

City of Coral Gables

405 Biltmore Way
Coral Gables, FL 33134
www.coralgables.com



Meeting Minutes

Thursday, April 14, 2022

8:00 AM

Youth Center, Conference Room

Parks and Recreation Advisory Board

Chairperson Monica Segura
Vice Chairperson Carlos Rua
Board Member Nicolas Cabrera
Board Member Ellen C. Chasens
Board Member Laura Hernandez
Board Member Bruce Lecure
Board Member Jennifer A. Marques
Board Member Ruben Rodriguez

CALL TO ORDER

@8:06am

ROLL CALL

a. Roll Call and Excusal of Absences

A MOTION TO EXCUSE RUBEN RODRIGUEZ ABSENCE WAS MADE BY LAURA HERNANDEZ AND SECOND BY BRUCE LECURE. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Present: 6 - Chairperson Segura, Vice Chairperson Rua, Board Member Chasens, Board Member Marques, Board Member Lecure and Board Member Cabrera

Excused: 2 - Board Member Hernandez and Board Member Rodriguez

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

a. Approval of March Minutes

A MOTION TO APPROVE THE MARCH MEETING MINUTES WAS MADE BY BRUCE LECURE AND SECOND BY ELLEN CHASENS. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

a. General Updates

Director Couceyro continued the meeting by announcing that there have been agenda items pertaining specifically to dog parks at Commission. Commissioner Anderson had a suggestion to fence in a portion of land in Salvadore park adjacent to the tennis courts in order to create space for a dog run area (not a big spot). The Commission directed the Department to provide preliminary concept designs by taking into consideration sidewalks and other near features. The Commission was not satisfied by the potential costs or with the presented designs.

The Department will have to resubmit within the next two weeks to present a better design plan. This was a directive from Commission with hopes of deterring dog traffic at Catalonia Park and to start to have active enforcement that will include citations at all our parks.

The Board continued the discussion on enforcement of dogs off leash in our parks. Some solutions include in changing the design of future parks to not include dog friendly elements on the inside of the park, creating designated spaces for children and for dogs within the park, and looking for land specific for a dog park. Board Chair Monica Segura then suggested that there should be a dedicated staff member since there has been an increase in the usage of the park especially at Salvadore Park. Monica volunteered to go to Commission to talk about the matter.

The Board had similar feelings about having a dedicated ranger at Salvadore Park based on the increase usage.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY NICOLAS CABRERA TO RECOMMEND A FULL-TIME PARK RANGER WITH ENFORCEMENT ABILITIES TO MONITOR SALVADORE PARK TO ENFORCE BOTH THE SAFETY AND PARK OPERATIONS HOURS. MOTION WAS SECONDED BY CHARLIE RUA. ALL IN FAVOR; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Board Chair Monica Segura wanted to congratulate staff member Mitch Zuriarrain on being named employee of the month for March.

Fred continued with general updates with briefly going over the status of the Coral Gables Country Club. The City has filed an injunction and the Country Club has been taken into receivership where it is being managed by a judge until settlement terms are finished. We hope with the Country Club being in receivership, the outgoing tenant will not damage the facility upon vacating. Operationally, we have hired on the three managerial division heads for the club that handled the banquet rentals, fitness, and maintenance. A Country Club director position is currently being advertised. The fitness equipment is being replaced with new pieces when we create a new business lease with the currently lease company in already in place. Event rentals bookings will resume. Liberty café is currently operational but based operations will be dependent on staffing and equipment left over from the departing tenant. If Board members would like any more information or have question, they can email or call staff directly.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY NICOLAS CABRERA TO RECOMMEND A FULL-TIME PARK RANGER WITH ENFORCEMENT ABILITIES TO MONITOR SALVADORE PARK TO ENFORCE BOTH THE SAFETY AND PARK OPERATIONS HOURS. MOTION WAS SECONDED BY CHARLIE RUA. ALL IN FAVOR; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

b. Special Events

Visits from the Easter Bunny - Saturday April 16th

Movies Under the Gables Moonlight featuring Jurassic World - April 29th at 7:30

AAC Spring Fling and Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon - Friday May 6 at 1pm

Literacy Festival - Saturday May 28th

Memorial Day Presentation - Monday May 30th

c. CIP Updates

Administrative Supervisor Mitch Zuriarrain quickly went through CIP updates that included Blue Road open space re-design, Granada golf proshop and restaurant renovation, the new Lamar Louise Curry Park completion date, Marlin park renaming and ribbon cutting on May 21st, Marjorie Park renovation and Merrick park sidewalks. Phillips Park and Pierce Park will also be receiving renovations.

Due to the increase in construction prices, all projects that have not already been slated to start construction and have not already been budgeted for, will be put on hold.

Board Chair Monica Segura wanted to add that Salvadore Park has a potential trip hazard around the rock structure that should be addressed. Mitch shared that those areas will be replaced with rubberized mulch flooring and the mulch and liner will be removed.

NEW BUSINESS

a. Purchase of 142 SW 37 AVE Property

The City's Asset Manager, Zeida Sardinias, spoke to the Board about a parcel of land that was submitted by Resolution of the City Commission for the City to look into purchasing for the purpose of establishing a neighborhood park and would like support from the Parks Advisory Board for this purchase of land located at 142 SW 37 AVE. She mentioned that the function of this land would act as an entrance feature into the city and Community Recreation Director Fred Couceyro added, that the space could also satisfy the City's need for a dog park. The appraisal price for the parcel was between \$430K to \$1.15M and the City was able to negotiate the purchasing price to \$750K pending property inspection and Commission approval. The expected closing date is June 1st 2022. The Property advisory Board has already approved the purchase and will go to the Budget Advisory Board on April 20th, 2022.

Board Chair Monica Segura asked if the park will only be a dog park, or if it will also have an additional play feature for kids. Couceyro explained that it is not decided yet, but most likely it will not because located near this parcel is Rotary Park. Fred also stated that in general, many of our gated neighborhood parks are now being used as dog parks which was never the intended use. The hopes of purchasing this lot are to move these dog owners into a dog specific park.

Board member Laura Hernandez mentioned that although it is a good idea, she believes that it will be used more by the residents of City of Miami than Coral Gables Residents. Director Couceyro shared in her concerns about nonresident usage but believes if the 11,000 sq ft parcel is solely used as an entrance space, the open lot will be used for other purposes not controlled by the City.

Board Chair Monica Segura asked where the funds for purchasing this lot will be pulled from.

Director Couceyro explained that impact funding and capital improvement funding that is dedicated solely to the acquisition of land to build parks will be used. These dedicated funding accounts were designated a couple of years ago by the Mayor.

Board Member Nicolas Cabrera added that he believes that an entrance feature not a dog park, is great for the that type of community. He also explained that the location of the park might not be the best because of the lack of parking. Director Fred Couceyro said that he understands his point but it is also important to understand that they need to be realistic in the process because of the fact that there is not much availability of space where a dog park would be a great fit in order to have a low degree of residential impact.

The Board continued to discuss design functions of the proposed parcel of land, however usage for the park will not be determined until the land is purchased and community input is obtained. At this time, these are just staff suggestions and the intent to purchase this lot is for entrance feature.

In summary, there was a unanimous decision by the Board to purchase the property.

BOARD MEMBER BRUCE LECURE MADE A MOTION FOR THE BOARD TO APPROVE THE REQUEST OF THE PURCHASE OF THE PROPERTY AS AN ENTRANCE FEATURE WITH SERIOUSLY LOOKING AT A SECONDARY USAGE FOR THE BEST USE OF THE REMAINING AREA OF THE LAND. SECONDED BY JENNIFER MARQUEZ. ALL IN FAVOR; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

b. Presentation of Park Designs for Toledo & Alava by Architecture Students of Gulliver Academy

The Architecture students at Gulliver Academy were given the opportunity to help the City in designing the park space located off Toledo and Alava. While working with city staff, the students received feedback on how to design the lot. Gulliver teacher Ms. Maite Martinez-Cid introduced each group and screen shared the designs with the Board. Three separate designs were present with different key elements and themes.

- Nature Themed Design- highlights included dog park area, children’s playground, pavilion space with picnic tables, restroom, and large picnic area.
- Public Spaces vs Private Spaces design – highlights include children’s playground, dog park, a movie screening area, small pond with remote boat rentals, outdoor sports tables, outdoor exercise equipment and an open green space.
- Botanical Park for all Ages Design- highlights include fountain feature, restrooms, pathway lighting, multiple tropical flowers varieties, orchids, succulents, and educational plaques with QR codes throughout the park identifying the different variations of plants.

The Board provided comments, asked questions for each presentation, and commended the students on their comprehensive park designs. The students were able to elaborate on their design elements. The Board was asked to select two designs to move forward to be presented at Commission on May 10th 2022.

BOARD MEMBER BRUCE LECURE MADE A MOTION RECOMMENDING THE NATURE THEMED DESIGN AND THE BOTANICAL PARK DESIGN TO MOVE FORWARD. MOTION WAS SECONDED BY LAURA HERNANDEZ. ALL IN FAVOR; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

OLD BUSINESS

DISCUSSION ITEMS

a.Registration Process & Residency Verification

Board Chair Monica Segura asked that the item on the Registration Process for Residents be moved to the following agenda. But wanted to state that Youth Center staff member Lauren Martinez was fantastic and very patient when she went to register her son.

Board member Nicolas Cabrera would like to discuss Phillips Park at the next meeting.

ITEMS FROM THE SECRETARY

Next meeting is scheduled for May 12th at 8am.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 9:46am

NOTE