

# **City of Coral Gables**

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



## **Meeting Minutes**

**Thursday, November 9, 2023**

**8:00 AM**

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

**Youth Center - Conference Room**

**Parks and Recreation Advisory Board**

## **CALL TO ORDER**

## **ROLL CALL**

Began at 8:05 am

### **a. Roll Call and Excusal of Absences**

Present: 7 - Chair Carlos Hernandez, Vice-Chair Carlos (Charlie) Rua, Board member Ellen Chasens, Board Member Antonio Gonzalez, Board member Maite Halley, Board member Erik Rodriguez and Board member Yamilet Rodriguez.

A MOTION TO APPROVE THE OCTOBER ABSENCES OF CARLOS (CHARLIE) RUA, YAMILET RODRIGUEZ AND ERIK RODRIGUEZ WAS MADE BY MAITE HALLEY AND WAS SECONDED BY ANTONIO GONZALEZ. ALL IN FAVOR; PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

## **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

### **a. Approval of October Meeting Minutes**

A MOTION TO APPROVE THE OCTOBER INFORMATIONAL MEETING MINUTES WAS MADE BY ANTONIO GONZALEZ AND SECOND BY MAITE HALLEY. ALL IN FAVOR; PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

## **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Director Fred Couceyro, Administrative Assistant Susan Lainfiesta, Board member Ellen Chasens, Board member Maite Halley, Chair Carlos Hernandez, Board member Antonio Gonzalez, Board member Yamilet Rodriguez, Board member Erik Rodriguez, Vice-Chair Carlos (Charlie) Rua and Deputy Director Carolina Vester, all presented themselves owing to the addition of a new members to the board and excusal of Director Couceyro not being part of last month's board meeting.

**a. General Updates**

Director Couceyro began the report by informing the board of substantial Holiday Park updates. He said they deal with a vendor that builds, puts up, and removes the park. We had a multi-year contract, and we're going to commission on Tuesday to extend the contract for this year. Adding a few new set pieces. There will be a vintage vehicle for photos. Director Couceyro continued with the City of Coral Gables Holiday Tree Lighting event on Friday, Dec 1st at 5p.m. as well as the Holiday Park opening. Forthcoming events for the month of December, including Hot Chocolate with Santa on Saturday, Dec 16 and Sunday, Dec 17 at 10a.m., the Junior Orange Bowl Parade 2023 on Sunday, Dec 10th at 5p.m. and Festival of Lights at Ponce Circle Park on Sunday, December 10th at 4p.m. He mentioned that the commission voted to add another menorah near City Hall. Rev up the Holiday Spirit with friends, family, and Santa - Sunday, Dec. 17 at 9 a.m.

**b. Special Events**

Director Couceyro proceeded to update the board on the occurrences of last October's events. The Adult Activity Center's Halloween Spooktacular, the Venetian Pool's Halloween Pumpkin Float, and the War Memorial Youth Center's Nightmare at 405 all performed very well. Director Couceyro went on to notify the board on Trick or Treating on the Mile, which was handled by the Economic Development Department, and then the Mexican consulate held the Day of the Dead event under the mayor's International Cultural Events Initiative grant program.

The resurfacing of the youth centers outside courts is then announced by Director Couceyro to the board members. The winning bidder came and resurfaced the courts, but the lines have yet to be completed. There is no material, according to the vendor. We hope to hear from them soon to find out when the work will be completed.

Board member Maite Halley said Youth Center Supervisor Carlos Pichardo informed her about the outside court and they are trying to expedite it. The wait feels endless—should we open basketball and pickleball? Director Couceyro requested to communicate with vendor. He demanded a formal notification. He wants everything in a letter to explain what's occurring and why it's taking so long. The board was notified what he told Carlos about installing portable pickleball lines on the other two courts. It'll work with four. Basketball is playable. We advised opening it if it ended up being too long. We hope to resolve this problem.

However, board member Maite Halley inquired as to when legal becomes involved. Legal advice would be involved, according to Director Couceyro, if we decided not to move forward with them and refused to have them complete the task. We are therefore still working on it. It's not for lack of effort and It's not for lack of trying.

c. CIP Updates

Due to last month's lack of quorum, Deputy Director Vester and Director Couceyro briefly discussed the Blue Road neighborhood park project and site history to the board. They said they've visited the community several times. The site is currently used to provide waterway access for canal maintenance. They informed the board that this initiative is grant-funded. The project must be substantially finished by April 25 and available to the public by July 2025.

Chair Carlos Hernandez asked if from a water standpoint is for non-motor craft owners? Deputy Director Carolina replied there's one watercraft dock there and that's the city motor craft. Does signage state you can't bring your boat or jet ski up there, Chair Carlos Hernandez asked? Deputy Director said we're working on it.

In addition, the proposed neighborhood park initiative and site history for Toledo and Alava were both discussed by Director Couceyro. He stated that they have been evaluating this property for a considerable extensive amount of time. In reference to our master plans for service levels, one of our goals is to provide all residents with access to neighborhood park spaces within ten minutes' walking distance. This is precisely why this space was so ideal for us. Additionally, we want to ensure that it is accessible to all by preventing them from having to cross significant roads. There will be an abundance of native plants, pollinator areas, and pollinator gardens, the majority of which will be comprised of native species. A little bit more natural and rustic look.

Director Couceyro notified the board that the Golf Course Pro Shop opened and we're finalizing conversations on timing, equipment supply, and other items now that the area has been demoed. Our team will hopefully know how long it will take by the next meeting. Our second project, the concession stand at Venetian Pool, is mid under construction. They are currently reinstalling the equipment. The pool will be closed in December, and the bottom will be painted. There will be temporary painting until the pool's surface is restored, followed by concrete repair the following week. This year, we'll paint it to make it look nice.

The Deputy Director Vester continued the dissemination of important Youth Center information to the board. She indicated that the following week, they would begin a project to waterproof the external walls as well as paint them. Because there are several water infiltration concerns in this site, the work at hand is a mix of waterproofing and painting.

Director Couceyro stated that we have anywhere from eight to fifteen separate capital proof of concept initiatives running concurrently. Administrative Operations

Supervisor Sarah from our office is our CIP liaison who works with the Capital Improvements Office and Public Works because we prefer to be involved since projects take a long time. We want to push a little bit just to see what's going on. And we're the client, and we're sort of needy customers, and we prefer to be needy and outspoken clients. So, we collaborate with Public Works on this.

Chair Carlos Hernandez inquired if Sarah is the point of contact and whether those of us who live near a park, or another may contact her. Director Couceyro said that she holds weekly meetings with several of the contractors as well as progress report meetings. We also have progress report meetings with our Public Works department, project managers, architects, and others. We have an email. Any proposal should be sent to [parksprojects@coralgables.com](mailto:parksprojects@coralgables.com). It is distributed to everyone here, including Sarah, as well as our CIP from the CIP office. As a result, it's a terrific approach to acquire everyone right immediately.

Board member Antonio Gonzalez said, "Do you have a time frame for the restaurant?" Director Couceyro said, "Not yet". There were also concerns about the lead times for some of the kitchen equipment. They were finishing that and several other things, and they had some queries about the contract that our project manager and our city administration needed to decide on. So, we had the meeting yesterday, and hopefully they'll be able to offer us a calendar of activities coming up in the next week or two.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **a. Selection of Board member at large**

A MOTION TO ELECT JENNIFER MARQUES AS THE BOARD-AS-A-WHOLE OF THE CORAL GABLES PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD WAS MADE BY CARLOS (CHARLIE) RUA AND WAS SECONDED BY ELLEN CHASENS. ALL IN FAVOR; PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

### **b. Blue Road and Toledo & Alava park project approval**

A MOTION TO KEEP THE BLUE ROAD PARK PROJECT PROPOSAL AS IS, WAS MADE BY ANTONIO GONZALEZ AND WAS SECONDED BY YAMILET RODRIGUEZ. ALL IN FAVOR; PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

A MOTION TO KEEP THE TOLEDO AND ALAVA PARK PROJECT PROPOSAL AS IS, WAS MADE BY MAITE HALLEY AND WAS SECONDED BY ELLEN CHASENS ALL IN FAVOR; PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

## **ITEMS FROM THE SECRETARY**

Next meeting date December 14, 2023 at 8 a.m.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

9:10a.m.

## **NOTE**