

**WORTH AVENUE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING
MONDAY, JULY 20, 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(10:30:06 a.m.)

Chairman Strawbridge called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m. All members of the Worth Avenue Improvement Project Review Committee were present, excepting Eugene Pandula (unexcused absence) and Robert Eigelberger (unexcused absence). Staff members present were Thomas Bradford, Deputy Town Manager, John Page, Director of Planning, Zoning & Building, Major Dan Szarszewski, Police Department, Tim Pompos, Division Chief, Fire-Rescue Department, Chuck Langley, Assistant Director, Public Works Department, and Cynthia Delp, Secretary to the Worth Avenue Improvement Project Review Committee.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

**MOTION FOR APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA BY MRS. GOLINO.
MOTION SECONDED BY MR. ROGERS.
MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A) Minutes of Committee Meeting on June 11, 2009

**MOTION BY MRS. GOLINO FOR APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES.
MOTION SECONDED BY MS. DIVER.
MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

IV. TOWN DEPARTMENTAL COMMENTS RELATIVE TO THE PRELIMINARY PLANS FOR THE WORTH AVENUE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

Mr. Strawbridge reminded all speakers to speak into a microphone because the meeting was being recorded. Secondly, he apologized to Mr. Eigelberger for his response, at the last meeting, to Mr. Eigelberger's expressed concerns about the proposal.

A) Police Department - Dan Szarszewski, Major

Major Szarszewski testified that upon initial review of the proposal, the Police Department was opposed to a single lane of traffic on Worth Avenue in consideration of emergency response time. The Police Department does not oppose either parallel or angled parking. After meeting with the architect, the design was altered increasing the single lane to 16 ft. in width which was acceptable to the Police Dept. This would allow two vehicles to pass side by side, but with only one designated lane of traffic, such passing would be a violation of the law. In summary, the Police Department was concerned about response time, and will accept the committee's ruling on the single 16 ft. wide lane, if that is the ultimate decision.

B) Fire-Rescue Department - Tim Pompos, Division Chief

Tim Pompos, Fire Marshal, testified that a reduction from two lanes to one lane on Worth Avenue would hamper Fire and EMS response time. The original plan (a single 14.5 ft. wide lane) is not feasible, but angled or parallel parking with a single 16 ft. wide lane might work. The standard size lane, per the Fire Prevention Code and the NFPA Uniform Fire Code, is required to be 20 ft. wide. The Fire Marshal may allow an exception to this code provision, however. The Fire Department recommends, with acceptance of a single 16 ft. wide lane, that there be a fire hydrant at every crosswalk, every corner, and every 400 ft. or less to help mitigate Fire and EMS calls. Mr. Pompos recommended against speed bumps or traffic calming devices on Worth Avenue. He also asked that the plans include measures to provide free access to Fire Department connections to help response times.

C) Public Works Department - Chuck Langley, Assistant Director

Mr. Langley expressed concern about the concept of a 14.5 ft. wide traffic lane, and suggested that perhaps even 16 ft. in width may not be sufficient when garbage collection trucks are on the avenue. He had reservations about angled parking as most communities are eliminating angled parking because of difficulties in backing out into traffic. Another concern with angled parking arises from the sawtooth curb configuration which will collect dirt and will require manual cleaning. With a sawtooth curb, Public Works would encourage local maintenance of the curb cleaning. In summary, Public Works prefers the maintenance of two traffic lanes and parallel parking on Worth Avenue. Wider

sidewalks could be accomplished by narrowing the two lanes of traffic.

Bill Diamond, 220 Wells Road, spoke on behalf of friends, the Webbs, who reside at 389 South Lake Drive. The Webbs sent a note to Mr. Diamond, which he read into the record, wherein they expressed concern over the plan to change the parking and traffic lanes on Worth Avenue.

Mrs. Golino expressed concern over what might be perceived as the Town encouraging illegal passing in a 16 ft. wide single lane on Worth Avenue, pursuant to Major Szarszewski's earlier comments. With respect to the Fire Department comments, she commented that the Town should not approve a plan which goes against existing code provisions. Lastly, liability is a big concern as it relates to persons who drive a small car and find it difficult to back up, and to anticipated increases in emergency response times.

Mr. Rogers questioned if the existing conditions pose problems now. The Police Department, Fire Department, and Public Works representatives responded that they were happy with the existing conditions, however, Mr. Langley recommended pedestrian improvements like shorter crosswalks.

Mr. Langley assured Ms. Diver that a 16 ft. wide single lane is legal, and Mr. Pompos indicated that 16 ft. is sufficient, but 18-19 ft. is preferred.

Jeff Smith stated that he has a problem with angled parking and one lane of traffic; that the Fire Department and Police Department clearly prefer two lanes of traffic; that one lane of traffic would pose a big problem; that sawtooth curbing creates a new problem; that Worth Avenue has been copied all over the world for its intimacy; and, recommended aesthetic changes rather than functional changes.

Mr. Strawbridge reminded everyone that the role of the committee is aesthetic review, rather than issues concerning legalities and liability. Mr. Bradford responded that it is the responsibility of staff and consultants to deliver a product that meets code requirements.

Mrs. Webb, who resides at the corner of South Lake Drive and Peruvian Avenue, commented that Worth Avenue is an obstacle course during season. She felt that this project will ruin Worth Avenue, and that shoppers will be very unhappy. Mrs. Webb maintained that Worth Avenue is a through street, not just a shopping street.

V. **PRESENTATION OF UPDATED PLANS FOR THE WORTH AVENUE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT** [Harvey Oyer, Shutts & Bowen; Mark Marsh, Bridges, Marsh & Associates; Jorge Sanchez, Sanchez and Maddux]

Attorney Harvey Oyer reintroduced the project, explaining the need for the project and the desired goals of the project. Since the June meeting, the design team has attempted to address the concerns of the committee and staff to arrive at a revised presentation for review today. Architect Mark Marsh introduced other members of the design team, Fred Schwartz, Engineer, Kimley-Horn, Jorge Sanchez, Sanchez & Maddux, Kevin Shannon and Adam Kerr, Kimley-Horn, and Hollis Tidwell, Bridges March & Associates. Mr. Schwartz showed examples of streets in other communities which utilize angled parking on streets of varying widths. He indicated that wider streets typically result in increased speed, and an increased number and severity of accidents.

Mr. Schwartz and Mr. Marsh presented four design options, as follows:

Option 1: Angled parking North; parallel parking South; (1) 16 ft. lane (provides 155 parking spaces)

Option 2: Angled parking North; No parking South; (1) 16 ft. lane (worst for parking space count - 94 spaces)

Option 3: Parallel parking North & South; (1) 16 ft. lane; increased sidewalk width with nodes at crosswalks (provides 136 spaces with more sidewalk)

Option 4: Mix of angled and parallel parking (by block) - a hybrid (provides 138 spaces with more sidewalks)

Please note that all options include parallel curbing (no sawtooth). Loading/unloading is still under discussion with options for one space per block, time certain deliveries, and a satellite depot located in the Apollo lot.

Mr. Marsh discussed the four different zones included in the Worth Avenue Improvement Project. Once again, he proposed a clocktower element (two different designs) to be located on the East side of South Ocean Boulevard at Worth Avenue which would serve to mark the location of Worth Avenue. On the west side of South Ocean Boulevard at Worth Avenue, piers are proposed to mark the entrance to Worth Avenue. Design options were presented for the piers. Jorge Sanchez discussed landscape/hardscape issues. Lighting for the avenue is still being studied. The subject of creating public restrooms for avenue shoppers was discussed at length. No decisions were reached, but no committee members were against the concept of having public restrooms on Worth Avenue.

Questions and comments were heard from the committee members, Mr. Diamond, and John Ripley.

Committee comments are as follows:

The avenue has functioned well for over 40 years.

The existing scale and closeness make Worth Avenue special.

There is no guarantee that this proposal will work when effected.

One lane of traffic will not work.

Look at 2 lanes with parallel parking on both sides.

Add as much to the sidewalks as possible.

Break up the parking.

Re-examine the clocktower.

Narrowing Worth Avenue is not practical.

The concept of going from two lanes to one lane in the 100 block of Worth Avenue is problematic.

The Town Council spent money on consultants to change the traffic pattern at the Day School and it proved to be a disaster and was changed back again within a month.

The existing traffic pattern on Worth Avenue works fine and should not be changed.

The piers at the East end of Worth Avenue are nice, but do not cross Worth Avenue to create another marker, i.e., the clocktower.

Widening the sidewalks is less important than improving the landscaping.

Shorten the crosswalks to slow down traffic.

The nodes at the crosswalks are beautiful.

Make sure there is enough shade available.

Instead of a clocktower, find a landscape solution to act as a marker.

Paving across the intersection of Worth Avenue and South Ocean Boulevard is fine.

All members opposed angled parking.

Stefan Richter, 159 Dunbar Road, stated that he has a store on Worth Avenue and represents the Worth Avenue Association. The merchants would like two lanes of traffic narrowed slightly to provide 1.5 feet additional to each sidewalk to allow for additional landscaping. The merchants are also in favor of parallel parking, the piers, no clocktower, and the elimination of a few parking spaces at the East end of Worth Avenue to allow for more landscaping to help create a grand entrance to Worth Avenue.

Mrs. Webb objected to cocoanut palms with a 30 ft. trunk, recommending instead that the palms be planted to make the street beautiful at the pedestrian level.

Mr. Bradford stated that the Town would like a recommendation from this committee as soon as possible, and no later than September.

The next meeting was tentatively scheduled for August 27, 2009 at 10:30 a.m., depending on availability of a quorum. (Please note that this was subsequently changed to Monday, August 31, 2009 at 10:30 a.m.)

VI. ANY OTHER MATTERS

VII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 12:32 p.m. without benefit of a motion.

Respectfully submitted,

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

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