

**WORTH AVENUE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING
THURSDAY, JUNE 11, 2009, 9:30 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 (9:30:05 a.m.)

The meeting was called to order by Tom Bradford, Deputy Town Manager at 9:30 a.m. Mrs. Delp called the roll which revealed the following members in attendance: Eugene Pandula, Joanna Golino, Wallace Rogers, William J. Strawbridge, and Leslie C. Diver. It should be noted that Robert T. Eigelberger arrived at 9:54 a.m. Jeffery W. Smith was absent.

Staff members present were John C. Randolph, Town Attorney, Tom Bradford, Deputy Town Manager, John Page, Director of Planning, Zoning & Building, and Cindy Delp, Secretary to the Worth Avenue Improvement Project Review Committee.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA (9:31:04 a.m.)

Mr. Bradford asked if there were any additions or corrections to the agenda. Hearing none, Mr. Bradford indicated that the agenda is approved as submitted.

III. OVERVIEW OF WORTH AVENUE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT REVIEW COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES [Thomas G. Bradford, Deputy Town Manager] (9:31:30 a.m.)

Mr. Bradford stated that the general rules and procedures of the Landmarks Preservation Commission will be followed with regard to this project. All State laws, including the

Sunshine Law, are applicable. The committee membership includes 4 members of the Landmarks Preservation Commission and 3 members of the Architectural Commission. A Chairman and Vice Chairman will be elected to facilitate the meetings. This meeting of the committee is being held in response to the filing of an Application for Certificate of Appropriateness. The duties of the committee are to review the project, convening as many times as is necessary, with a quorum, to enable the project to remain on schedule, together with making any necessary recommendations to the Mayor and Town Council relative to the project.

IV. ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR OF THE WORTH AVENUE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT REVIEW COMMITTEE [Thomas G. Bradford, Deputy Town Manager] (9:34:57 a.m.)

Ms. Diver nominated Mr. Pandula as Chairman, and the nomination was seconded by Mr. Strawbridge. Mr. Pandula declined the nomination, however, due to other responsibilities, but he indicated that he would accept a Vice Chairman position. Ms. Diver nominated Mr. Strawbridge as Chairman. The nomination was seconded simultaneously by Mr. Pandula and Mrs. Golino, and carried unanimously upon a roll call vote. Ms. Diver nominated Mr. Pandula for Vice Chairman, which was seconded by Mrs. Golino, and carried unanimously (without a roll call vote).

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V. **PRESENTATION OF THE PRELIMINARY PLANS FOR THE WORTH AVENUE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT [Harvey Oyer, Shutts & Bowen; Mark Marsh, Bridges, Marsh & Associates; Jorge Sanchez, Sanchez and Maddux] (9:37:00 a.m.)**

Attorney Harvey Oyer explained that he was engaged by a number of property owners, “that constituted between 70 and 75% of the lineal ownership of the avenue (Worth Avenue)” to find a way to undertake improvements to benefit the avenue and the surrounding areas. Other members of the team working on this project are Bridges Marsh and Associates (Architects), Jorge Sanchez, President of Sanchez and Maddux (Landscape Architects), Adam Kerr, P.E. of Kimley-Horn and Associates Inc. (Engineers) and Don Daniels, Surveyor. Mr. Oyer explained that this is a Town project which was initiated by the property owners, but will not be controlled by the property owners.

Mr. Oyer clarified that the vias along Worth Avenue are not included in the project. The project seeks to improve the public right of way including the private property (first 5 feet) abutting the public right of way. Mr. Oyer outlined the geographical boundaries of the project.

Mr. Marsh introduced and thanked the members of the design team, and also Jane Day, Town Historic Preservation Consultant, for their efforts toward the project. He explained that a preliminary improvement plan will be presented today to solicit feedback from the committee. Mr. Marsh showed several historical photographs illustrating how the avenue has changed over the course of time. Study has revealed the importance of Coconut Palms and bougainvillea to the avenue, the angled parking of the past, the importance of awnings along the avenue, and approximately 30%-35% of the structures on the avenue which have been landmarked which form the architectural strength of the avenue. Mr. Marsh explained that the avenue began to be negatively impacted in the early 60’s, with its traffic pattern and the introduction of Christmas palms to the avenue. The project will deal with Worth Avenue as a whole from South Ocean Boulevard to Coconut Row. Project goals are to have all properties benefit equally from the improvements, to slow down the traffic on the avenue so people can fully appreciate its beauty, and to achieve as much parking on the avenue as possible.

Mr. Marsh presented changes to four specific areas along the avenue as follows:

Intersection of South Ocean Boulevard and Worth Avenue

Create an architectural feature to be placed on the East side of South Ocean Boulevard at Worth Avenue to mark the avenue. An arcaded clock tower topped by a weather vane was proposed. Create piers at the east end of Worth Avenue (West side of South Ocean Blvd.) Jorge Sanchez presented landscape/hardscape improvements for the 100 block of the avenue, with an emphasis on Coconut Palms and traditional simulated coquina for the sidewalks and crosswalks. Two lanes of traffic will be maintained in a portion of the 100 block of Worth Avenue, and beach parking will be removed on the North and South sides.

Intersection at South County Road and Worth Avenue

Create a park, now referred to as “Triangle Park” on the Southeast corner of Worth

Avenue and South County Road, to provide shade and a place for persons to stop and gather. The artist, Patrick Blanc, will create a “living wall” on the west façade of the Saks building, within the proposed Triangle Park. Introduce bougainvillea to this East end of the avenue to match the West end. It was mentioned later in the presentation that plans include improvements to paving and landscape on South County Road from Peruvian Avenue South to the Colony Hotel.

Intersection at Hibiscus Avenue and Worth Avenue

Create a shaded, canopied piazza with fountains and a pool within the right of way from Worth Avenue to Peruvian Avenue where persons could sit and congregate. This includes removal of the parking along Hibiscus Avenue from Worth Avenue to Peruvian Avenue, but vehicular traffic will remain on either side of the piazza. Study removal of the existing Apollo Parking ingress/egress on Hibiscus, and relocate it to Peruvian Avenue. Attempts will be made to encourage the owner of the Apollo Parking lot to allow for new retail buildings along Hibiscus Avenue to mirror the West side of the street.

Intersection at Coconut Row and Worth Avenue

Plant Coconut Palms along the East side of Coconut Row up to Peruvian Avenue.

Mr. Marsh discussed pedestrian improvements to the avenue including more pedestrian crossings with “nodes” having benches and landscaping to provide seating and shade. Several bench styles are being considered, but those with a back are the early favorites. As a result of the nodes, pedestrian crossings are shortened in length providing more safety for pedestrians.

Mr. Marsh discussed the proposed angled parking. It is proposed in a saw tooth configuration which allows for wider sidewalks (more walking room provided) because planted trees move out into the triangulated areas created as a result of the saw tooth design.

Adam Kerr of Kimley-Horn and Associates stated that a goal of the proposal is to slow down the traffic on Worth Avenue to enhance the pedestrian experience. The proposed angled parking is appropriate in downtown, low speed streets with little “through traffic” like Worth Avenue. Existing parking on Worth Avenue totals 155 spaces (parking and loading spaces). Angled parking will provide wider spaces and would increase the number of parking spaces to 170 spaces, and that takes into account the removal of some parking on Hibiscus Avenue and at the east end of Worth Avenue. It is important to note, however, that the angled parking is proposed for only the North side of Worth Avenue, while parallel parking will remain on the South side. It should be noted that the Worth Avenue traffic lanes will continue as two lanes for the east 100 yards of Worth Avenue, but then change to a wider, single traffic lane from that point West to Coconut Row.

Mr. Marsh stated there have been complaints about too many delivery vehicles on Worth Avenue, so the proposal includes limiting the time that such loading/unloading can take place on the avenue. It has also been contemplated to establish a load/unload area in the

Apollo Parking lot (off Worth Avenue) and then to allow pickup and delivery to and from merchants through the use of electric carts, etc.

Ms. Inga Bowdry, who worked on the avenue for 35 years, stated that it will not work to try to limit delivery vehicle parking to a few hours per day. She spoke in favor of the Apollo lot load/unload area.

As Mr. Marsh concluded his presentation, Mr. Strawbridge asked for comments and questions from the committee. While there were an overwhelming number of very positive comments regarding the proposal, issues raised were as follows:

- Clear trunk height of proposed Coconut Palms
- Difficulty backing out of angled parking spaces
- Maintaining sight line at “nodes”/crosswalks
- Give the entrance to Worth Avenue (at South Ocean Boulevard) more emphasis than the clock tower design presented
- Necessity for public restrooms on or near Worth Avenue
- Whether to regulate consistency on Worth Avenue with regard to pots, vases, awnings, etc. versus allowing for individual expressions by each tenant
- Suggestion to maintain parallel parking on both sides of Worth Avenue and eliminate 14 delivery spaces on Worth Avenue, instead of introducing angled parking to gain 15 parking spaces.
- Adamant opposition by one member to changing from two traffic lanes to one traffic lane on Worth Avenue
- Regardless of pots or awnings, sidewalk paving patterns should match on Worth Avenue.
- Expand the area for improved paving materials and wall finishes at the proposed architectural element at the Worth Avenue gateway to establish a broadened anchor for the architectural element
- Equipment necessary to facilitate a potential increase in the number of electric cars.
- Curb stops necessary for angled parking are not attractive and are a potential tripping hazard
- Keep the Coconut Palms on axis
- How to handle valet parking on Worth Avenue
- Lighting on Worth Avenue
- Outdoor dining on Worth Avenue

During discussion, Mr. Marsh noted that the project is scheduled to begin in May of 2010 and is proposed to complete by November of the same year. Mr. Bradford stated that this is an assessment project and it will be paid for by the property owners in the Worth Avenue Improvement District as a non-ad valorem assessment. Mr. Bradford explained how the project will be funded. The total estimated budget for the project is slightly over \$ 14,000,000, with an annual debt service of \$ 999,000. It was noted that the Town owns one of the parcels in the district and will have to pay its appropriate share of the total costs.

John Ripley of the Preservation Foundation spoke in favor of the project and the possibility of creating a historic district in this area.

Councilman Kleid stated that he is very enthusiastic about the plan, but he has a concern, due to State requirements, about the proposed removal of public parking on the east end of Worth Avenue.

Attorney Harvey Oyer embellished on the suggested historic district for Worth Avenue. A consultant has been engaged to evaluate the area as an historic district. At this point, the consultant has submitted a draft report indicating that the 100 block of Worth Avenue does not qualify for designation; that the 200 block of Worth Avenue includes a sufficient number of worthy structures to merit designation; and, the 300 block of Worth Avenue is almost 100% worthy of designation.

Mr. Strawbridge thanked the design team for their presentation. Mr. Bradford indicated that another meeting of the committee will be scheduled when the team is ready to make another presentation with updated information.

The subject of angled parking on Worth Avenue was raised again causing the committee to take a straw poll, as follows:

Ms. Diver: No problem with angled parking

Mr. Eigelberger: Vehemently opposed to angled parking on Worth Avenue. Acceptable on Peruvian Avenue, however.

Mr. Strawbridge: No problem with angled parking

Mr. Pandula: Fine with angled parking

Mrs. Golino: Has concerns with angled parking, but is in favor of pursuing it with her concerns addressed

Mr. Rogers: No problem with angled parking

Mr. Oyer responded to Mr. Eigelberger's suggestion for angled parking on Peruvian Avenue by saying that while it may be a great idea to have angled parking on Peruvian Avenue, it is not part of the Worth Avenue Improvement District.

It was clarified that this committee will make recommendations to the Town Council relative to this proposal, but the Town Council will make any final approvals.

VI. ANY OTHER MATTERS(11:33:14 a.m.)

VII. ADJOURNMENT(11:33:18 a.m.)

**MOTION BY MR. PANDULA TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 11:33 A.M.
MOTION SECONDED BY MRS. GOLINO.
MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Respectfully submitted,

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

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