

CITY OF CORAL GABLES
Economic Development Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, April 7, 2010, 8:00 a.m.
1 Alhambra Plaza, Suite 617, Coral Gables, Florida 33134

MEMBERS

Mr. Bertram “Chico” Goldsmith
Mr. Raymond Zomerfeld (Chair)
Mr. John M. “Jack” Thomson
Ms. Haydee Polo
Mr. James Casey (Vice Chair)

M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A
■	E	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	X	P
P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	X	P
■	E	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	P	X	P
■	P	P	E	P	P	P	P	P	P	X	P
P	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	E	P	X	E

COMMISSIONERS

Mayor Donald D. Slesnick II
Vice Mayor William H. Kerdyk, Jr.
Commissioner Maria Anderson
Commissioner Rafael “Ralph” Cabrera, Jr.
Commissioner Wayne “Chip” Withers

A = Absent
E = Excused Absence
P = Present
X = No Meeting
= Special Meetings
■ = Not on Board

STAFF:

Ms. Dona Spain, Assistant City Manager
Ms. Cynthia S. Birdsill, Economic Sustainability Department Director
Mr. Fred Couceyro, Parks and Recreation Department Director
Ms. Jessica Wotherspoon, Business Development Specialist

GUESTS: None

Meeting Motion Summary: (No Commission action requested)

- **The minutes of the February 3, 2010 Board meeting were approved.**
 - **A motion was unanimously approved that the Board support the purchase of the land at 4650 Alhambra Circle for use as a public park.**
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1. **Meeting Called to Order:** Chairperson Ray Zomerfeld called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.
2. **Attendance:** Mr. Casey was excused
3. **Approval of February 3, 2010 Board Meeting Minutes**
Mr. Goldsmith motioned to approve the Board meeting minutes.
Ms. Polo seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.
4. **Presentation regarding purchase of property at 4650 Alhambra Circle for use as park land as required per Division 12, Section 2-2016 of the Procurement Code.**

The Director of the City’s Parks and Recreation Department, Fred Couceyro, presented the purchase proposal.

In 2006, Miami-Dade County passed the Building Better Communities Government Obligation Bond (BBC GOB) program that distributed funds to municipalities for land acquisitions and enhancements of public parks and plazas. As a result, the City of Coral Gables has been able to utilize these funds for the acquisition

and enhancement of parks and plazas throughout Coral Gables. Presently, the City has a little over \$900,000 of these bond funds remaining.

The Parks and Recreation Department has a goal to make it so that every area in the City is within a half-mile radius of an open public space for that neighborhood to enjoy. The City's Parks and Recreation Advisory Board has wanted the property located at 4650 Alhambra Circle for many years to become public park land. This is because it is located within a neighborhood that presently does not meet City's half-mile goal. Unfortunately, since the property came on the market, the asking price has been beyond the City's roughly \$900,000 BBC GOB funds remaining.

Within the last year, Miami-Dade County through its Safe Neighborhood Parks (SNP) bond program issued an RFP for municipalities who are seeking additional funds for specific park projects. The City responded to the RFP with a proposal to utilize any granted funds toward the acquisition of the 4650 Alhambra Circle land. As a result, the County awarded the City of Coral Gables \$220,000 of additional grant funds to assist with the acquisition of the property. Mr. Couceyro mentioned that although this County grant money must be matched, it can be matched with BBC GOB funds already set aside for the City.

Three appraisals on the property conclude:

- M. Scott Dooley of R.E. Analysts-Residential, appraised the property as of September 21, 2009 at \$1,070,000.
- Paul A. Borja of Tech Appraisers of Florida, appraised the property as of July 16, 2009 at \$1,022,000.
- Danny Ojeda of Appraisal Link Corp., appraised the property as of July 17, 2009 at \$924,000.

The seller ultimately lowered its original price and offered a final price at \$1,000,000 for the 21,000 SF vacant lot.

Mr. Thomson asked what would the City need to do to the property for it to be ready to be used as public park space. Mr. Couceyro said grading would need to be done, and sod would need to be put down. The initial costs are estimated to run a few thousand dollars to beautify the land.

Mr. Zomerfeld asked that about the possibility of there being a septic tank on the property and what could be the potential costs that might arise because of it. Mr. Couceyro said he would look into this.

Mr. Zomerfeld asked if there will be established guidelines put in writing stating specifically how this and other park lands will be used. Mr. Couceyro said it is not likely because the needs of neighborhoods change over time.

Per the City's Procurement Code requirement, the Board then provided answers to the following questions.

1. *Will the proposed use be in keeping with City goals and objectives?* The Board unanimously said yes.
2. *What is the economic impact to the City and is the proposed use in keeping with a public purpose and community needs?* The Board unanimously agreed that there was nothing that would significantly affect the City's revenue base or costs, and that the use was in keeping with a public purpose and community needs.
3. *Are there alternatives available for the proposed disposition, including assembly of adjacent properties, and can the project be accomplished under a private ownership assembly?* The Board unanimously agreed with Mr. Couceyro that there were no suitable park land acquisition alternatives available for the proposed disposition and that the same project could not be accomplished under a private ownership assembly.

Ms. Polo motioned that the Board support the purchase of the land at 4650 Alhambra Circle for use as a public park. Mr. Goldsmith seconded the motion and the Board approved it unanimously.

5. Update on the Miracle Mile and Giralda Avenue Streetscape Plan.

Streetworks, LLC has been retained to look at and provide comments on the plans generated for the Miracle Mile and Giralda Avenue Streetscape Plan.

6. Update on Wine & Fashion Florence Café opening up in the City; a collaboration with the Beacon Council

The Beacon Council and Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce have been working with a consortium of business, arts, and governmental entities from Florence and the Tuscany Region of Italy. This past November, a delegation from the consortium made a debut at the Biltmore Hotel to promote its new project “Wine & Fashion Florence Café.” This event was the precursor to the consortium bringing this project to Miami in the form of a café, winebar, showroom, and fashion store. The City’s property at 220 Aragon Avenue has been selected as the consortium’s target retail location, and the City is in leasing negotiations with the entity.

7. Update on Economic Sustainability Asset Manager/Assistant Director position

The City is interviewing candidates for the Asset Manager/Assistant Director position. Once on board, they will manage the City’s leased properties.

8. Distribution of marketing brochure and update of other marketing efforts

A hard copy of the City’s new electronic marketing brochure was handed out and the Board was told about the City’s plans to redevelop its website.

9. Ponce de Leon Blvd. median construction, Phase II

The second phase of the median build-out is set to begin this Spring and is expected to be completed over the next ten months.

10. Additional Business:

A. MBEC Seminars:

Over the next few months the Economic Sustainability Department will host the Minority Business Enterprise Center while it provides office hours and seminars to the local business community.

B. Segovia Median:

A question was raised about the Segovia Road median project and an update will be provided at the May Board meeting.

11. General City Update: It was noted that the City’s Building & Zoning Director had retired and that Manny Lopez is the interim department director until a new one is hired.

Motion to adjourn made by Mr. Goldsmith and seconded by Ms. Polo.

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 8:52 a.m.

Next Economic Development Board Meeting: Wednesday, May 5, 2010 at 8:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Jessica Wotherspoon
Business Development Specialist
Economic Sustainability Department