along the avenue, the removal of non-conforming parking spaces, and changes to the major intersections. Jorge Sanchez discussed paving materials for crosswalks and sidewalks, landscaping and lighting along the avenue, and the two piers with gas lights which are planned for the East end of Worth Avenue. Mark Marsh reviewed each of the major intersections. He showed several contemplated designs for a structural element on the ocean side of the East end of Worth Avenue, but noted that it is a 27 ft. high clocktower on a 10 ft. x 10 ft. base which is the choice of the design team. The clocktower will serve to mark Worth Avenue for persons travelling on South Ocean Boulevard. Mr. Marsh noted that the "living wall" to be placed on the Saks facade and in Triangle Park will require a structure for support, and this issue is being investigated. At the Hibiscus and Worth intersection, Mr. Marsh discussed changes to the fountain and the fact that entrances to the Apollo lot will remain the same, but with an upgrade to the "parking lot shack". Renderings of the project were shown including all of the proposed changes.

V. CONSIDERATION OF COMMITTEE APPROVAL RECOMMENDATION TO THE TOWN COUNCIL FOR THE UPDATED WORTH AVENUE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT PLANS(12:07:39 a.m.)

Mr. Smith stated that, because of the current configuration of the island on Hibiscus Avenue, it will be a huge inconvenience for those who cannot find parking on Worth Avenue, who then turn onto Peruvian Avenue expecting to be able to turn into the Apollo lot from Hibiscus. This will cause these vehicles to have to go around the block turning right on South County Road, right on Worth Avenue, and then right again on Hibiscus Avenue, thereby creating more traffic on Worth Avenue. It was suggested that either the size of the island be reduced, or that an entrance be created from Peruvian into the Apollo lot, but the latter is outside the scope of the project. Due to the objections from Mr. Smith and others on the committee, Mr. Marsh agreed to study this further. Mr. Smith was not in favor of the clocktower, recommending a paving alternative instead. He expressed concern about the proposed tall palm tree trunks together with a lack of flowers on the avenue; and, cautioned against the use of simulated coquina in the crosswalks because this material will become dirty very fast.

Mr. Rogers and Ms. Diver spoke in support of the project, and Ms. Diver suggested that convenience may have to be sacrificed for beauty.

Mr. Pandula likewise spoke in favor of the project as presented. He recommended that the proposed clock tower be made a "jewel box"; that the piers be lower on the East end of Worth Avenue; and, that there needs to be a maintenance program for potted plants along the avenue.

Mr. Kleid, 2660 South Ocean Boulevard, brought up the subject of public restrooms on the avenue and improving utilities on the avenue, questioning whether the plans allow for power stations for battery driven cars. Mr. Oyer responded relative to the public restrooms stating that many agree they are needed, but the location and daily ongoing maintenance issues related to bathrooms are significant issues to resolve. Regarding utilities, Florida Public Utilities would like to upgrade their services, and the project includes undergrounding the FPL lines which are in the sight line. Mr. Oyer felt that the electric service contemplated on the avenue would accommodate battery driven cars.

Mrs. Coniglio, 1139 North Ocean Boulevard, thanked the Worth Avenue Association, the merchants and property owners for undertaking this project which will be a vast improvement to the Town. She spoke in favor of the clock tower, and recommended plantings at the base of the palm trees to add additional color. Mrs. Coniglio expressed her disappointment that public restrooms were not part of the project, and that not all electric lines will be undergrounded.

Mr. Bradford explained that a partial undergrounding was included in the project as a compromise because a total undergrounding would have been cost prohibitive. He noted that even if a total undergrounding were to be done, that would not guarantee the area against power outages.

Mr. Eigelberger echoed Mr. Smith's opinions about accessing the Apollo lot. He also called for an ongoing routine maintenance program to water plants, pressure clean sidewalks, etc. Mr. Bradford responded that it will be recommended to the Town Council that maintenance issues be handled by a Business Improvement District (BID). Mr. Eigelberger suggested that angled parking be considered for the South side of Peruvian Avenue where it would be most helpful. Regarding landscaping, he noted that there are many ways to add green to the trunks of the palm trees on Worth Avenue.

MOTION BY MR. EIGELBERGER THAT WITH THOSE TWO MINOR CHANGES, (CONCERNING ACCESSIBILITY INTO THE APOLLO LOT AND THE NEED FOR AN ONGOING MAINTENANCE PROGRAM FOR PLANTS AND SIDEWALK CLEANING, ETC.) THIS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS THAT THIS PROJECT GO TO THE TOWN COUNCIL FOR APPROVAL.

MOTION SECONDED BY MS. DIVER.

Mr. Smith asked that the record reflect his objection to the clock tower, even though he supports the project as a whole.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

VI. ANY OTHER MATTERS

Mr. Strawbridge took this opportunity to recognize Major Dan Szarszewski, Police Department, Tim Pompos, Division Chief, Fire-Rescue Department, and Chuck Langley, Assistant Director, Public Works Department, for their very forthright input and commentary during this review process.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION BY MR. SMITH TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 12:10 P.M.
MOTION SECONDED BY MR. ROGERS.
MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted,

William J. Strawbridge Jr., Chairman
Worth Avenue Improvement Project Review Committee

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