

BAD IDEA!

Gretsas' \$20,000 'solution' is worse than the problem



By CAL DEAL

FORT LAUDERDALE — City Manager Gretsas says parallel parking is the solution to the SE 13th Street median controversy.

It's a solution that's worse than the problem!

Residents of Poinciana Park are angry that the city has allowed 14 asphalt parking spaces to be built on what has been an all-green public right-of-way since 1924. They don't like looking at private car butts instead of beautiful public green space. They want the median restored.

Gretsas' Grand Idea is to replace the view of car butts with a view of car *doors*! He'd back those cars onto the street and park them end-to-end along both sides of the median — creating walls of cars that

will block most of the green space from view.

The Great Walls of Gretsas will be uglier than the car butt view that now exists!

The City Manager says his parallel parking plan will cost taxpayers \$20,000. He claims he has the authority to unilaterally approve the project and the expenditure! However, City Code *requires* that non-utility construction in public rights-of-way have City Commission approval (*See 25-150, 25-7, and 25-96 to 25-100*).

Gretsas formally unveiled his plan at an invitation-only meeting in his conference room Dec. 15. It has been rejected for its incredibly bad aesthetics, its cost, and its lack of City Commission approval by Ray Dettmann and this writer, leaders

of the "Restore the Median" effort.

City staff — without notifying neighboring property owners — illegally issued a permit for the parking spaces in July 2003. The permit essentially gave away \$300,000 in public land for a parking lot that benefits only private interests. Taxpayers are still paying to maintain the land.

The City Commission has failed to act, and Gretsas' plan seems designed to shield them from this hot-button issue.

City Attorney Harry Stewart says the illegal permit is legal; on Jan. 5, 2004, the Commission gave him a 2.5 percent raise.

Pictures and information about the median controversy can be found at: <http://www.graphicwitness.com/median>

Goodness, Gretsas, Great Walls of Tires! Cars Block View in Manager's Plan

