

CITY OF CORAL GABLES
Economic Development Board Meeting Minutes
Friday, December 13, 2013, 8:00 a.m.
1 Alhambra Plaza, Suite 617, Coral Gables, Florida 33134

MEMBERS	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	COMMISSIONERS
	'13	'13	'13	'13	'14	'14	'14	'14	'14	'14	'14	'14	
Scott Sime	E	P	A	P									Mayor Jim Cason
Alberto Manrara	P	P	E	P									Vice Mayor William H. Kerdyk, Jr.
Jack PJ Mitchell	P	P	P	P									Commissioner Pat Keon
June Morris	E	P	P	P									Commissioner Vince Lago
Alexander Binelo	P	E	P	E									Commissioner Frank Quesada

A = Absent
E = Excused Absence
P = Present
X = No Meeting

STAFF AND GUESTS:

Cynthia S. Birdsill, Director, Economic Sustainability Department

Megan Schmitt, Special Projects & Cultural Coordinator, Economic Sustainability Department

Jim Cason, Mayor

Meeting Motion Summary:

A motion to approve the minutes of the November 6, 2013 meeting was approved unanimously.

Mr. Sime brought the meeting to order at 8:06 a.m.

1. Citywide update presented by Mayor Cason

Mayor Cason began by informing the Board that the City of Coral Gables had just been awarded a silver prize at the United Nations-sanctioned International Awards for Liveable Communities (The LivCom Awards). Each year, communities from across the globe compete for the honor of being named the most liveable place within their population size. Mayor Cason explained that this prestigious award would be added to the list of the other accolades Coral Gables has received, all of which strengthen the City's reputation as one of the most beautiful small towns in the world, and because quality of life is so critical to business development, all of the City's branding activities benefit from this kind of recognition.

The Mayor then shared an overview of some of the progress being made on various beautifications projects throughout the City, including Ingraham Park; many historic fountains and entrances; renovations at the Biltmore/William H. Kerdyk Tennis Center; street repaving; and planting thousands of trees. In addition, the City is discussing with Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden planing some 250,000 orchids throughout trees in the City.

Mayor Cason updated Board members on several upcoming development projects, including the Old Spanish Village site opposite Ponce Circle Park. He noted that the developer of the site will likely contribute significantly to the Art in Public Places program. Ms. Birdsill updated the Board about the Segovia Circles International Call for Artists, informing them that 180 submissions were received from artists all over the world.

The Mayor noted that the City is still in court opposing FPL's proposed new power line location.

Mayor Cason said that the City Manager is working on the financing for Streetscape, which is a high priority project for the Commission, the BID and the Chamber. In addition, a parking study has been completed, and an RFP for the development of the two City-owned garages is under development.

The Mayor told Board members that the City of Miami recently expanded their free trolley service with a new route that will connect Downtown Miami and Miracle Mile.

Mr. Sime asked Mayor Cason where he thought the Board should focus their energy in terms of goals. The Mayor explained that his hope was to draw more young professionals to the City by offering them services and amenities that will allow them to live, work and play in Coral Gables. He said that adding more interesting shops, offering high end entertainment, developing housing that young professionals can afford, and expanding the trolley service are all ways to achieve this goal. The Mayor added that attracting consulates and companies whose employees are well compensated were also important. Recently, the City set up a non-profit organization that will allow City officials to begin promoting itself as an international business center, especially among companies located in the City's Sister Cities.

The Mayor encouraged Board members in their travels to other world-class cities, to look for ideas and designs that they might suggest to enhance the City. Ms. Birdsill added that in the coming year there would likely be economic development initiatives going before the Commission to which the Board could lend support.

2. Review of the November 6, 2013 meeting minutes

Mr. Mitchell made a motion to approve the October 2, 2013 meeting minutes. Ms. Morris seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

3. Discussion of upcoming year's goals

Due to time, the Board decided to take up the issue of goals at the next meeting.

4. Update on Business Tax Licenses and New Businesses/ "Welcome to Coral Gables" New Business Letter presented by Michelle Cash

The Business Tax Licenses and New Business report was reviewed by the Board.

Ms. Cash explained that staff created a letter to welcome new businesses to Coral Gables as soon as they open. She said that the letter thanks business owners for choosing the City, and provides them with important city contact information, as well as lets them know that the Economic Sustainability Department staff can act as their liaison to other departments. The Mayor mentioned that he sends a letter to every new resident that moves to Coral Gables. He also said that he does a ribbon cutting for any new business that asks. Ms. Birdsill suggested that Board members attend the ribbon cuttings, and also spread the word about this opportunity to new or expanding businesses that are not aware that they can have a ribbon cutting.

5. Other City business

Ms. Cash told Board members about a program the City is participating in along with the Chamber, the BID and the Florida Retail Federation called "It's a Gables Holiday" that encourages business owners to dress up their storefronts for the holiday season. The public will vote for their favorite on social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter. Three winners will be recognized at a Chamber breakfast in January.

Mr. Roberts reminded the Board that Jazz in the Gables starts on January 15, 2014 and the Mayor mentioned that the Farmers' Market begins on January 18, 2014.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:07 a.m.

The next Economic Development Board meeting will be held on January 17, 2013.

Respectfully submitted,

Megan Cross Schmitt, Special Projects & Cultural Coordinator
Economic Sustainability Department