



**Town of Surfside**  
**Special Town Commission Meeting**  
**MINUTES**  
**April 27, 2015**  
**6 p.m.**

Town Hall Commission Chambers - 9293 Harding Ave, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Surfside, FL 33154

**1. Opening**

**A. Call to Order**

Mayor Dietch called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

**B. Roll Call of Members**

Town Clerk Sandra Novoa called the roll with the following members present: Mayor Dietch, Commissioner Olchyk, Commissioner Cohen and Commissioner Karukin. Vice Mayor Tourgeman was absent.

**C. Pledge of Allegiance**

Chief Allen led the Pledge of Allegiance

**2. Traffic Management Plan Background – Guillermo Olmedillo, Town Manager**

Manager Olmedillo began by addressing a few housekeeping items. By law the maximum number of people who can be in this room is 99 and if they exceed that number some people may have to wait outside. The second item referred to those wishing to speak and he asks they fill out the speaker cards outside and to write clearly so we have a record.

Manager Olmedillo said they have invited several traffic experts who will advise and help with the issue.

He introduced MDC Assistant County Attorney Bruce Libhaber who deals with traffic issues from a legal aspect. He said Collins and Harding are State owned and any changes would need approval from State Dept. of Transportation and not the County. He gave an overview of the County Home Rule Charter and the different type of roads. Closing of streets, barricades and gates would need County approval. He further mentioned consideration be given to the residents of Indian Creek who must go through Surfside to get to and from their residence when thinking of closing a street. He gave further legalities regarding public vs. private roads and man operated guard gates as well calming devices. Commissioner Cohen asked about special taxing assessment and if all residents of Surfside would be involved or only those of whose roads are involved. Mr. Libhaber explained who would be assessed. There was a review of the history of what occurred in 1996 when Surfside closed off a street and there was litigation and the street had to be reopened.

Commissioner Cohen asked if the 2012 traffic study is applicable today as there is a different situation now. Commissioner Karukin said the study did go five years out and included some of the new construction and the study did take into account all of the scenarios in question. He also said Policy Chief Allen did a supplemental study. Based on the studies, Manager Olmedillo read the recommendations of MDC and named various traffic circles they suggested.

Joan Shen, Traffic Engineer Division Chief of MDC said the recommendations made and approved by MDC also need approval from the Fire Dept as well because emergency vehicles will also be slowed down. Residents will also have their input and the County would require seeing the final plans.

Commissioner Karukin said before anything is done they must identify the problem and then use the computer system software to model a resolution. Ms. Shen explained the software and whether using the software would be beneficial to the town.

Mayor Dietch asked what the process would be to close off Byron at 88<sup>th</sup> St. to northbound traffic. Mr. Libhaber said MDC would require a traffic study first. Ms. Shen said MDC does not look at street closing favorably but prefers other means such as slowing down traffic in various ways. The Mayor asked Ms. Chen to explain why she suggests traffic circles as he feels they do not function properly in Surfside. Ms. Chen addressed the issue and did mention a possible problem with emergency vehicles getting through quickly. She also explained that stop signs are used to control right of way and when there may be a visual obstruction but are not that effective in slowing down the speed.

Commissioner Olchyk said she had informed the Commission and Town Clerk that she had a scheduling conflict this evening and is to be at the Parks and Recreation town meeting at 7:00 P.M. Manager Olmedillo read an email from Vice Mayor Tourgeman who could not be in attendance due to a death in the family. However, the Vice Mayor wanted it known that he is not in favor of the closing of any streets in Surfside and has expressed this at the last Commission Meeting and to the Police Chief.

Manager Olmedillo identified the problem as one of public safety. On Byron there is a problem of speed, quantity of traffic and the lack of sidewalks in some areas. He gave a summary of what has been done to try to solve some of the problems. Byron is a through street and gets traffic which does not want to use Collins or Harding. He said closing Byron will only divert the traffic to another street and create a problem there as we are dealing with local and regional traffic. The Mayor said he lives on the northern end of Byron and we have to be very careful in our intent this evening because if we get into the specifics of only one area then the meeting will be over because we will have lost our quorum as Commissioner Olchyk has to leave. He would like to focus on what the options are as well as the problems and go forward from there.

Commissioner Cohen asked about having one way streets, lowering speed signs and more speed bumps. Ms. Shen explained why one way streets are not recommended in residential areas. Having sidewalks would be safer for pedestrians. There was some

discussion regarding certain hours on one way streets. Commissioner Karukin said putting in sidewalks may become problematic as it will take parking space away from that side of the street.

Commissioner Olchyk left the meeting at 6:54 p.m. but could not get out to attend another meeting across the street and returned at 7:00 p.m.

Eric Czernlkejewski Director of Traffic Engineering from CGA gave further insight on the issue.

Many residents have filled out speaker cards and the Mayor wanted them to have the opportunity to speak. He opened the meeting to public speakers at this time which is on the agenda as Item 4.

### **3. Traffic Management Plan Discussion - Guillermo Olmedillo, Town Manager**

#### **A. Short-Term Options.**

- 1. Removable Barricades.**
- 2. Street Closures.**
- 3. Traffic Calming Devices.**

The Mayor asked Ms. Chen if she has worked with other communities with similar problems and what has been done so they may look at their solutions.

Ms. Chen said for a short term solution a delineator can be put in the form of a circle which would slow down traffic. She sees a gated community may be a problem because there is a lack of enough setbacks from the travel lane and a major study would have to be done to make sure traffic does not spill back. She is in favor of the creation of several traffic circles as the best solution. As a short term solution, the town may try removable speed bumps to slow down traffic and place them in different areas to see if it works better in one area.

Commissioner Olchyk questioned the circles and emergency vehicles going through. Ms. Chen said both the speed bumps and circles would slow down emergency vehicles response time. However they can look into a three piece speed cushion where lifesaving vehicles are go through the middle.

The Mayor asked Ramon Sierra from FDOT what the town can do to work together to minimize the lane closures at peak hours on Collins. Mr. Sierra said they are trying to minimize lane closures and can work with the town and developers and DOT does not allow lane closures at peak hours. He also stated that putting in more traffic signals on Byron or Abbott may create another problem as traffic will then cut through to other streets as there are many traffic lights already in place. Options were discussed and a study was suggested by the Mayor as to bringing back the U-turns that were previously in place and residents were able to leave the town through Abbott. Mr. Sierra said if the town consultants produced a study on Abbot they would look at it with an open mind.

Mayor Dietch gave an overview of some of the short term options to be looked at like reinstalling stop signs at all corners, synchronizing traffic lights, speed cushions and no parking on the north side of 95<sup>th</sup> Street. He also asked if there was any way to designate residential neighborhoods.

Commissioner Cohen spoke about growth in the town which creates growing pains and patience is needed. Commissioner Cohen felt solving the parking problem will help as people will not be driving around looking for a place to park. He also spoke about duties of the Police Dept and being careful as police spending time giving out tickets takes them away from other important issues. He also spoke about gating the community as once all the development is completed do we still need gates and the cost to residents.

Commissioner Olchyk is in favor of speed bumps and cushions as well as more stop signs. She also said a heightened police presence will help as people will slow down if they know they will be ticketed. She is against doing any expensive measures as they may not work and then we will regret it. She is concerned about the closing of the lanes and said it is dangerous.

Commissioner Karukin gave his views on gating, police enforcement, calming devices, and growth and development. He also said patience is needed as this will not be solved overnight.

Mayor Dietch said there are some things that can be done short term.

Manager Olmedillo said he will summarize what was said this evening and bring back a plan with recommendations.

#### **B. Long-Term Options.**

- 1. One-Way Circulation Pattern.**
- 2. Gated Community.**

Items were touched up under item 3A and item 4.

#### **C. Cost of Selected Option.**

### **4. Public Comments**

Mayor Dietch opened the meeting for public speaking.

#### Public Speakers:

-Jared Plitt said slowing down the traffic is not going to solve the problem as Collins is so congested that it is still better for cars to go slower through local streets. He sees the solution as gating off the community.

-Marsha Kupferberg relayed an incident of a high speeding car which then turned onto Harding and said this could happen on any block. She asked if approved, what the cost would be to the taxpayer for a gated community and feels it may be worth it. Manager Olmedillo said if approval is given the factors for cost would be determined by defining the area, the type of system and number of gates.

- Joseph Fuist said he was open to some of the options suggested but noted that after the last Commission meeting there was not as much police enforcement on Byron. He was hoping that the Commission will see that there is still a heightened police presence on Byron until the problem is solved as this is a safety issue.
- Celine Mahoney said the traffic on Byron is excessive and something has to be done for safety especially for the children.
- Richard Iacobacci first extended prayers to Vice Mayor Tourgeman and his family. Regarding traffic he hopes this issue will not put neighbor against neighbor for he understands the problem his neighbors on Byron are facing and there are safety issues. He also said the residents should have a say in the decisions the town makes on this issue. He does not believe moving the traffic into other residential areas is the answer.
- Lou Cohen said they have to look at Collins and Harding at 95<sup>th</sup> Street.
- David Wilson said more young families have moved into the community and Byron has become a highway. He said we have to eliminate the cut through traffic and feels speed bumps do not slow down traffic and speeding.
- Rick Zambrano agrees with the Vice Mayor that no streets in Surfside should be closed. He also feels the town has the means to have more police presence and more enforcement in the area. He spoke about traffic circles, the cost and its effectiveness.
- Sara Pack said this is not just a Byron Avenue issue but a town issue as children move around from block to block and it is a safety issue. She suggested that police issue more tickets and use the money to solve the problem. Commissioner Olchyk reminded all that just because a ticket is written it does not mean that money is collected.
- Clara Diaz-Leal said some of the streets in Surfside are closed. She said that Abbott is a buffer street not Byron and talked about roundabouts and what really works. She said the situation will get worse with all the construction and more people coming in.
- Sonia Hedditch is in favor of closing streets.
- Allan Yarkin empathizes with the people facing the issue on Byron but said the town has to face reality. They made a decision to grow which is now creating construction and heavy traffic problems on Collins and more to come. If the town closes off streets the traffic will be pushed back to Collins which is heavily congested as is. We have a traffic problem because we have a growth issue in our town. What the town has to decide is whether we want to increase our tax rate or focus on human issues such as traffic, quality of lifestyle, people coming to our community who don't live in the community. He said the reality is it is going to get worse as they have been under construction for four years and it is not done as more projects are being approved. The more we build on Collins the more traffic will be pushed to the side streets. The issue for the Commission is what kind of community you want this to be.
- Monica Sanabia said the past few weeks she has noted that now heavy duty construction trucks are using Carlisle and Byron to go through. She relayed an incident where she was cut off by a construction truck because she wasn't going fast enough for it and the incident almost put a pedestrian with her children in danger.
- Steve Levine sees two separate issues one volume of traffic and the other safety. He thinks stop signs should be placed on every corner. He believes increased police presence and enforcement would also help. Commissioner Karukin made a motion to allow Mr. Levine an additional 30 seconds to speak. The motion received a second from Commissioner Cohen and all voted in favor. Mr. Levine continued by suggesting a traffic light placed on Abbott. As to community gates he feels it will back up traffic

trying to get into the gate especially on holidays. He believes a mandate from the people should be gotten before anything is done.

-Juan Borges said this being a regional problem we should talk to our neighboring communities and study the Harding and Collins corridor before we cage ourselves in. We have to help with the situation on Byron.

-Martin Oppenheimer said we need a comprehensive solution and in the interim we need a 3-5 year commitment for increased policing on Byron.

-Ricardo deArmas said the traffic problem is due to the construction on Collins and does not want to see changes made at this time.

-Sindy Posso asked for samples of urgent solutions as building traffic circles would take time.

-Deborah Cimadevilla said to keep in mind that the problem is due to the vast amount of construction going on in the town. She also addressed the large construction trucks going through the residential streets.

-Marie Restlar said she did not think all the traffic was due to construction but just more people. He spoke about gated communities and options that can be thought about.

-Alex Motola after listening to all the comments and suggestions and he would like a study done and then come back with a plan and what our options are and possible solutions.

No one else wishing to speak the Mayor closed the public speaking.

#### 4. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

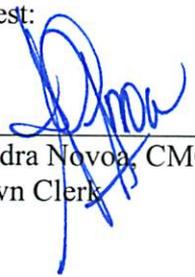
Respectfully submitted,

Accepted this 12<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2015



\_\_\_\_\_  
Daniel Dietch, Mayor

Attest:



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Sandra Novoa, CMC  
Town Clerk