

# City of Coral Gables

405 Biltmore Way  
Coral Gables, FL 33134  
[www.coralgables.com](http://www.coralgables.com)



## Meeting Minutes

Thursday, November 13, 2025

8:15 AM

<https://coralgables.zoom.us/j/89943974263>

Youth Center - Conference Room

**Parks and Recreation Advisory Board**

## **CALL TO ORDER**

Meeting called to order at 8:19 a.m.

## **ROLL CALL**

Present:

Jennifer Marques  
Vanessa Gutierrez  
Erik Rodriguez  
Michelle White  
Maite Halley  
Richard Smit  
Kirk Menendez

## **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

A MOTION TO APPROVE THE AUGUST, SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER MEETING MINUTES WAS MADE BY BOARD MEMBER KIRK MENENDEZ AND SECONDED BY VICE CHAIRPERSON MAITE HALLEY. ALL IN FAVOR; PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

## **DIRECTORS REPORT**

**a. General Updates**

Director Couceyro opened his report with a summary of fall programming, beginning with the Pumpkin Patch event. He stated that the event sold out the day of, and although pumpkins ran low, many attendees did not take theirs, which ensured that supplies remained sufficient for photo opportunities and activities. He noted the strong response on social media and commented on the overall success of the event.

He described a recurring pattern in which small events grow significantly over time, requiring the department to decide whether to expand them or scale them back. He referenced the Easter Egg Hunt as an example, explaining that reduced advertising has allowed attendance to remain manageable. He stated that similar considerations will apply to next year's Pumpkin Patch, particularly if improvements at Ponce Circle Park require relocation.

Director Couceyro continued with a review of Halloween programming. He reported that the Adult Activity Center's Spooktacular event sold out, while the Haunted House drew lower attendance than in previous years. He suggested that scheduling the event on Halloween may have contributed to competing family obligations. He also described the high volume of trick-or-treaters at City sites, including Halloween on the Mile and the Country Club, and he confirmed that no significant safety concerns or incidents were reported.

He then provided a recap of the Veterans Day ceremony and the naming of Staff Sergeant Carl Philippe Enis Park. He explained that although the permanent bronze plaque had been delayed at the foundry, a temporary sign was installed in time for the ceremony. He shared that the family was pleased with the event. He also reported that the department is exploring enhancements for the park, such as the installation of a flagpole, a commemorative walkway, and the potential addition of memorial bricks.

**b. Special Events**

Adult Activity Center 17th Annual Dr. William M. Schiff Art Show - Friday, November 14 at 6 p.m., Coral Gables Christmas Tree Lighting - Friday, December 5 at 5 p.m., A Saturday at the Cinema showing: " The Time Machine" - Saturday, December 6 at 11 a.m., Centennial Grand Finale - Sunday, December 7 at 6 p.m., Adult Activity Center Annual Holiday Luncheon - Friday, December 12 at 1 p.m., Coral Gables Hot Chocolate with Santa -Saturday, December 13 & 20 at 9 a.m., Festival of Lights - Sunday, December 14 at 1:30p.m., Menorah Lighting - Tuesday, December 16 at 5:30 p.m., Movies Under the Gables Moonlight - Friday, December 19 at 6 p.m. and Junior Orange Bowl Parade - Sunday, December 14 at 5 p.m.

**c. C.I.P Updates**

Director Couceyro provided updates on several capital improvement projects. He

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reported that the Venetian Pool renovation is nearing completion and that staff training on the updated mechanical systems is underway. He explained that the walkway replacement has significantly improved accessibility and safety, and that an official reopening date will be announced after the Centennial celebration.

He stated that David Lawrence Park (formerly Blue Road Park) is expected to open for a soft launch soon, with the formal naming ceremony planned for after the holiday season. He added that construction at Phillips Park began on November 3 and will include improvements to fields, playgrounds, restrooms and walkways. He added that discussions are ongoing regarding potential court resurfacing and future pickleball and basketball configurations.

He informed the board that the Granada Golf Course shelters are pending review by the Historic Preservation Board and that architectural drawings are currently in progress. He then addressed concerns regarding delays in planning for additional pickleball courts at the Biltmore. He acknowledged the need for updated assessments and stated that the department is reviewing logistics, parking considerations, and possible site configurations. He added that community needs for both tennis and pickleball will be considered in future recommendations.

A board member asked for an update on prior discussions regarding the possibility of creating a walking path around the Granada Golf Course. The member noted increasing concerns about golf balls striking vehicles, private property, and pedestrians, and shared several recent incidents in which golf balls had crossed into streets or swales. The member emphasized that while many residents currently walk around the course, bringing walkers closer to active play areas could increase safety risks and potential liability exposure for the City.

Director Couceyro stated that although the concept of a walking path has been discussed periodically over the years, he has not been involved in any recent planning meetings or seen any capital projects initiated for this purpose. He recalled that similar concepts had been presented during community discussions, including a proposal to convert traffic around the course to one-way in order to accommodate a walking, running, and cycling lane. He noted that resident opposition at the time prevented the project from moving forward.

Director Couceyro explained that the Granada Golf Course is heavily used, currently approaching approximately 66,000–67,000 rounds of play for the year. He clarified that under law, liability for errant golf balls rests with the golfer rather than the City. He also explained that courses with high beginner participation—such as Granada, which features straight fairways, minimal water, and a nine-hole layout—tend to experience more errant shots due to the skill level of players.

He further noted that the course's age and popularity create ongoing maintenance challenges. While most greens are in good condition, Greens 1 and 3 require focused attention and are being monitored closely. Historically, the course has required resurfacing every 13–14 years, and it is currently in year 12 of that cycle. He added

that strong maintenance efforts have extended the life of the course, and that staff continues to work on targeted areas of concern.

The course supports high school golf teams and hosts a youth instructional program that grew rapidly enough to require a formal bid solicitation. Director Couceyro noted that the site is also used for summer camps and after-school programs, all of which remain popular with the community.

Director Couceyro reiterated that while the idea of a walking path resurfaces periodically, he is not aware of any active project, funding, or formal directive to advance such an initiative at this time.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **a. Park Naming Policy.**

Director Couceyro presented and reviewed the Park Naming Policy with the board. The policy was originally developed in 2016 in collaboration with a former commissioner. He explained that the intent of the policy was to establish a formal process for evaluating and recommending park names, which included a nomination application, review by a designated nominating committee, and subsequent consideration by the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board before forwarding a recommendation to the City Commission.

Director Couceyro noted that the policy also allows the City Commission to waive any or all of the procedures at its discretion. He stated that in recent instances—such as the naming of Blue Road Park after David Lawrence, as well as the naming of Dorothy Thompson Park and Roxy Bolton Park—the process originated at the Commission level.

Board Member Menendez expressed concern that new commissioners may not be aware that the policy exists, and that bypassing the advisory board undermines the purpose of the established review process.

He emphasized that other advisory boards customarily review items before they proceed to the Commission, and that the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board should receive the same consideration. While members agreed that the individuals recently honored through park naming were highly deserving, they noted the importance of ensuring that future naming decisions follow transparent and consistent procedures.

**A MOTION TO ADVISE THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION THE PARK NAMING POLICY 'S EXISTENCE WAS MADE BY BOARD MEMBER KIRK MENENDEZ AND SECONDED BY BOARD MEMBER MICHELLE WHITE. ALL IN FAVOR; PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

## **OLD BUSINESS**

**a. Phillips Park USA Blind Soccer Update.**

Director Couceyro noted that the USA Blind Soccer program remains on hold due to the temporary lack of storage space for required panels but may resume once Phase 2 construction at Phillips Park is completed. A follow-up meeting with program representatives will be arranged.

**DISCUSSION ITEMS**

**a. Discussion of Potential Revision to Board Meeting Schedule.**

The board determined that the current meeting schedule presents no conflicts at this time.

**b. Pickleball at the Biltmore**

A board member raised the status of the pickleball project at the Biltmore. It was noted that when six pickleball courts were created there, the City Commission also supported pursuing a design for a layout that could accommodate eight pickleball courts and return two tennis courts currently striped for pickleball back to tennis.

The board member expressed concern that negotiations with the design consulting firm have been ongoing for several months without a clear update. Members emphasized the importance of involving the Tennis Operations Manager and Vice Chairperson Halley in the design process to ensure that any proposed layout works for both user groups and addresses parking and access issues.

Director Couceyro stated that the Capital Improvements team has been in contact with the design firm and that he would obtain an official update on the project. He acknowledged the need to evaluate whether additional courts can be accommodated within the existing footprint while managing parking demand, circulation, and accessibility. He also referenced previous discussions about alternative configurations at other sites, such as Salvador Park, and the need to balance the needs of tennis and pickleball players, including the value of existing clay courts.

Director Couceyro agreed to seek a formal status report from the Capital Improvements team and indicated that the item could be brought back to the board for further discussion at a future meeting.

**c. Pickleball Club Play Program**

The board discussed the status of the Club Play Pickleball Program. A member of the board explained that the fall session was approved only five days before its scheduled start and that the program suffered from a lack of advertising and communication. Twelve participants registered, although approximately forty were needed for the program to operate successfully. The board expressed concern that no newsletters, e-news messages, or promotional materials had been issued to support the program.

Following discussion, the board reached consensus directing staff to ensure that all advertising, promotions, and participant communications for the upcoming January session are issued promptly. The board emphasized that sufficient lead-time is essential for the program's success.

**A MOTION RECOMMENDING CLUB PLAY PICKLEBALL BE ADDED TO THE CITY'S ENEWS WAS MADE BY BOARD MEMBER KIRK MENENDEZ AND SECONDED BY VICE CHAIRPERSON MAITE HALLEY. ALL IN FAVOR; PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**ITEMS FROM THE SECRETARY**

Next meeting date Thursday, December 11th at 8:15 AM

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:35 a.m.

**NOTE**