

## **BAYFRONT ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

### **CITY COUNCIL REPORT**

**Tuesday, September 14, 2010**

I thank you, on behalf of the Bayfront Advisory Committee, for allowing me to appear before you today and update you on the activities of the Committee. The BAC Committee continues in its efforts to fulfill your mission to us of serving as a liaison between the BayFront community and the City Council with respect to development and improvements to the Shore Drive Corridor.

- I. One of the most important aspects of our mission is to monitor and report to the City Council the progress of implemented public projects and plans within the Shore Drive Corridor, and provide recommendations for remedial actions as deemed necessary. With respect to that the BAC Committee has diligently monitored the progress of the Capital Improvement Projects slated for the corridor. We have seen many of the Shore Drive Interim Safety Improvements, as recommended by the Shore Safety Task Force in 2006, implemented, and the Shore Drive Demonstration Project, from Treasure Island Road to Marlin Bay Drive, completed. We participated in the staff presentations and public discussions regarding the proposed Lesner Bridge Replacement Project and endorse the proposal. We understand that Phase 4 of the CIP project, Marlin Bay Drive to East Stratford Drive, is funded and scheduled to begin construction sometime in 2013.

The BAC Committee, through citizen concerns, requested that staff review and provide some method of identifying streets that intersect with the Cape Henry Trail bike path. Staff installed street name blades along the path at certain intersections.

- II. Another equally important aspect of our mission is to engage in public information efforts to improve communications between the BayFront community, the development community, and the City government, and to serve as a forum for discussion of information brought forth by both the public and private sectors on matters related to the BayFront community. We have made great strides in this area. Staff continues to update and maintain the BayFront Advisory Committee webpage on the Planning Department's website. Press releases of upcoming meetings and committee meeting minutes are posted regularly. Information pertaining to the corridor and community activities is also posted to the website.

We have worked with the Shore Drive Community Coalition to form a more collaborative partnership by providing time during regular BAC Committee meetings for the SDCC to report their activities. We partnered with the SDCC to sponsor Lunch with the Mayor in order to gather an e-mail database that will allow a better distribution of information. And staff regularly forwards information to the SDCC for posting on their website.

We also reached out to the Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek- Fort Story Base and Hampton Roads Sanitation District. The Commander of the base is now an ex. officio member of the BAC Committee and a representative regularly attends the committee meetings to provide input on how base operations may affect the community and how public projects may affect the base operations.

Further the Communications Sub-committee regularly provides a newsletter to staff and the SDCC regarding the activities of the committee. The newsletter is posted to the BAC and SDCC websites.

The BAC Committee also reviews proposed development projects within the Corridor and offers suggestions for compliance with the Shore Drive Design Guidelines.

- III. The BAC Committee also exists to encourage and facilitate establishment of public-private partnerships alternative funding sources to achieve the goals and recommendations of the ULI Study and the adopted plans and guidelines. The BAC Committee worked extremely hard on the Comprehensive Plan revisions for the BayFront Community to prioritize the areas of concern brought forth by the citizens. Acquisition of Pleasure House Point is considered the highest priority in the Community and this is reflected in the Comprehensive Plan. It was with great pleasure to learn that a plan for the Point is in place and you received our endorsement and support for your initiative to acquire the Pleasure House Point parcel of land.
- IV. Lastly we continue to identify, refine and reprioritize a series of recommended projects and actions to the City Council for implementing the adopted Shore Drive Corridor Plan, Transportation Plan, Design Guidelines, and Landscaping Guidelines, and to address issues associated with the public safety and development of the Corridor. Our Design Sub-committee worked with staff to have BayFront Community signs installed along Shore Drive and Great Neck Road, and is currently working on neighborhood signs that will complement the community signs. Other issues the Design Sub-committee is exploring is design guidelines for neighborhoods and businesses in the community.

With regard to this particular part of our mission however we have recently finished an intense effort to study pedestrian safety issues along the corridor. The Public Safety Transit, Parking, and Pedestrian Access, Design, and Communications Sub-committees met three times to discuss the safety issues along the corridor, and there were two field trips to view the problems. City staff and concerned citizens also attended the meetings and field trips. The sub-committees determined that there are three areas of public safety that should be addressed – infrastructure improvements, enforcement, and education.

City staff presented several options for short term Infrastructure Improvements to the corridor – pedestrian cameras that preempt the traffic signal, traffic signal enhancements, a safety fence in the median, improved street lighting, sidewalk improvements, and trimming of overgrown vegetation. Traffic signal timing was also discussed, but is not an immediate recommendation for the corridor.

The next item discussed was the possibility of moving Phase III of the Capital Improvement Project for improvements to Shore Drive between Great Neck Road and the Lesner Bridge to a priority position. Currently Phase IV improvements to Shore Drive between the Lesner Bridge and Shady Oaks / Marlin Bay, is fully funded and scheduled to begin in 2013. The amount of funding for each project is similar. The request could be accommodated as the perceptions and issues along the corridor between Great Neck Road and the Lesner Bridge have changed. Most if not all citizens in the area recognize the need for safety improvements in this particular section of Shore Drive.

With regard to Enforcement the Police department reported that enforcement is continuing along the corridor with a special emphasis on Friday and Saturday. A request was made for the Establishment Review Task Force (ERTF) to become more active along the Shore Drive Corridor.

The final element to be discussed was Education – not only for the public, but also the owner(s), managers, and staff of the establishments. Citizen involvement along the corridor can assist in the changing the behavior as well as the owner taking responsibility for what happens in his establishment and off premises when the patron has been over served.

The Sub-committees considered all of the information provided and made the following recommendations to the Bayfront Advisory Committee for consideration. The BAC Committee now presents these recommendations to you, Council, for your consideration and implementation:

- Infrastructure Recommendations:

Long Term - We recommend, with staff's support, moving Phase III, which is improvements to Shore Drive between Great Neck Road and the Lesner Bridge, to a priority position ahead of Phase IV. Phase IV covers improvements between the Lesner Bridge and Shady Oaks / Marlin Bay.

Short Term – We recommend the installation of movement actuated pedestrian cameras to preempt the traffic signals, the installation of crosswalks and handicap-accessible ramps at West Great Neck Road and Starfish Road, the addition of seven new street lights (250 watts HPSV) along Shore Drive between Urchin Road and Starfish Road and the upgrading of the two existing lights, the installation of 500 feet of missing sidewalk with handicap-accessible ramps along Shore Drive between North Great Neck Road and the Lesner Bridge, trimming of the overgrown vegetation, and the retiming of traffic signals pending the final determination of Shore Drive speed limit.

- Enforcement:

We recommend heightened Police department enforcement of jaywalking, public intoxication and traffic regulations, heightened Fire department enforcement of occupancy regulations, and request the Establishment Review Task Force expand their efforts to increase enforcement in the Shore Drive corridor.

- Education:

We recommend the utilization of alcohol responsibility programs developed by major trade associations in the hospitality industries and promulgate these ideas across the city, and we recognize that there is a need to improve the image of the Shore Drive Corridor, which image has had an unfortunate impact on the good citizens of our community.

These public safety recommendations will cost approximately \$63,000.00. We, the Bayfront Advisory Committee, urge the City Council to consider these recommendations for implementation.

Addendum –

Many challenges remain ahead of us, most importantly is funding the remaining phases of the Shore Drive Corridor Plan. We realize the strains on our City's budget but we ask that you keep it on your radar in future deliberations. As to funding the Lesner Bridge we are pleased that Council and staff are working with our two United States Senators and the United States Department of Transportation. We encourage you also to explore Department of Defense funding as we fast approach weight limit postings on a vital military strategic route.

In closing I would like to express my deep gratitude to the members of BAC for their gratitude to members of BAC for their diligence and spirit of volunteerism. Also special a thank you to Clay Bernick who served us as staff liaison for over ten years and to our current and equally able liaison Faith Christie and to the staff in Planning and Public Works.