

CITY OF CORAL GABLES

LANDSCAPE BEAUTIFICATION ADVISORY BOARD

<https://zoom.us/j/83110285038>

THURSDAY, JUNE 8th, 2023 – 10:30 A.M.

- MEETING MINUTES -

MEMBERS	A 22	M 22	J 22	S 22	O 22	N 22	D 22	J 23	F 23	M 23	M 23	J 23	APPOINTED BY:
Carolina Estefan-Chahine	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	P	P	P	P	P	Mayor Lago
Anne Boynton-Trigg	E	P	E	E	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	Vice Mayor Anderson
Elizabeth Parnes	.	.	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	Commissioner Mena
Carmen Lizama-Gaspa -R	P	P	P	P	E	A	P	P	P	R	-	-	Commissioner Fors
Nancy Leslie	P	P	P	E	E	P	P	P	E	P	P	P	Commissioner Menendez
Amy Dash	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	A	City Manager
Maria Debye Saxinger	-	-	P	P	E	P	E	P	P	P	P	P	Board-As-A-Whole

P – Present
E – Excused Absence
A – Absent
(-) – No Appointment
(*) – No Meeting

STAFF:

Deena Bell-Llewellyn, Assistant PW Director, Greenspace

Pilar Wiese, Recording Secretary, Greenspace

GUEST:

Marlin Ebbert, Chair, Sustainability Advisory board

CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order at 10:35 a.m. The roll was taken, and a quorum was present.

MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL:

The board reviewed the May 11th, 2023, minutes. **A motion was made to “Approve the minutes of May 11th, 2023” The motion was seconded, voted upon, and adopted unanimously.**

PRESENTATIONS / DISCUSSIONS:

- **OBJECTIVES CORAL GABLES SUSTAINABILITY BOARD:** Chair of the Sustainability Advisory board, Ms. Marlin Ebbert was invited to attend the board meeting for the board members to have a better understanding of sustainability as relates to the City of Coral Gables. Ms. Boynton-Trigg explained to Ms. Ebbert that the board have been working on its mission statement and board was not clear if its responsibility was just for beauty or sustainable landscaping is part of that. They wonder why such a progressive city like Coral Gables does not participate in programs to recycle vegetation, composting, etc.

Ms. Ebbert shared that when her husband passed, she did not know how to dispose the pills. People usually throw them into the toilet. She said that it has been found that putting pills into the toilet have killed fish. Police department can receive pills to be incinerated. She said that she was tired of seeing people throwing electronics, paint, batteries in their trash pile. Some years ago, the Sustainability board started an event to dispose electronics and it has been so successful that now the city has two events per year. People want to do the right thing, just have to educate and guide them.

Ms. Bell said that all residents can compost in their own property. She suggested to get composting bins and set them up in the backyard, out of view, not visible from the street. She said that there is not a large company in South Florida that provides composting in a citywide scale. Ms. Boynton-Trigg commented that having plenty of agricultural in the state it could be used to compost and help agricultural businesses. Ms. Estephan-Chahine said that being the city beautiful with a lot of trees and plants, the clippings and cuttings could become mulch and offered to the residents. Ms. Bell informed the board that trimming contractor chip Christmas trees and the mulch is used for landscaping sites maintained by the city. Ms. Parnes suggested that topic for next year's Farmer Market should include ideas for sustainability in a garden or landscape. Ms. Debye Saxinger said she knows that the city of Palm Beach has put together a mini guide to educate residential properties. Ms. Parnes intervened saying it will be a good idea for the Landscape Beautification and Sustainability boards to come together with a project to work on how to tie in sustainability and landscape beautification.

Ms. Estefan-Chahine inquired if the landscaping debris collected by the city solid waste division could be used for mulch for the residents, but Ms. Bell said that those piles are usually contaminated with all kinds of materials. It is impossible to separate the green matter from pet waste, broken glass, etc. coming from the pile. Ms. Bell said that illegal dumping is a big part of the contamination problem and that landscapers from outside the city dump their trash on resident's piles when they are not being seen. Ms. Boynton-Trigg suggested to write a letter to the commissioners with a concern from the board to address the issue and find a solution to compost in the city of Coral Gables.

- **STATE OF ROAD AT INTERSECTION OF OLD CUTLER AND RED RD.:** Ms. Estefan-Chahine said she put this item in the agenda because she wanted to put some pressure into this issue and for the city commissioners to read it in the minutes. Since she brought it up to the county last fall, they have done a traffic study, but no results have been shared yet. Damage is on both sides, but especially on the right side of Old Cutler, which is completely destroyed, and very hazardous. Congested traffic crates a bottleneck, and the area is directly across from the fire station. This problem area needs to be addressed urgently. Cars are destroying the area trying to get around traffic coming from Gulliver school. Also, the column gate entrance is damaged as it has been hit by car crashes. Ms. Bell said that she will bring it up to the Public Works director to be on their radar, to move it forward even though it is a county project. She suggested to find out the county commissioner of that district and contact their office, to make more noise to be heard. Ms. Estefan-Chahine said that down the road there was a renovation project sponsored by commissioner Raquel Regalado.

- **DISCUSSION AND AGREEMENT ON THE BOARD'S MISSION AND PURPOSE:** Ms. Parnes asked board members if they agreed with the latest revised version for the board's mission statement which includes all the comments from last board meeting. Landscape Beautification Advisory board mission statement to read as follows:

The Landscape Beautification Advisory Board's (LBAB) mission is to promote the ecological beautification of public and private green spaces within Coral Gables. The members are charged with advising related City departments about the development and management of public landscapes within the city. The board encourages Coral Gables residents to create and maintain beautiful and sustainable landscapes through education and the recognition of successful residential projects.

Activities pursuant to the mission of this Board include:

- Advising on the preservation and further development of the City's urban forest.
- Advising on landscaping improvements on the public rights of way.
- Advising on new city landscaping projects.
- Advising on plans for significant public landscaping projects.
- Awarding annual beautification awards in recognition of outstanding efforts in landscape aesthetics of residential properties.
- Facilitating public outreach and education seminars regarding the selection, planting, and maintenance of trees and landscaping.
- Coordinating the annual Arbor Day celebration.

A motion was made, “to approve revised version of mission statement for the Landscape Beautification Advisory board.” The motion was seconded, voted upon and adopted unanimously.

- **DISCUSSION MOBILITY HUB:** Ms. Boynton-Trigg said that she requested item be discussed but it seems that mobility hub is being redesign so no action should be taken at this time.

Ms. Parnes suggested to send a thank you note to Joanne Matthews representing the Garden Club for her service and dedication to the board.

Ms. Parnes said everyone on the board should be proud for all the accomplishments. She said that it has been a very nice experience and a pleasure to serve as a chair and thanked the board members for the opportunity to serve in that position.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:40am

**THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE HELD ON
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 14th, 2023, 10:30 AM**