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Parkway six-lane proposal debated

CRA chair questions loss of parking spots

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Despite agreeing in principle to a proposal to widen Cape Coral Parkway to six lanes, the debate figures to continue among members of the Cape Coral Community Redevelopment Agency.

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“I know we agreed to recommend the six-laning of the parkway to (Cape Coral City) council, but I am concerned about business parking,” said John Jacobsen, agency chairman. “I’m going to bring it up again.”

The redevelopment agency has its regular meeting at 5:30 p.m. today in City Hall, 1015 Cultural Park Boulevard. It will vote on recommending the lane changes to city council.

Should city council vote in favor of the change, curb sides along the downtown section of the parkway that are now reserved for parking would be open for traffic. Jacobsen favors an eastbound-only lane expansion limited to three hours, 6 a.m. to 9 a.m. weekdays.

The problem is that many businesses have “nose-in” parking, Jacobsen said. Backing out of those spots from parking lots into a lane of traffic would be dangerous, he said.

The agency members agreed at a July 10 workshop, where discussion is non-binding, that Cape Coral Parkway lose its parking lanes so they can become through lanes in downtown.

The only business owner at that meeting, Lou Simmons, owner of the Cape Dog Bakery, spoke against changing the lanes.

“No one is going to want to walk along the parkway with cars whizzing by next to the sidewalk,” he said.

More than 48,000 vehicles use the Cape Coral Bridge at the east end of Cape Coral Parkway every day.

Morning traffic backs up to the west past Coronado Parkway.

The recommendation came from a downtown traffic study commissioned by the agency.

The study estimates the cost for the work at \$349,500 for the improvements, including median changes, traffic line painting, pedestrian signals and other work at the intersection of Cape Coral Parkway and Del Prado Boulevard.

In other business:

- The agency board will set a date for a workshop to consider methods to hire another executive director. Suzanne Kuehn, currently in the position, resigned July 10. She remains in the position until January.
- A contract to upgrade and replace plants in the parking lot behind Iguana Mia will be considered.
- The board will review parking-lot lease agreements.
- A proposed Home & Garden Show will be updated.
- A Downtown Street Market will be considered for Vincennes Boulevard between Southeast 47th Terrace and Southeast 47th Street from November through April.

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