

PALMER LAKE AREA CHARRETTE MEETING SUMMARY

*Orlando Urra Allapattah Community Center
2257 N.W. North River Drive
Miami, Florida 33125*

February 22, 2010 · 3:00 P.M.

Steering Committee Members Present

Ismael Perera, Brett Bibeau, Arturo de la Vega and Jose Bared

Community Members Present

Carlos Saenz, Roberto Nunez, Maria Nunez, Carlos Batista, Fran Bohnsack, Marino Llamas, Margaret Morales, James Kohnstamm, Vilma Licea-Amejo and Gary Donn

County Staff Present

Department of Planning and Zoning (DP&Z): Eric Silva, Shailendra Singh, Gilberto Blanco, Kimberly Brown, Jess Linn, Catherine Prince, Alex Zizold and Bianca Paz.

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Eric Silva began the meeting by requesting that the steering committee members and community members to introduce themselves then outlined the agenda for the meeting.

Mr. Silva brought new members up to date by summarizing what transpired at prior steering committee meetings.

Shailendra Singh provided some examples of communities that have implemented waterfront redevelopment plans. They included:

- Portland
- Netherlands
- Detroit
- Philadelphia
- Maryland

Mr. Singh detailed a 1998 plan that was created for the area around the Miami Intermodal Center (MIC). The recommendations included preserving the marine industrial uses along the river, adding mixed uses including commercial, retail and residential near the MIC and providing greenways along the river.

Mr. Kohnstamm inquired as to whether residential uses would be permitted within the Critical Approach Area of the Miami International Airport.

Ms. Bohnsack requested that the members of the committee be permitted to view the Odebrecht video. Staff agreed to show the video at the next meeting and post the video on the website.

Chair Bared indicated that there may be uses that are not on the water but would work better on the water. He asked that staff provide examples of communities where prior marine industrial/commercial uses have transitioned to other uses.

Mr. Silva outlined comments made by committee members at the prior steering committee meeting.

Ms. Bohnsack expressed concern that some of the recommendations may not be possible based on existing constraints.

Chair Bared indicated that, in his opinion, the steering committee comments identified at the prior meeting do not represent the full spectrum of possible issues and additional steering committee meetings may be required to flush out additional issues. He indicated that he does not feel that the group is ready to move into the charrette. He indicated that he thinks the group needs more information and more guidance prior to the charrette. Chair Bared would like staff to narrow down which uses are the most viable given market and regulatory constraints.

Chair Bared emphasized that his goals are to create value for the individual property owners, as well as, value for the community as a whole. His interest is in how other uses can be introduced into the area without disturbing the viable uses that currently exist within the study area.

Chair Bared emphasized to the new members that the purpose of the charrette is for the members to tell staff what they would like to see for the study area rather than staff telling the members what would be there.

Chair Bared would like to see examples of areas in Dade County that were underutilized and have been transformed over the last decade including an explanation what prompted the transformation and what new uses were introduced.

Chair Bared reiterated that more steering committee meetings are needed prior to the charrette.

Mr. Silva explained the meaning of the urban center designation.

Vice-chair Bibeau asked that a new category be added to the list of steering committee comments for marine industrial. He asked Mr. Donn to show the location of future hotel on FDOT property on the map. Mr. Donn indicated that an RFP has not yet been issued and identified the possible location on a map. Mr. Donn indicated that they envision the FDOT property to be developed with uses such as a business-type hotel, retail uses, convention space with direct connections to the intermodal center.

Vice-chair Bibeau identified 2 existing hotels, 1 hotel under construction and one planned hotel all located within the study area. He indicated that the market may not be able to support any additional hotels in the area.

Vice-chair Bibeau asked that minutes be provided to the Board for approval prior to posting them on the website. Chair Bared indicated that minutes should be provided to members and, if comments are not received within two days, the minutes should be posted.

Vice-chair Bibeau clarified that the plan is not to acquire the properties necessary for the greenway through eminent domain, rather construct on-road Greenway facilities along South River Drive and NW 25 ST featuring wide sidewalks, landscaping, wayfinding signage, benches, decorative lighting, trash receptacles, etc.

Vice-Chair Bibeau provided two letters for the official record. One of the letters is from Miami-Dade Transit to the Miami River Marine Group pledging after completing construction of the MIC-Earlinton Heights Metro-Rail extension, that the riverfront parcels which the County eminent domained will be used for marine industrial purposes including but not limited to tug boat basins, truck staging, freight forwarding, short-sea shipping, etc.

Vice-chair Bibeau indicated that there was a prior Miami-Dade County proposal and some GOB funding to replace their fixed bridge on South River Drive at the entrance of Palmer Lake, which is currently too low to allow passage of a vessel. Miami-Dade County is willing to pursue a drawbridge that would allow that portion of the river to be used for water taxis and He asked whether the property owners of the submerged land entering and in Palmer lake would be willing to allow vessels to enter Palmer Lake.

Chair Bared asked whether anyone knows of areas that may provide an example of redevelopment such as Beacon Center.

Ms. Bohnsack recommended that the creator of the report, Bill Hamlin, be invited to present at the next Steering Committee meeting.

Mr. Batista would like to see history of river and what has changed over the years including within the City of Miami and what is happening just outside of the study area boundaries.

Chair Bared wants to see the impact of the other charrette area plans and a summary of the Kimley-Horn study recommendations. Vice-chair Bibeau clarified that the Kimley Horn study was mandated by the Miami River Improvement Act from the Florida Statutes.

Vice-chair Bibeau submitted a list of the new residential projects approved along the Miami River since 2000. He indicated that 7,000 new residential units have been constructed and 9,688 new units have been approved and have not commenced construction within a couple miles of the study area. Chair Bared indicated that he does not want to discuss, in detail, uses that have not yet been proposed by the group.

Chair Bared suggested one or two more steering committee meetings prior to the charrette.

Mr. Silva asked that committee members review the maps that were provided (ownership, etc.) and inform us of any necessary revisions.

The meeting was adjourned.

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