

## Mayor's Report 2023 0412

On March 21<sup>st</sup>, I posted on my mayor of Rockaway Beach Facebook site about the availability of preliminary documents for previously approved Wayside improvement and Anchor Street projects on our Public Works webpage. A comment on my post prompted my decision to speak about the history of the Anchor Street project in tonight's mayor's report.

We live in a world of infinite needs and limited resources. As such, it is incumbent upon Rockaway Beach's City Council to make well informed decisions rooted in what is in the best interest of our residents, our business owners, and visitors to our city. We do this in a variety of ways such as proactively seeking input from stakeholders and holding decision making meetings that are open to the public.

I also submit that the bar needs to be extremely high for going back and revisiting a previous Council's decision. Particularly a decision that was rooted in input from stakeholders and one made in public. If the bar isn't high, city government would be in a constant state of turmoil with no forward movement.

I will spend the remainder of my time this evening describing the decision-making history of the approved Anchor Street Park

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Project. A process that was rooted in stakeholder input, public comment and open to citizen input.

I don't expect to convince everyone, but simply want to get the facts on the table for all to hear – the historic record shows that the Anchor Street Park Project is an excellent example as to how projects should be identified and Council decisions made.

The journey of the Anchor Street Park Project began with the Rockaway Beach Transportation Plan dated October 2010. The Plan can be accessed on the City of Rockaway Beach's web page at the bottom right side of the landing page under Resources. I highly recommend that all with an interest in Rockaway Beach read the Plan.

Specific to my report is the discussion of Public Involvement on page 2-1. The report states:

A Project Advisory Committee (PAC) made up of local residents, business owners, and public officials met at key milestones, in October 2009, January 2010, and April 2010 to provide input on the project needs, existing and future needs, existing and future

conditions, possible transportation improvements, and to recommend project improvements.

Two public open houses were held at the Rockaway Beach Civic Center (February and April of 2010) that allowed substantial input and feedback from the community. The first meeting collected input on the deficiencies and needs, and gathered comments on the concepts under consideration and new ideas to be considered. The final Open House presented the draft project recommendations for public review and comment.

I suggest this is an excellent example of how to have conversations with our community in making recommendations for projects. A model that Rockaway Beach should replicate going forward.

On page 3-8 you will find the discussion on Improved Parking with item 7d stating:

A new City-maintained parking area currently exists behind and north of City Hall. This recommendation

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implements the current paving and striping plan for the parking area, and adds signage on the highway advertising it is available for use. Due to its location in the downtown core, with proximity to shops, restaurants, and the beach, this parking area could easily accommodate visitor day use.

This project was added to the Transportation Plan with an impressive level of citizen involvement.

The next phase of the Anchor Street Park project's journey began at the November 10, 2021 City Council meeting under New Business:

Preliminary Discussion on Goal Setting for the 2022/2023 Budget Year.

During the discussion Council asked for, among other items, more parking and more restrooms. City Manager Shepard committed to bringing a summary for further discussion to the next meeting.

At the December 8, 2021 City Council meeting under Old Business:

Continued Discussion on Goal Setting for the 2022/2023 Budget Year.

Council continued their discussion of Goals for 2022/2023 and City Manager committed to bringing the refined list with estimates to the February Council meeting.

At the February 9, 2022 City Council meeting under Old Business:

Approval of Administrative Task List 2022-23,

On the Administrative Task List was the following:

- Development of Anchor St. lot with paved parking, lights, restrooms, info kiosk, and other amenities

The Administrative Task List passed unanimously; one Councilor had an excused absence.

City Manager Shepard presented the concept plan for Anchor Street at the August 2022 Council Meeting. City Council did not request further review so the plan was sent to the Engineers for design.

The Rockaway Beach Transportation Plan addresses key issues related to transportation within the City of Rockaway Beach including parking for visitors. The Plan was built from the bottom up as it should have.

The Anchor Street Park Project was approved over the course of three City Council meetings; meetings that were public with opportunity for those who choose to attend can provide input.

I submit that the approval of the Anchor Street Park Project as a well-informed decision rooted in what is in the best interest of our residents, our business owners, and visitors to our city; and there is no compelling reason to revisit this decision.

I am committed to giving our citizens opportunities to provide input on city projects, to having community conversations and being transparent about new projects.

Thank you for your time and attention.