



**Town of Surfside
Town Commission Workshop
MINUTES
April 2, 2024
2:00 PM
Manny Crawford Conference Room**

1. Opening

1.A Call to Order

Mayor Burkett called the meeting to order at 2:02 p.m.

1.B Roll Call of Members

Town Clerk McCready called the roll with the following members present.

Present: Mayor Charles W. Burkett, Vice Mayor Tina Paul, Commissioner Ruben Coto, Commissioner Nelly Velasquez, and Commissioner Gerardo Vildostegui.

Also Present: Interim Town Attorney Mark Blumstein and Town Manager Hector Gomez.

1.C Pledge of Allegiance

Interim Town Attorney Blumstein led the pledge of allegiance.

2. Mayor, Commission and Staff Communication

2.A Discussion on Town Projects - Hector Gomez, Town Manager

Mayor Burkett opened the meeting and gave the floor to the Town Manager.

Town Manager Gomez informed the Town Commission that there are members of the public via zoom.

Town Manager Gomez stated that he will be providing an overview of the different projects beginning with the Capital Improvement Projects and then Capital modification type projects.

Downtown Walkability Improvements

Tennis Center Project - Contract has been cancelled with the engineering company until further direction is given to the administration.

Traffic Calming and Walkability projects has not started.

Surfside Boulevard beautification.

Abbott Avenue Drainage Improvement is a project scheduled for the April 9, 2024 Regular Town Commission meeting.

93rd Street is a project that has not started.

Town wide vulnerability assessment will be paid by a grant received for \$300,000.

Small projects that the Town is currently working on or have been approved are as follows:

Town Hall Improvements of the Town Police Department and Commission Chambers.

Pool heater in the Community Center.

Parking Lot Surveillance Cameras.

88th Street and Hawthorne Traffic Circle.

95th Street Sidewalks.

Mayor Burkett asked fellow members of the Town Commission if it will be appropriate to open the floor to the residents or allow the Town Manager to go first.

Consensus was reached to allow the Town Manager to speak about each item and they will open it up as they go.

Town Manager Gomez began with the Downtown walkability project and showed the Town Commission a schematic/rendering of the project. He explained that this project will take away some parking spaces to provide for more walkability and better landscaping. He further explained the rendering and the amount of parking spaces this project will be impacting.

Commissioner Velasquez stated that they should scrap this project and if they want more walkability, they should move the palm trees and place them on those parking spaces.

Town Manager Gomez explained that by doing so, you will be using more parking spaces which in his opinion will be approximately 22 parking spaces.

Commissioner Velasquez believes that the town already has a parking deficit and taking more parking spaces is not going to work. She would like to see a wider sidewalk throughout town.

Town Manager Gomez provided some information related to the permitting and approval by FDOT.

Commissioner Coto believes that any beautification project is a good idea as this the

Town they live in but he not in favor of removing parking spaces in the downtown area.

Commissioner Vildostegui is concerned with people dining so close to high traffic area as this is in Collins Avenue. He is in support of making crosswalks more visible and beautiful. He is concerned of safety with cars possibly cutting on the curb cuts.

Commissioner Velasquez believes that some more ideas should be brought to the table for wider sidewalks and is also concerned about the safety of the residents when you will be placing them so close to the street.

Mayor Burkett believes that they should also look into their parking problem. He doesn't think it is a great idea to parallel park on Harding Avenue. He stated that he is not a fan of this project, and it looks like it's a half-cooked project.

Commissioner Vildostegui is asking if the intention is to go back to the drawing board. If this is the case, he would like the town to consider exploring the idea of a bike lane.

Vice Mayor Paul stated that this is a great idea but they really need repairing their sidewalks and she thinks that before they go into these design ideas they should try fixing what is currently in place.

Commissioner Velasquez compared this to the tennis center and trying to build a new one where there is one there already.

Vice Mayor Paul would like to see beautiful crosswalks and maybe changing the red paint that is currently there.

Mayor Burkett spoke further about the paint color on the crosswalks. He suggested to sandblast those areas and maybe add some textured crosswalks.

Mayor Burkett opened the workshop to the members of the public.

Marianne Meisheid stated that she was in the DVAC Committee and this was discussed and she believes this is a problem. She believes that the curb side dining can be an issue and maybe they can look into not having dining on the sidewalk. The walkability problem occurs when the restaurants are doing sidewalk dining and pedestrians have nowhere to walk.

Jeffrey Platt believed that the side curbs were created to provide more free dining space to the restaurant. They can start charging for sidewalk dining or they can eliminate it.

Dina Gonzalez disagrees about eliminating the spaces as people will continue to double park. She stated that there are no problems in downtown and people walk fine and there is no reason why they should eliminate parking spaces. She stated that there is no police presence in the downtown.

George Kousoula (via zoom) spoke about how to possibly fix the congestion on the

sidewalks. He provided a few solutions/ideas to the town commission. He believes the congestion in downtown is real and that the sidewalk pattern can be done regardless of what you do with this project. He further added that the town can probably look into their cafe ordinance.

Michael Karukin (via zoom) stated that he agrees with focusing on priorities. He believes that the sitting should be kept in the owners areas so that the sidewalks are free for pedestrians to walk. He also mentioned the existing sidewalk ordinance and they should look into it and maybe allowing just single row set up for restaurants allowing a better flow of pedestrians.

Horace Henderson stated that if they remove all the sidewalk sitting, the congestion will go away.

Ann Findlay stated that the town has an overall parking issue and removing spaces will create a bigger issue. She believes that those sitting areas are being removed in other cities due to safety. She stated that the walkability is horrendous in downtown, and that storefronts are complaining as the sidewalk restaurants are bleeding into other stores.

Tricia Fowley spoke about when Dietch was on the Town Commission there was discussion about parking. She believes the sidewalks are dangerous and the town should demand that the businesses clean their sidewalks. She suggested that the dining should be more like starbucks were it is contained to their restaurant area and it doesn't bleed into the actual sidewalk. She is in support for extending the sidewalks but she believes that restaurant owners should be more responsible. She also spoke about the alleyways and proposed that if those are clean maybe that will be a safer way for bicycles and scooters.

Mayor Burkett believes that it is a good idea to add an item on the agenda to discuss outdoor dining and the possibility of making the business owners clean their areas and be more responsible. He stated there are multiple issues like the crosswalks being slippery, dining issue, crosswalk, number of tables so that they don't go over to the other businesses.

Commissioner Velasquez provided some other options that can be looked at like a rooftop dining for those restaurants that have that ability.

Vice Mayor Paul spoke about the idea of keeping the dining areas contained within each business and to also avoid those businesses to place outdoor sitting on other businesses storefronts.

Consensus was reached on this item to add the sidewalk cafe and sidewalks as an agenda item and also stop this project.

Tennis and Sport Complex

Town Manager Gomez stated that this project has been stopped and the agreement has been terminated with the engineering company. He further stated that he provided the drawings to the Commission as reference only.

Commissioner Vildostegui would like to come back and evaluate the options after this commission deals with their priorities.

Traffic Calming and Walkability

Town Manager Gomez explained the project to the Town Commission.

Commissioner Velasquez loves the roundabout ideas, it slows down traffic and beautifies streets by bringing shade trees and vegetation. She believes roundabouts are a great idea and she believes it is a beautiful thing for the town.

Vice Mayor Paul believes this is a great opportunity for a workshop. She requested to have asphalt speedbumps instead of the ones that are currently installed in our town.

Mayor Burkett opened the meeting to members of the public.

Miriam Alvarez stated that a speedbump is needed on 93rd Street and 92nd Street as it looks like a speedway there.

Mayor Burkett spoke about the speeding and he believes that the cut through traffic is the cause of many of the issues in town. He spoke about the different options in street closure and right turn only, but he further stated that to address the traffic and speeding problem, they have to figure out what the source of the problem is and think outside the box for outside the box solutions. He further stated that this commission wants to solve problems that will benefit their residents.

Miriam Alvarez spoke about the possibility of having a gated community.

Commissioner Vildostegui believes that as traffic solutions, the town should consider some diverters in order to calm the traffic in town. He stated that the workshop he attended, had a lot of positive feedback from everyone in attendance for diverters. He doesn't believe that gating is a calming solution. He also asked the Town Manager if they can order a la carte from the different options. The Town Manager stated that yes as long as its approve by the County.

Commissioner Velasquez would like a workshop on traffic and discuss the ideas of diverters and roundabout. She is a supporter of anything that can be easily done and beautifies the town.

Commissioner Coto spoke about more police enforcement on the speeders and that will detour them not to cut through the town.

Jeffrey Platt believes that the diverters will not work as there is an app called Waze that will provide the drivers with every single detail.

Ann Findlay stated that in the morning and afternoon there is an increase traffic due to parents dropping and picking up their kids. She believes it can be a good idea for the Town to have a school bus and provide a service to the town and its residents.

Further discussion took place about the traffic and the different options or

possibilities that can be done to mitigate traffic and the speeding issues.

91st Street "Surfside Boulevard" Beautification

Town Manager Gomez introduced the item.

Commissioner Velasquez stated that she doesn't like this option. She believes that these dollars should be used to fix the drainage problem in Town which affects many of the residents.

Vice Mayor Paul spoke about the size of the trucks that are going through our streets into Indian Creek. She suggested maybe considering the possibility of limiting the size of the trucks.

Mayor Burkett spoke about not having better renderings for this project. He stated that without the beautiful images and concept design, they are unable to make a proper decision on this item.

Vice Mayor Paul asked if this project would assist with traffic calming and possibly tied up with the previous item.

Commissioner Vildostegui asked if 91st Street is any wider than any other streets in Town.

Town Manager Gomez stated that 91st Street is the same width as the other streets in Town.

Commissioner Vildostegui asked about the appropriated dollars to this project.

Town Manager Gomez explained that the dollar from the grant can probably be redirected to the underground utilities project.

Commissioner Coto spoke about the possibility of going to the Village of Indian Creek and request more funds for this project or a similar project.

George Kousoulas spoke about the provided drawing and not having a better-looking rendering of the project.

Townwide Utilities Undergrounding and Alleyway Improvements

Town Manager Gomez spoke about the item and provided some funding information to the Commission. He explained that the first phase will be from 96th street through 93rd street. He provided a brief explanation of each phase and stated that the project has been in design for two years now and believes construction will take up to six years.

Commissioner Velasquez asked about the procurement process of this project.

Mayor Burkett asked questions related to the engineering firm that is currently working on this project.

Mayor Burkett spoke about Kimley-Horn and how he feels about what they did

related to the airplanes flying over Surfside taking the tranquility of many other municipalities as well. He stated that he is not happy with the work they did with that project. He further stated that he is not happy about doing business with them. Mayor Burkett asked if the Town is obligated to pay Kimley-Horn the two millions dollars.

Town Manager Gomez stated that the Town can walk away at any point and clarified that the contract is for \$2.7 million.

Town Manager Gomez responded to questions and concerns posted by the Town Commission. He further stated that a meeting will be scheduled and they can provide an update to the Town Commission.

Commissioner Vildostegui spoke about the need to probably go back to the residents as it seems that the \$40 million approved will not be enough to complete this project.

Town Manager Gomez spoke and provided some information related to the project in regard to undergrounding Atlantic, AT&T and FPL.

Eliana Salzhauer asked a question regarding a specific pole in town.

Town Manager Gomez addressed her question.

Further conversation took place regarding this project and the need or no need of a future referendum.

Commissioner Velasquez spoke about the development orders and that some of those proffers should be allocated to the undergrounding project.

Vice Mayor Paul asked for grant funding.

Kristina Brown, Grant Writer spoke and addressed the question.

Vice Mayor Paul stated that the Town lobbyist should be lobbying for these companies to release their data in order to better apply for grants that will assist the town with this project.

George Kousoulas spoke about the allocation of risks in regards to this project.

Commissioner Vildostegui asked the Town Clerk to provide the Town Commission with the deadline to submit a referendum on the November election.

The commission discussed the different providers.

Town Manager Gomez explained that the Town's intention is to put the conduits in the ground and each provider can put their cables through those.

Debra Cimadevilla spoke about the beautification project on 91st Street and where the \$500,000 are being used. She further stated that she doesn't believe that the volume of traffic on 91st street was taken into consideration when coming up with

this project.

The consensus by the Town Commission was to move this project forward from the Town Commission.

Abbott Avenue Drainage Improvements

Town Manager Gomez spoke about this item and discussion with the Public Works team to work in mitigating the drainage by deploying the current pumps prior to a storm.

Mayor Burkett spoke about obtaining portable pumps in order to mitigate the flooding.

Eliana Salzhauer spoke about systems in order to clean drainages ahead of time.

Town Manager Gomez spoke about going out for the third time with a Request for Invitation (RFI). He discussed the different designs and which one to put out.

The consensus of the Town Commission is to go out with the first design and this item will be in front of the April 9, 2024, Town Commission meeting.

Discussion took place regarding the Fund Balance Policy.

Marianne Meisheid spoke about the timing of the undergrounding project and the Abbott Avenue project.

Town Manager Gomez responded that it doesn't matter which project happens first.

George Kousoulas spoke about the different designs and the options.

Further discussion took place regarding the two different options (Ferrari vs. Kia).

This item will be further discussed during the April 9, 2024 Regular Town Commission meeting.

Collins Avenue Water Main Replacement

Town Manager Gomez provided an update on this item. He stated that there are no dollars allocated for the construction of this project.

Vice Mayor Paul believes that there should be dollars set aside for these projects every year.

Conversation ensued regarding people tapping into the Towns sewer and paying some sort of impact fees.

Dune Resiliency and Beautification

Town Manager Gomez explained this project and stated that there are \$470,800 in grant dollars. There are no construction dollars allocated for this project as of today.

Discussion took place about the different options and ideas as to what to do.

Town Manager Gomez stated that the beach is man made and that the Town must keep up with it.

Diana Gonzalez believes that the land should remain the way it is.

Town staff stated that the dunes are the first line of defense the town has.

Marianne Meischeid wanted to know if it is mandatory for all developers to raise their dunes.

Town Manager stated that yes and in instances, they required the developers to do that themselves.

Michael Karukin asked if there is a cross section that can be shown.

Town Manager Gomez stated that there is not one at the moment.

93rd Street Beautification

Town Manager Gomez spoke about this item and stated that this request will be funded by the 9300 Development.

The Town Commission would like the dollars to go towards a different project.

Eliana Salzhauer spoke about the approval of a parking entrance that will interrupt town events on 93rd Street. She further stated that they should be asked to relocate their entrance.

Consensus amongst the Town Commission was reached to use the \$400,000 to go towards Collins Avenue.

Vice Mayor Paul believes that the Town should put out a call to the artist for this project.

Town Manager Gomez stated that he will bring this back as a discussion item.

Also, the Town Commission requested the development order of 9300 related to the parking entrance and the possible relocation.

Surfside Memorial Park

The committee to reconvene and speak about a possible name.

Town Manager Gomez spoke regarding the committee's meeting that took place March 18, 2024. He stated that 4 members of the 6 were present during this meeting.

Vice Mayor Paul would like the entire committee to agree on the name of the memorial.

Eliana Salzhauer spoke about the developer accessing the site through 88th street

and into their site.

Commissioner Vildostegui spoke about obtaining the rights to access from the building on 88th street.

Town Manager Gomez stated that this is on the April 9, 2024 agenda for the Town Commission discussion.

Vice Mayor Paul and Commissioner Velasquez do not wish to have the developer provide the in-kind, they rather have the dollars be given to the Town.

Commissioner Velasquez spoke about the 88th Street and she wants to make sure that the entire street is dedicated to the memorial.

Commissioner Vildostegui spoke about the FPL vault on the plans. He stated that he believes that the site plan that was approved that if FDOT did not require access on 88th street they wouldn't have it and he is not sure if the site plan approval said anything differently.

Mayor Burkett asked to research what was former Commissioner Landsman's motion.

Mayor Burkett spoke about what the developer did at the request of the memorial committee. The request was for the removal of the trash from the memorial. He asked the Town Attorney to research the matter and go back and listen to the tape and see what were the specifics of the motion.

Vice Mayor Paul asked if there was not really a final design.

Town Manager Gomez stated that there will be more meetings to create a final design.

Vice Mayor Paul believes that there should be a call for artist.

Town Manager Gomez added that there is a call to artist component in the project.

Interim Town Attorney Blumstein read the motion from the September 27, 2023 meeting from the adopted minutes where the project was adopted into the record. He stated that the motion accepted the 88th street corridor for the use of that roadway for emergency and utility services which means it remains.

Commissioner Velasquez said that they should create a way to access that area within their own property.

George Kousoulas spoke on the item in regards to the utility vault on the property.

Mayor Burkett stated that Mr. Martin Langesfeld texted him and told him the name is Surfside Champlain Memorial.

Interim Town Attorney Blumstein read a portion from Resolution No. 2022-2853

dated January 11, 2022 where the pertinent portion of Section 2 read as follows: "direction to the Town Manager to pursue the closure of 88th street east of Collins Avenue to vehicular traffic for the purpose of providing a memorial park and pedestrian plaza honoring the victims of the Champlain Towers South collapse. The Manager was directed to take all steps necessary to pursue all governmental approvals necessary to permanently close that portion of 88th Street located in between Collins Avenue on the west and the public beach to the east (the "street-end") to vehicular traffic for a memorial park and pedestrian plaza honoring the victims of the Champlain Towers South collapse. The closure of any portion of 88th Street to vehicular traffic is subject to the maintenance of emergency or governmental vehicular access and any access required to reach property north and south of the Street-end".

Mayor Burkett stated that they now have a better idea regarding the memorial and asked the Town Manager to continue to the next project.

Town-wide Vulnerability Assessment with Town Hall Category 5 Adaptation Plan

Town Manager Gomez introduced the item. He stated that vulnerability assessment is something that every Town should have.

Commissioner Velasquez asked if this will also include buildings that are not conforming to FEMA standards. She believes this is a bad idea and she is not in favor of this.

Vice Mayor Paul does not believe that this study will affect that.

A statement was made that public buildings are critical assets. The Town received \$300,000 from FDEP to fully fund this project.

Kristina Brown, Grant Writer spoke regarding this item and stated that FDEP is mandating that all municipalities do this in order to be able to apply for future funding.

Eliana Salzhauer spoke about the Town being in a mandatory evacuation zone.

The Town Commission's consensus was to move forward with this project.

Town Hall Improvements

Town Manager Gomez introduced the item.

Discussion ensued by the Town Commission on their different ideas.

Commissioner Coto stated that the carpet has to go.

Commissioner Velasquez would like the screens that are on the dais be removed.

Vice Mayor Paul would like to see the dais raised so that chairs fit underneath.

Mayor Burkett recommended a refreshment center.

Vice Mayor Paul requested new flooring.

Consensus amongst the Town Commission was for the Town Manager to circulate design options.

Pool Heater

Town Manager Gomez spoke about this item.

Parks and Recreation Director Milian spoke about this item. He stated that the heaters do not last a long time due to the location of the Community Center and the saltwater. This item will be on the April 9, 2024, Town Commission meeting for approval.

Parking Lot Surveillance Camera

Town Manager Gomez explained the item.

Town Commission consensus was ok with this item.

88th Street and Hawthorne Traffic Circle

Town Manager Gomez spoke about this item.

Consensus amongst the Town Commission was to place this item together with the traffic study.

95th Street Sidewalks

Commissioner Vildostegui spoke about the Byron Avenue sidewalks that are disconnected from others. He spoke about his concerns with walkability, and it does not feel safe. He believes this needs to come back and try to do the Byron Avenue connection and then think about the rest.

Vice Mayor Paul stated that this item should go on the workshop related to walkability and beautification.

Consensus was reached to have this item on a future agenda.

Miriam Alvarez a resident of Surfside spoke about the Town Commission meeting of March 26 and the residents' concerns on traffic and safety issued. She introduced the Canadian company she works for and the ideas of traffic control, and electric school busses. She believes her company can be an asset to the Town.

3. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:55p.m.

Accepted this 14th day of May, 2024.



Charles W. Burkett, Mayor

Attest:



Sandra N. McCready, MMC, MPA
Town Clerk