

PALMER LAKE AREA CHARRETTE MEETING SUMMARY

*March 19, 2012 · 3:00 P.M.
Orlando Urra Allapattah Community Center
2257 N.W. North River Drive*

Steering Committee Members Present

Jose Bared, Chair, Brett Bibeau, Vice-Chair, James Kohnstamm, Wendy Sager-Pomerantz, Robert Vinas

Community Members Present

Mark Bailey, Victor Bared, Carlos Batista, Sylvia Bernstein, Trish Blasi, Ramon Collado, Richard Dubin, Joseph Formicola, Pedro Garcia, James Holland, Christian Larach, Herminio Menendez, Lisa Monocandilos, Nicholas Monocandilos, David Picciolo, Bradley Siddall, Carlos Saenz, Michael Saenz, Lisa Spadafina, Norma Vallejo

Public Agency Staff Present

District 5 Legislative Aide Betty Gutierrez; Miami Dade County Aviation Department: Renee Bergeron; Miami-Dade County Public Works and Waste Management Department: Jeff Cohen; Miami-Dade County Sustainability, Planning and Economic Enhancement Department: Jess Linn, Josh Rak, Eric Silva, Shailendra Singh
City of Miami Planning Department: Rogelio Madan, Alina Mencio, David Snow

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Eric Silva began the meeting with introductions and by recognizing the steering committee members in attendance. Mr. Silva then asked the chair of the steering committee if he had any comments. Jose Bared responded by stating that he was pleased that the planning process has moved to its next phase and that it would "hopefully" move more quickly.

Mr. Silva then reviewed the adoption status of the Palmer Lake Charrette Area Plan report and meeting agenda. Mr. Silva continued by discussing the contents of the proposed Palmer Lake Metropolitan Urban Center zoning district. Mr. Silva emphasized that all existing IU-1 and IU-2 uses currently permitted in the area would continue to be allowed. Mr. Silva then asked Jess Linn to discuss the building standards portion of the proposed zoning district. Mr. Linn then described the difference of prescriptive building standards as proposed in contrast to the existing IU zoning districts.

During the presentation Sylvia Bernstein stated that she was concerned that the proposed zoning district would impact property owners. Mr. Linn responded that the purpose of the document being discussed is to implement many of the recommendations of the Palmer Lake Charrette Area Plan while continuing to permit existing industrial uses.

Mr. Linn continued to describe the remaining sections of the proposed zoning district and reviewed a comparison table of the existing and proposed zoning districts. Mr. Linn then presented several examples of the application of the proposed zoning standards on various properties in the area, in particular how the standards work to improve the character of the building frontage along streets. Ms. Bernstein then expressed a concern that some of these standards would constitute a taking of private property. Mr. Linn responded that the proposed zoning standards are similar to the existing zoning requirements for setbacks, landscaping and parking and that those are not now considered takings of private property.

Mr. Bared then stated that it is important to understand that the requirements being discussed would only apply when new development occurs. Discussion then continued regarding specific provisions of the proposed zoning standards and how they would be applied to existing uses. Nicolas Monocandilos then asked how the standards would apply to non-conforming buildings. Ms. Bernstein then stated that assistance from an attorney is needed to review the proposed standards. Mr. Bared then expressed a concern with the section concerning damage to a non-conforming structure. The proposed standards would permit a reconstructed building to occupy its original footprint only if its replacement cost is 50 percent or less than the building's assessed value; there may be properties where the assessed value is less than a building's replacement cost. Mr. Bared suggested there should be no limitation on the reconstruction of a non-conforming structure and that only when redevelopment occurs that the new standards would apply. Mr. Bared then stated that there could be a risk of future enforcement actions on non-conforming buildings which would be a burden on property owners and should be avoided.

Mr. Bared then emphasized the desire of the committee for flexibility for future development in Palmer Lake and that permitting building over sidewalks [in the manner of a colonnade] was discussed during the charrette. Carlos Batista then commented that older buildings in downtown Miami had awnings and colonnades for weather protection of pedestrians and allowances for similar features should be considered. Discussion continued regarding the provision of colonnades among Mr. Bared, Mr. Batista, and Mr. Monocandilos.

Brett Bibeau then listed for the committee his comments on the proposed zoning standards: the proposed standards do not support the Port of Miami River Sub-element of the comprehensive plan; the wall requirement for boat storage facilities should not apply along the water; the proposed standards do not adequately implement the Miami River Greenway Action plan and that the Miami 21 standards for waterfront development should apply; for water dependent uses no additional area should be required for sidewalks; the segments of the greenway should be similar to those already constructed in the City of Miami and sidewalks be colored "Mesa Beige;" the elevated pedestrian walkways should have adequate clearance for trucks; the requirement for underground utilities should apply to FPL as well as property owners; the landscape open area requirement should be the same as required for IU districts. Mr. Bibeau then stated that if the new standards were to go into effect there would be a disincentive to redevelopment.

Mark Bailey then asked what the rationale was for references to the Port of Miami River Sub-element not being included in the plan report. Mr. Linn responded that resulted from prior decisions made by the steering committee. Mr. Bared further responded that the committee desired to address the entire study in a similar manner.

Jeff Cohen then stated that the Tamiami Canal swing bridge is to be replaced and will include a multi-use path that would continue along the south side of NW South River Drive. Mr. Linn then requested that any specific information available regarding roadway improvements within the Palmer Lake area be provided to planning staff.

Trish Blasi then asked what would the next steps in the planning process would be. Mr. Linn replied that the Palmer Lake plan report is expected to be approved by the Board of County Commissioners in May and additional meetings to review the proposed zoning district would be scheduled following that. Mr. Batista then commented that it is important that the plan for Palmer Lake will fit with other ongoing planning efforts.

Mr. Bared then suggested a future next meeting date and requested that the presentation shown during the meeting be provided online.

The meeting was adjourned.

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Next meeting date: June 11, 2012 · 3:00 P.M.