

CITY OF PALM BAY, FLORIDA
INFRASTRUCTURE ADVISORY AND OVERSIGHT BOARD
MEETING 2023-04

Held on Monday, the 24th day of April 2023, in the City Hall Council Chambers, 120 Malabar Road, SE, Palm Bay, Florida.

This meeting was properly noticed pursuant to law; the minutes are on file in the Public Works Department located at 1050 Malabar Road, SW, Palm Bay, Florida. The minutes are not a verbatim transcript, but a brief summary of the discussions and actions taken at the meeting.

CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Thibert, Chairperson, at 7:00 PM.

ROLL CALL:

CHAIRPERSON:	Rebecca Thibert	Present
VICE CHAIRPERSON:	David Jones	Present
MEMBER:	Ann-Marie Fraser	Present
MEMBER:	Paul Edwards	Present
MEMBER:	Thomas Gaume	Present
MEMBER:	Terry Muller	Absent
MEMBER:	Logan Luse	Present

ALSO PRESENT:

Frank Watanabe, City Engineer; Christeen Sullivan, Construction Project Manager

ADOPTON OF MINUTES:

1. Meeting 2023-01; January 23, 2023

Motion by Vice Chairperson Jones, seconded by Mr. Gaume, to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: (Non-agenda items only)

1. Bill Battin, resident, asked about water lines being installed along Gaynor Drive which would cause damage to the newly paved road. Mr. Watanabe stated that a jack and bore method was highly recommended when placing utilities; however, the utility

costs may be cost prohibitive. It was encouraged not to cut a road within the first 5-10 years. These roads were constructed four (4) years ago and rejuvenated this year. Chairperson Thibert asked that Christopher Little, Utilities Director, be invited to the next meeting with this item on the agenda. Mr. Watanabe stated that there would be more areas with new streets adding utilities and a decision should be made as to how to address same. Mr. Gaume suggested discussion of a 5-year moratorium of cutting into any new road or street and recommended to the City Council.

2. Jimmy Glover, resident, brought up the enforcement of parking on the rights-of-way. The streets were poorly lit and there were cars parked in the street.

BUSINESS:

1. Traffic Calming for Brickell Street between Emerson and Eldron.

Mr. Watanabe provided a presentation explaining various traffic calming measures to reduce speeding. He provided specific data concerning traffic on Brickell Street between Emerson Drive and Eldron Boulevard. He believed this area was eligible for traffic calming measures and recommended a petition be provided to City Council to include a request for a 4-way stop at the intersection of Brickell Street and Ellington Avenue. Mr. Watanabe also suggested monitoring the conditions for six (6) months to a year to determine the efficacy of the 4-way stop in reducing the negative effects of traffic and, if needed, consideration of the more restrictive measure to remove the northbound turn from Emerson Drive to Brickell Street.

Chairperson Thibert asked if, procedurally, the Board could make recommendations to City Council based on information received from the residents. Mr. Watanabe said the City's Traffic Calming Policy did not require a vote from the Board. The policy required that a study be performed and once findings were received, a petition would be required with at least 85% of support from affected homeowners. It would have to be presented to City Council to allow the affected homeowners to voice their opinion. There was discussion concerning the details of the policy as it related to the support of the citizens. Mr. Watanabe had not determined the number of property owners in that section of roadway. City Council had the authority to approve traffic calming measures without the required number of signatures.

Katie Meek, resident, spoke of the dangers caused by speeding vehicles. The locals were aware of the dangers and yielded at intersections, but she believed the 4-way stop would be beneficial in helping to reduce the speeding of cut-through traffic. She asked

for clarification as to whom would sign the petition. She also asked if the zone could be expanded to include nearby residents.

Theresa Cahill, resident, stated that there had been additional accidents since the findings presented by Mr. Watanabe, one of which was a fatality. The corner of Brickell Street and Ellington Avenue was also a bus stop.

Claudia Corey-Church, resident, stated that she had difficulty pulling out of her driveway and her mailbox had been knocked down numerous times. Her mother had also been sideswiped and injured. She would like the speed limit dropped to 20 or 25 miles per hour and supported closing the left turn lane from Emerson Drive as well as the 4-way stop at Ellington Avenue. She believed all residents should have a voice, not just affected homeowners.

Connie Glass, resident, asked that the east end of Brickell Street be included in the discussions. Mr. Watanabe said he would perform a study of the eastside of Brickell Street from Emerson Drive to Bloke Avenue as well.

Jim Pierce, resident, was concerned that a bureaucratic shuffle would delay everything. He believed there was sufficient information needed to prove there was a need for action. Chairperson Thibert explained that the Board did not have the authority to waive the petition requirement in the policy. Vice Chairperson Jones asked if the Board could suggest changes to the traffic calming policy to Council. He reminded the residents that the petition would still be required. Mr. Watanabe said once Council approved the installation of an all-way stop, staff could have the signs installed within two (2) days.

Edwin Miranda, resident, expressed his concerns with the traffic. He was contemplating selling his house and moving to ensure the safety of his daughter. He supported the four-way stop. He had seen accidents which he believed were caused by speeding vehicles; area schools causing additional traffic; and school buses were speeding down the street. Mr. Miranda added that many were never reported, such as mailboxes and trash cans hit by vehicles.

Bill Battin, resident, asked if blocking the northbound entrance to Brickell Street from Emerson Drive would impact emergency vehicles. He recommended that residents attend the City Council meetings to provide information directly to Council.

Willard Pierre-Noelle, resident, asked if there was a way to have the signatures waived. He felt that requiring for signatures would extend the time needed to have action taken.

Ms. Fraser reiterated Mr. Battin's suggestion that the residents present their concerns to City Council as it had the authority to waive the petition requirements. Mr. Watanabe clarified that the item would have to be on the Council agenda in order for action to be taken and would not be on Council's next agenda of May 1st.

Vice Chairperson Jones suggested that the residents alert Brevard County Public Schools that buses were speeding and provide bus numbers.

Chairperson Thibert questioned the role and enforcement of the Police Department. Mr. Watanabe stated that the Police Department was limited due to personnel but patrolled the area periodically.

Mr. Watanabe explained that the purpose of the petition was to provide ownership from the community. Although those residents present may feel that everyone would support calming measures, many may disagree, and their input and opinion should be heard as well.

Mr. Gaume asked how much of the problem could be attributed to the school. Mr. Watanabe stated that the speeding could not be attributed to any one cause. He felt a contributing factor could be that Brickell Street was parallel to Jupiter Boulevard which made it a cut-through to avoid traffic.

Mr. Miranda questioned how speed was tracked and felt it should be done in a more central location. Mr. Watanabe explained that the 41.5 miles per hour was the 85th percentile average. Some people may have reached speeds up to 70 miles per hour, while others were going 20 miles per hour. Vice Chairperson Jones asked if this information was shared with the Police Department. Mr. Watanabe confirmed same.

Chairperson Thibert asked what staff needed to move forward. Mr. Watanabe responded that the petition from the residents and an endorsement from the Board.

Motion by Ms. Fraser, seconded by Vice Chairperson Jones, to recommend to Council that the traffic calming procedures were made. Motion carried unanimously.

2. Agenda requests for future meetings.

Chairperson Thibert wanted to review the current Traffic Calming Policy and comparisons from other nearby municipalities such as Melbourne and West Melbourne, and Brevard

County. She also wanted to discuss whether it would be a resident decision or a homeowner decision.

Ms. Fraser asked that an update on anticipated road closures be provided. Mr. Watanabe stated that road closures were posted on the website. Mr. Watanabe said he would share the road closure information as a part of the Board meetings. Vice Chairperson Jones asked staff to provide an average of closures of similar roads.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:37 PM.

Rebecca Thibert, Chairperson

ATTEST:

Christeen Sullivan, Recorder