



**Town of Surfside  
Town Commission Workshop  
MINUTES  
June 20, 2024  
6:00 PM**

Commission Chambers - 9293 Harding Avenue  
Surfside, FL 33154

**1) Opening**

**1.A) Call to Order**

Mayor Burkett called the meeting to order at 6:01 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, and Commissioner Ruben Coto,

Absent: Commissioner Nelly Velasquez and Commissioner Gerardo Vildostegui.

Also Present: Interim Town Attorney Mark Blumstein and Interim Town Manager Marisol Vargas.

Commissioner Vildostegui arrived at 6:03pm.

**1.C) Pledge of Allegiance**

Police Chief Doce led the pledge of allegiance.

**2) Mayor, Commission and Staff Communication**

**2.A) Surfside Memorial Design Workshop with Keith and Associates**

Cover Page

Surfside Memorial Presentation

Interim Town Manager Vargas introduced the members of Keith Engineering Group.

Mr. Paul Weinberg, Executive Vice President for Keith Engineering presented to the Town Commission a PowerPoint presentation providing them with more information about the process.

Mayor Burkett welcomed any visuals that they may have brought with them.

Vice Mayor Paul asked when will they present the three different concepts.

Mr. Weinberg responded that they have it schedule for about the end of August 2024.

Mayor Burkett opened the floor to public comments.

The following individuals from the public spoke:

Tricia Fowley spoke about the importance of providing some light that will be available during the day and at night as well.

Commissioner Vildostegui asked about what exactly is the memorial. He wanted to know if they are viewing the entire plaza as the full memorial or a portion of the plaza.

Mr. Weinberg stated that they are having the entire space to be designed in connectivity and provide a transition to a sacred ground. He further spoke about what they envision and consider all groups involved. He stated that different people will have a different connection to the memorial.

Martin Langesfeld stated that this means a lot to them and seeing this project coming to fruition. The most important thing to him is to take into consideration all the families and keeping them informed of every step being taken regarding the memorial. He asked if they heard anything about DAMAC being able to incorporate the memorial landscape as part of the site.

Mayor Burkett stated that he believes that the owners of the property may be open to conversations.

Interim Town Attorney Blumstein spoke about conversations that he and the Interim Town Manager have had with the members of the DAMAC representatives as they progress with their construction documents for the project. He further stated that he can incorporate into their future discussions the comments provided by Mr. Langesfeld and see what opportunities are available.

Mayor Burkett stated that the question is if they are open to potentially explore some incorporation of both properties. He also stated that this is something that they have to think it through, but that they should explore if they are open to that.

Martin Langesfeld stated that these conversations were had prior to the elections and after the elections they have not heard from them. The conversations were to incorporate some of the landscape south of 88th street and make it all look unilateral.

Mayor Burkett expressed his confidence in the Town Staff and that they will have those conversations.

Interim Town Attorney Blumstein stated that DAMAC is waiting for the FDOT

approval relocating the dock to Collins Avenue.

Commissioner Coto likes the vision and the ideas presented and he believes that all families should be involved.

Mr. Weinberg stated that Mr. Langesfeld was present when they presented to the selection committee and that they have had an opportunity to speak. He further spoke about the possibility of balancing the memorial space with the new development.

Vice Mayor Paul thanked Mr. Weinberg and the entire Keith Engineering team for the sensitivity and the approach to this project. She asked about the access that would remain on 88th street and their approach to this.

Mayor Burkett spoke about the access on 88th Street and how can everything be designed to not notice the access and to stop making it look like a street rather a place of contemplation is the goal of this Commission. He further stated that he walked that site day in and day out and he believes that there is a spot where everyone will meet because that is where the victims will go and another spot where all the belongings will go to sort them out. He believes that the street could be a progression that can tell the story.

Mayor Burkett spoke about the steps that the Town Commission that sat when the collapsed happened took to designate that entire street as the memorial.

Mr. Weinberg stated that they are all about the vision and creating a community and this is about the victims, the family and friends. He spoke about some sections of the buildings where their beginning impact happened. He spoke about the idea that 88th street needs to be recognized as the memorial.

Commissioner Vildostegui had some thoughts about the design and asked if the design team was present.

Mr. Weinberg presented two members of the design team present at the meeting.

Commissioner Vildostegui spoke about the Jewish museum in Berlin where there is a significant reference to a number in the memorial design, and he believes that incorporating the number 98 in the memorial would be meaningful to the families. He mentioned that it doesn't have to be 98 of a particular thing but somehow incorporated into the memorial. He stated that it could be an emotional significance. He spoke about the double rainbow on the beach that appeared after the recent rain storms experience and how some friends stated that a couple of days after the collapse a sand spit appeared in the sand near the site and he thought that maybe an idea of a walkway may be meaningful as well.

He further spoke about some of the themes in the presentation, specifically the one on the bottom left of the PowerPoint containing the nature, the waves and the soothing effects that it provides. Also, the image of the gateway looks broken and looks like something is wrong and how they have to think about the right choice for the memorial.

Raquel Oliveira stated that this has been going on for about a year and this week

is very difficult. She spoke about the previous meetings and how they were in an exploratory phase, and they spoke about the different elements they would like to see. She stated that it is important to get the feedback to know what's important to the community and the survivors. She expressed that it is important for those that lost a family member, but also for those that were there and survived because those have a different perspective and their trauma is different from hers. She spoke about what they would like the visitors to see when they visit the memorial. She would like to integrate nature, waves but also something impactful that would show visitors what happened there, incorporate shapes like waves, a melody and maybe even include some of the materials as elements from the collapse.

Mara Chuela thanked the Town Commission and would like to be involved and that the memorial is not only for those who lost a family member but also for those that lost their homes. It is important to mention that there are many people involved and hopefully the memorial can bring some light.

Vice Mayor Paul believes it is important to have like a 24-hour memorial that you can visit at any time. She suggested having some covering in the areas of reflection to cover from the rain. She stated that they were not in office in the last two years, and she would like to see the survivors to keep their residency for parks and recreational programs and activities for their kids.

Mr. Weinberg stated that as a survivor they would like to hear from them to also include some elements that will assist them in the healing process as well. He wants to provide the venue and encourages everyone that wants to provide feedback and ideas to provide them.

Mayor Burkett asked what the next steps will be.

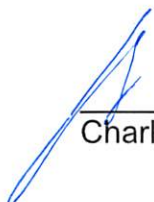
Mr. Weinberg stated that scheduling dates and venues to collect feedback and opinions. They will break up people in groups to hear everyone, there will be voting involved in order to collect proper data.

Vice Mayor Paul spoke about the memorial that was created by the families by the tennis center and she would like some of those memories to be included in the memorial.

### 3) **Adjournment**

There being no further business to discuss before the Commission, a motion was made by Commissioner Vildostegui to adjourn the meeting at 6:57 p.m., seconded by Commissioner Paul. The motion carried with a 4-0 vote, with Commissioner Velasquez absent.

Accepted this 9<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2024.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Charles W. Burkett, Mayor

Attest:



*for*   
Sandra N. McCready, MMC, MPA  
Town Clerk