

CORAL GABLES

THE CITY BEAUTIFUL

Economic Development Board Meeting Meeting Minutes

Wednesday | February 1, 2023 | 8:00 a.m.

Location: Zoom and Police and Fire Headquarters (PFHQ), Community Meeting Room A
2151 Salzedo Street, Coral Gables, FL 33134

EDB MEMBERS	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	APPOINTING ENTITY
	'23	'23	'23	'23	'23	'23	'23	'23	'23	'23	'23	'23	
James Kohnstamm	X	P											Mayor Vince Lago
Olga Ramudo, Chair	X	P											Vice Mayor Michael Mena
Stuart McGregor	X	P											Commissioner Kirk R. Menendez
Tania Cruz-Gimenez	X	A											Commissioner Rhonda Anderson
Mary Snow	X	P											Commissioner Jorge Fors, Jr.
Barbara Perez	X	A											City Manager Peter Iglesias
Thad Adams	X	P											Chamber of Commerce

A=Absent E=Excused Absence P=Present X=No Meeting Ph=Present by Phone Z=Zoom - =Former Board Member

Staff and Guests:

Belkys Perez, Director, Economic Development Department
 Francesca Valdes, Business Development Coordinator, Economic Development Department
 Leticia Perez, International Business Development Coordinator, Economic Development Department
 Yenis Gomez, Administrative Assistant, Economic Development Department
 Kevin Kinney, Director, Parking Department

Welcome and Introduction

Ms. Ramudo welcomed new member of the Board, Mr. James Kohnstamm, appointed by Mayor Lago. Mr. Kohnstamm introduced himself. All members were asked for self-introductions as well.

Mrs. Belkys Perez was introduced by the Chair as the new Economic Development Director. Board members congratulated Mrs. Perez. She thanked everyone for the well wishes.

Chairwoman Ms. Olga Ramudo brought the meeting to order at 8:13 a.m.

1. Review and approval of December 7, 2022, Economic Development Board Meeting Minutes. Ms. Snow made a motion to approve the meeting minutes and Mr. Adams seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. There was no discussion regarding the minutes.

2. Parking Update

Mr. Kevin Kinney provided the Board with an update on the state of parking in Coral Gables. He stated that December 2022 was the best December the City has ever had regarding parking revenue, and trolley and Freebee ridership. January is also looking to be a banner month.

The Coral Gables Trolley that runs north and south on Ponce de Leon Boulevard is the most utilized form of transportation offered by the City. Pre-pandemic the trolley system transported 1.2million passengers a year. In 2022 the trolleys recovered to 975,000 passengers and Mr. Kinney estimates a 20% increase in ridership this year – possibly even setting a record. He stated that the rebound in public transportation the city is experiencing is not common. The use of public transportation in cities across the country remains significantly down since the pandemic.

Mr. Kinney says he will involve the Economic Development Board when he receives funding in FY24 for a master parking and mobility plan which will include options for enhancing trolley routes. The Board had several questions that Mr. Kinney addressed.

3. Economic Development Activities:

a) International Affairs

Ms. Leticia Perez updated the board regarding the following:

- The Consulate of Guatemala moved into the city last year. They are waiting for the permit to install their sign. Once completed, we will inform the Board of the ribbon cutting ceremony.
- The Consulate of Paraguay has already moved into the city from Downtown Miami.
- The Consulate of Mexico will also be moving to Coral Gables. It is currently in the permitting process for the buildout of the space. They held their Day of the Dead celebration on Saturday, October 29, 2022.
- On February 22, 2023, the Consulate of St. Lucia will be celebrating their 44th Anniversary of Independence at the Merrick House.
- The Consulate of Colombia would like to host Carnival of Barranquilla on April 29, 2023.
- Coral Gables is in the process of establishing a new Sister Cities relationship with Stellenbosch, South Africa.

b) Retail Advocate Workshop & Tour

Mrs. Francesca Valdes reminded the Board of the department's consultant Downtown Works. The company holds a workshop and tour for retail advocates at a different location every year. Due to the city's economic growth and great work encouraging chef-driven restaurants to open in the city, Coral Gables was selected as the destination for the conference this year. Over the three-day event, retail advocates will explore the Greater Miami-Dade County area, visit a retail assemblage in West Palm Beach, and meetings with local developers of mixed-use projects, business owners and Chefs.

Mrs. Valdes also informed the Board that on March 2, the City will partner with Miami Commercial Realtors to hold a Commercial Realtors Coral Gables Spotlight. The location will soon be selected for the breakfast event, presentation and trolley tour. The trolley tour will highlight new development projects in the City.

She also updated the Board on the success of the Sip & Shop event held on December 15, 2022, in partnership with the Community Foundation. The event benefited Friends of Gables High. The organization was presented a check at the January 10, 2023 City Commission meeting, in the amount of \$2,737.66.

4. Economic Development Competitive Assessment

Mrs. Perez provided an update on the Economic Development Competitive Assessment which has taken longer than anticipated. The consultant, Dr. Ned Murray, will be presenting at an upcoming Board meeting.

5. Business Tax License Report

Mrs. Valdes updated the Board on the new and upcoming businesses in Coral Gables. Currently citywide, the retail vacancy rate is 2.3% and the office vacancy rate is 10.7%.

6. Open Discussion

Ms. Mary Snow informed the Board that the Coral Gables Community Foundation, in partnership with the City, will bring a public art installation to the city called Museum of the Moon, a 23-foot in diameter inflatable moon created with NASA imagery. The installation will take place at Fred B. Hartnett/Ponce Circle Park and be on display for the last three weekends in March.

Mr. Thad Adams informed the Board that on Thursday, February 9th, the Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce will be hosting Burgerlicious, 5:30 - 9:30 p.m.

There being no further discussion, the meeting adjourned at 9:13 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Yenisis Gomez, Administrative Assistant, Economic Development Department.