

**CITY OF CORAL GABLES/UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI COMMUNITY RELATIONS
COMMITTEE**

MEETING MINUTES

MONDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2010

**Coral Gables Police Department Community Meeting Room
Coral Gables, Florida**

MEMBERS:

Robert Berman
Tamara Hartnett
Rick Munarriz
Rene Alvarez
Bruce Steinberger
Sydney Josepher
Dr. Patricia A. Whitely
Rudy Fernandez
David Rivero
Ethan J. Alpern
Christina Farmer*
Lionel Moise

	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O
Robert Berman	+	+	+	+	+	+	P	+	+	+	+	P
Tamara Hartnett	+	+	+	+	+	+	E	+	+	+	+	P
Rick Munarriz	+	+	+	+	+	+	P	+	+	+	+	A
Rene Alvarez	+	+	+	+	+	+	A	+	+	+	+	P
Bruce Steinberger	+	+	+	+	+	+	P	+	+	+	+	P
Sydney Josepher	+	+	+	+	+	+	E	+	+	+	+	E
Dr. Patricia A. Whitely	+	+	+	+	+	+	E	+	+	+	+	P
Rudy Fernandez	+	+	+	+	+	+	P	+	+	+	+	P
David Rivero	+	+	+	+	+	+	P	+	+	+	+	P
Ethan J. Alpern	+	+	+	+	+	+	P	+	+	+	+	P
Christina Farmer*	+	+	+	+	+	+	P	+	+	+	+	P
Lionel Moise	+	+	+	+	+	+	P	+	+	+	+	-

APPOINTED BY:

Mayor Donald D. Slesnick, II
Vice Mayor William H. Kerdyk, Jr.
Comm. Maria Anderson
Comm. Rafael Cabrera, Jr.
Comm, Wayne Withers
City Manager, Patrick G. Salermo
Vice President, Student Affairs, UM
Vice President, Community Relations, UM
Director of Public Safety, UM
Inter-fraternity Council President, UM
Student Government President, UM
Student Government President, UM

STAFF IN ATTENDANCE:

Carmen Olazabal, Building and Zoning Department Director
Virginia Goizueta, Building and Zoning Department

A = Absent

E = Excused

P = Present

+ = No Meeting

***** = New Member

- = Resigned Member

GUESTS: Janet Gavarrete, Assistant for Vice President for Campus Planning and Development
Alicia Corral, UM Campus Planner; Gilbert Arias, UM Assistant VP for Student Affairs; Mindy Herris, Multimedia Coordinator, Jeff Bass, attorney representing the University of Miami

I. CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Berman at 5:06 p.m. Committee members introduced themselves.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – MARCH 2, 2010:

Mr. Rivero made a motion to approve the March 2, 2010 minutes. Mr. Steinberger seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

III. UPDATE ON U.M. PLANNING & CONSTRUCTION INITIATIVES:

Ms. Corral updated the Committee on the following:

- The Alumni Center is completed
- Construction on the wellness Center began this February and it is expected to be finished in February next year.
- The addition for the Cox Science Building, the Neuroscience Pavilion, has been approved by the Board of Architects and it's currently in the Building permitting process. The University hopes to start Construction this December.
- Miami-Dade Transit will fund most of the construction of the Pedestrian Bridge linking the Metro Rail Station with the Shopping Center across US-1 where the Friday's restaurant is located. The City of Coral Gables and the University are holding conversations to try to fill in the gap on the financing.
- The City of Coral Gables Historic Preservation Department has determined the large art building and four apartment buildings to be historically significant; these will be scheduled to be restored. The non-significant buildings will be scheduled for demolition in the near future.

Ms. Tamara Hartnett requested a clarification on the location of the proposed addition to the Cox Building. Alicia Corral clarified the addition would be located behind the building, in the back by the arboretum adjacent to the loading dock.

Mr. Steinberger recollected the overpass was to be funded by the State of Florida; not by the City nor by the University. Mr. Rudy Fernandez explained the cost of the overpass was between 6.5 to 7 million dollars. While 5 million have been allocated by the State, there was still a 1.5 to 2 million gap therefore; the University had contacted the County and the City to see where they can bridge that gap and get the overpass constructed. This intersection is a major safety concern for the University and Coral Gables residents.

- A presentation was made by Jeff Bass, attorney representing the University of Miami, regarding the Development Agreement. He explained that on September 28, 2010, the City of Coral Gables Commission approved the Development Agreement for second reading. On the same day they approved and adopted the University comprehensive plan amendment along with other components of this Development agreement. He went on to explain the different parts of this agreement.

Mr. William Hartnett residing at 4950 Campo Sano Court expressed his disapproval and concerns regarding the approved Development Agreement. Mr. Hartnett requested the Committee to pass a resolution asking the Commission not to approve the Development

Monday, October 4, 2010

Continued

Agreement. Mr. Hartnett stated the agreement made between the University of Miami and the City of Coral Gables was the worst thing for the City of Coral Gables. "For 84 years the City has been taking taxes off the tax rolls because the University is not a taxable institution. They pay no taxes on properties like the house in Segovia, and they turn around and sell it for a tremendous profit. Every citizen that owns property in the City of Coral Gables has been subsidizing the University of Miami for police and fire services. Just ask them to see how many times they have to respond to the campus. It used to be the University of Miami in Coral Gables now it's Coral Gables at the University of Miami. This agreement does not do anything for the school board or the state, county or navigation taxes; all those items are off the board. Every time they acquire and expand that campus they take dollars out of your pocket. It's time for this committee and others speak up and deny this development agreement. I have not read this agreement in its entirety but I know and have heard this agreement does not do anything for the City of Coral Gables, the school board system, the state or for the navigation deal. There is an agreement signed in 1979 with the State of Florida limiting the campus to 260 acres and 12,000 students and it shall be adhered to. This agreement bypasses the concurrency statutes and regulations of the State, County and the City of Coral Gables. There is no trip available for area 45 & 46; all they do is add. Increasing the Bank United occupancy from 7,500 to 10,000, which they build out illegally, will now increase the traffic jam by 23 % that the City of Coral Gables Police Department will have to handle for every event they have. The interior road was proposed and agreed to since 1955 when the City of Coral Gables gave to the University of Miami Miller Road to the University so they could build the student activity center and at that time they were suppose to develop the interior road. There are two sets of plans that every commissioner and everyone have since 1975 for the construction of that interior road. The re-zone areas are going to be utilized as offices to take away from the private sector which could have paid City, County and the State taxes. That area has been zone for houses and other things but they want to increase the square footage of that campus which already has twice the commercial square footage of the City of Coral Gables. There is a fire problem with the high-rises and the need for additional fire equipment that will be needed to service that area. I think it's time for this committee to make a resolution to the City Commission opposing this development agreement."

Mr. Berman reminded Mr. Hartnett the Development Agreement had already been passed and adopted by the City Commission and the Planning and Zoning Board. Tamara Hartnett added the neighbors had many concerns regarding this Agreement and requested an additional meeting take place in which the neighbors could attend and discuss this matter further. Mr. Berman expressed his disappointment with the neighbors opposing this project due to the small turn-out at the meetings held by University of Miami as a requirement of the Planning and Zoning Board. Although several newspaper articles and letters had been written; he hadn't heard of any complaints other than the one resident, Mr. Hartnett present at this meeting and his points were very well taken. Ms Hartnett replied that the meetings were held during the summer when the residents were away and were not able to attend. She also expressed the neighbors were not aware of this meeting of the University of Miami Community Relations Committee. Mr. Berman explained that he had tried to hold this meeting in the City Commission chambers and invite the neighbors however; he had not received approval from the City with enough time to notify the neighbors. He also explained due to budgetary constraints this committee was down to two meetings a year. Ms. Hartnett felt the University had their meetings when the neighbors

City of Coral Gables Community Relations Committee Meeting Minutes

Monday, October 4, 2010

Continued

were away on vacation and/or they were held at the worst time possible when they couldn't attend. "Instead, the neighbors call us because they feel we are a valuable source." Mr. Berman stated the chamber was packed at the Planning & Zoning Board. He did not recognize anyone but there were a lot of people there. Mr. Hartnett stated it was the greatest University P R deal because the majority of the people had been University of Miami personnel.

Rudy Fernandez explained the mission of the University was to be a good community partner and the University had worked with the City as to the dates of these public meetings. "This committee is composed of two types of members; the appointed University personnel and City appointed personnel. We have worked very hard on this process in coordination with the City Commission and the City Manager and we have made sure there is always resident input. Although we are far from perfect; we've always aimed to be good community partners."

Mr. Steinberger made the observation "the fact that this committee was having this conversation at this point in the process meant something got off-track and what was being presented today was a done deal. The roll of this committee was to have the dialog between the University and the citizens and to be having this dialog today speaks for itself." Ms. Hartnett insisted "the dialog had to take place throughout the process and did not feel this was a done deal." Ms. Hartnett asked Mr. Hartnett to make a motion for the committee to vote on; however, since he is not a member of the committee he was not able to make it. She then decided to make a motion to vote no to the Development agreement as approved but there was no second.

Mr. Rudy Fernandez asked the chairperson to remind the committee members of the role of the Community Relations Committee per the City's creation. He thought the authority of the approval of the Development Agreement lies with the City and was beyond the scope of this Committee.

Mr. Berman complied and by reading the purpose of the committee: "To provide an opportunity between the University, its neighbors and the City. To create a forum to hear complaints and concerns. To establish a procedure to resolve problems and to foster better relations between all concern parties."

Ms Hartnett insisted that she had been receiving lots of calls from residents expressing "they were very unhappy regarding what was going on" and requested a meeting next month, in order for these people to come in to voice their opinions.

Mr. Steinberger agreed this was not the role of this committee and stated the appropriate approvals had already been obtained. "However, the role of this committee, in terms of the dialog to express concerns, should have taken place six months ago and the fact that it did not take place six months ago had created this overall frustration." Mr. Berman reminded everyone the committee had met in March, 2010 and wondered why this issue had not been brought up at that time; as a matter of fact, the University informed the Committee the construction of the inner road was to commence within three or four months. "Were the University representatives misinformed?"

Monday, October 4, 2010

Continued

Alicia Corral explained she had attempted to reach the members of this Committee prior to the two neighborhood meetings to inform them regarding this matter and added "I am available for any neighbors that are interested or have any questions on this matter; please have them call me." She also stated copies of the master plan and other literatures were available.

Jeff Bass attorney for the University explained the Development agreement required an annual meeting be held by the leaders of both the City and the University to discuss the effects of it's implementation. He also added this project was design to happen within a twenty year term. "I might suggest this committee synchronizes it's meetings in advance of those annual meetings so that it's input can be share in a systemic way with the leaders of the University and the City." Mr. Berman wanted to make it clear the committee believed they have been left out of the loop. Mr. Rene Alvarez added "it's like being a day later and a dollar short."

IV. FOR GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS:

Mr. Fernandez updated the Committee on the following:

Mr. Fernandez suggest we communicate with the officials who appointed us and the City manager's office scheduling meetings in a timelier manner to have an effect on major things that are brought in front of the City Commission.

Mr. Berman suggested the committee members send e-mails to the officials who had appointed them to voice their concerns and opinions and encourage the citizens do the same. Ms. Hartnett added "The University should to know if there are things which can affect the neighborhood they should be voicing them out in our meetings."

Mr. Fernandez wanted the Committee to know the University is willing to meet with the representatives of the City as often as need be in order to have a good dialogue with the City and its neighbors like Mr. Hartnett. The University values the role of this Committee. Dr. Whitely who has been serving in the committee for fourteen years suggested we meet on a quarterly basis. Mr. Berman reminded everyone the reason we were meeting only twice a year was due to the City's budgetary constraints and the fact that everything was running along very quietly. "Our meetings were made of simple reports and suddenly this whole business fell in the cracks. We might want to start meeting on a quarterly basis."

Ms. Hartnett did not necessary think we needed to meet in a quarterly basis but asked we possibly meet when there are changes to be done, there is a plan, there are things happening or when there is something that will impact the neighbors. Rene Alvarez added "if the neighbors didn't show up for these neighborhood meetings what would make them want to show up for this meeting?" Ms. Hartnett explained that these meetings were done during the summer when people were out of town.

Janet Gavarrete added “if you would like to have us answer any specific questions or concerns the neighbors who are calling you might have, we are more than happy to sit down with the agreements, applications filed and/or approvals received and explain each and everything to them. There is no such thing as no more traffic studies quite the contrary there is a lot more reporting to the City on a number of things because of these approvals. The master plan did not change. We had a couple of neighborhood meetings where we went into specific details and had 4 separate mailings to over 1,700 homes. We have had maybe 5 to 7 people who have taken the time to read the notice in detail and give us a call to request copies and/or have asked questions which we’ve answered. Please note if there is any iota of information that people feel they don’t have, but would like to have, we are more than happy to sit down and go over everything. There have been changes but there has been no release of controls.” Mr. Berman suggested rounding up a dozen neighbors and having a meeting with the University planners. “I think they would be very willing to meet with them.” Mr. Hartnett stated the University shall be made aware the mailing list is not up to date; therefore, the new residents are not aware of what is going on.

V. UPDATE/PRESIDENT OF INTERFRATERNITY COUNCIL:

Mr. Alpern updated the Committee on the following:

The seven fraternity houses which he helps to manage have followed all the rules Coral Gables has set forth. He also wanted everyone to know the members of these fraternities are very happy to be citizens of this City. With the expansion of campus and the expansion of the student body there is a lot going on student and Greek life all together. More and more organizations are receiving philanthropy money from our fraternities and sororities and other Greek involvement in philanthropy. There is a new fraternity on campus the first fraternity for the Gay, bisexual and progressive men. It’s a new way to improve the fraternity diversity. We are the most diverse campus in the country and now we can say the same about our Greek system.

Pietro, vice president of the student government and a fraternity member, added “all of the fraternities have taken active steps to improve the appearance of their houses. Although the majority of the houses are run down, we’ve seen major external improvements within the last year such as new paint jobs and the construction of a new house on campus. I can speak for my fraternity we’ve been changing our landscaping and making improvements to our house so it would look visually pleasing.”

Mr. Berman asked Dr. Whitely if there have been any complaints. Dr. Whitely responded “everything was terrific; we have very great leaders in student government and fraternities this year. Might want to look at Sigma Chi’s house which is located next to the Alumni center; there are some improvements taking place for the next 36 hours in anticipation to the opening of the Alumni Center. With 500 people expected to visit on Friday, we want to make sure the house looks in good shape. I would like to mention 90 percent of our freshman are now on campus; orientations went very well. Most of our first year students live at Stanford. This weekend is the Family weekend and it is also the game against FSU at 8:00pm ABC national television; you really can have it much better than all the parents and about 7800 students. It will be a big weekend for us.

Homecoming weekend is the first weekend in November and we are playing Maryland. November 5th is the parade, the concert on the green and the boat burning. As you know we are hosting the Dali Lama on October 26th at 1:30 in the afternoon; all the tickets have been sold out. We lost 300 beds in our apartment area but we have been able to accommodate all the students that requested housing. University Village is full; the students can't drive on campus until 4:00 pm in the afternoon. Freshmen do not have cars. We have seen a drop of 30% on sophomores driving. Since they did not drive as freshmen; they have become accustom to ride the shuttles and/or rent the zip cars, so that is very positive. I don't know if anyone has realized but there are less shuttles on the road during the day; we are talking about hurricane busses we've gone from 17 to 6 busses in an hour. There are two routes; one goes on the San Amaro side to the fountain and from Hecht athletic to the fountain on the Ash building. The other one goes from the Ponce garage to the Stanford circle. We will take the student within 5 minutes of where they need to walk to. There have been some issues with the class schedules but we've worked with the students and made changes in the schedule; overall there has been a drastic change with the amount of shuttles which is a positive thing. We have given the guide to every student that lives in Coral Gables and South Miami; it was sent out this week by the division of student affairs. This committee helped us put it together and its design, a couple of years ago. Every student this year is getting this guide no matter where you live last year. Sunset shuttle is still provided on Thursday, Friday & Saturday; Yves ride still goes to the Grove on Thursday and Friday; we have discontinued Saturdays. We've just started a campaign, the division of student affairs and I, over the summer you might have seen the posters and banners saying "canes care for other canes." This is an attempt to have our students come forward if they are concerned about a fellow student. There has been a rash of suicides around college campuses and what we are trying to encourage is to call somebody. If you are concerned about somebody, about a drug problem, alcohol problem, they are not doing well in school and/or they are homesick, whatever it is, call somebody. There are ten numbers they can call starting with the chief of Police. Phase I is kind of a PR and the Phase II will be an actual website you can go unanimously and put in a comment and it will pop up on our e-mail and we will decide who will respond."

VI. UPDATE/PRESIDENT OF STUDENT GOVERNMENT:

Ms. Christina Farmer President and Pietro Bortoletto Vice President provided the Committee with the following update:

Christina reported they have been working on a lot of different projects; one of those being the green initiatives. The increase in the number of recycling bins inside and outside the classroom to encourage recycling. They are also working on the composting with the dining halls. "Canes nights" is a new program where the freshman are transported by busses off campus to see the City and interact with our residents and experience what's around them.

Pietro reported they are trying to get the library to stay open twenty four hours during mid-terms as it currently does for finals. They want to make sure there are facilities and security for students who want to study in that section of the campus, late at night. Also they are working on expanding bike paths. President Shaleyla has requested for them to look to expand pedestrian and bicycle programs in the University. They are trying to decrease the activity of cars and busses around the campus and reduce some of the traffic within the San Amaro Drive area by having people to stay internal. They are organizing a bicycle tour of the campus within the next couple of weeks. "Several members of the Student Government will be riding around trying to determine where we would benefit by having an internal bike path."

Christina also reported about a new incentive program which rewards student for attending sporting events with points that can be redeemed for raffles. Pietro added they are trying to encourage attendance to sporting events which aren't as highly attended such as women's volleyball and women's soccer so they can get those seats filled.

VII. MEETING ATTENDANCE:

Mr. Sydney Josepher could not attend the meeting; he is attending a boys and girls club event schedule for this evening.

Rick Munarizz is absent.

Ethan suggested if the frequency of the meetings was to increase, we select the meeting dates in advance allowing for staff to plan for the meetings.

VIII. SCHEDULE OF NEXT MEETING:

Mr. Berman reminded everyone that next scheduled meeting would be on Monday, March 7, 2011 and asked if anyone would like a meeting sooner? Ms. Hartnett expressed she would like to meet sooner but she would have to coordinate with the neighbors. Mr. Berman decided to leave the meeting scheduled for March 7, 2010 unless there was a request to have a meeting sooner at which time a meeting would be called by the chairman of the committee pending room availability.

IX. MATTERS FROM THE FLOOR:

On September 10, 2010 the City attorney's office held an Ethics and Public trust training session and has provided copies of the documents for the committee members. The training session is available on CD.

City of Coral Gables Community Relations Committee Meeting Minutes

Monday, October 4, 2010

Continued

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Virginia Goizueta
Secretary to the Community Relations Committee