

CITY OF CORAL GABLES
Economic Development Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, October 5, 2011, 8:00 a.m.
1 Alhambra Plaza, Suite 617, Coral Gables, Florida 33134

MEMBERS	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	COMMISSIONERS
	'11	'11	'11	'11	'11	'12	'12	'12	'12	'12	'12	'12	
Mr. Scott Sime	P	P	P										Mayor Jim Cason
Mr. Raymond Zomerfeld (Chair)	P	P	P										Vice Mayor William H. Kerdyk, Jr.
Mr. John M. "Jack" Thomson (Vice Chair)	P	P	P										Commissioner Maria Anderson
Mr. Emile De Boyrie	P	E	E										Commissioner Rafael Cabrera, Jr.
Mr. Rolando Mora	P	P	E										Commissioner Frank Quesada

A = Absent
E = Excused Absence
P = Present
X = No Meeting

STAFF AND GUESTS:

Ms. Cynthia S. Birdsill, Economic Sustainability Department Director
Mr. Leonard Roberts, Economic Sustainability Department Assistant Director
Ms. Cindy Dorrel, Special Projects Coordinator
Ed Holden, President Elect of Coral Gables Chamber

Meeting Motion Summary:

The minutes of the September 7, 2011 Board meeting were approved.
Motion to excuse Board members Mr. Mora and Mr. De Boyrie's absence from the meeting.

1. Approval of September 7, 2011 Board Meeting Minutes.

Mr. Thomson moved to approve the board meeting minutes of September 7, 2011. Mr. Sime seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Thomson moved to excuse the absence of Mr. Mora and Mr. De Boyrie. Mr. Sime seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Holden, President Elect for the Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce, was introduced to the Board. Mr. Holden will be representing the Chamber at future Economic Development Board meetings. He mentioned some of the Chamber's initiatives, which include improving International Trade, Small Business, Streetscape and relationships with other entities such as the Beacon Council.

2. Discussion of Board Goals

The Board continued the discussion from the last meeting on its goals for the year. They decided that each member will be a liaison for outside committees as follows:

Mr. Thomson - Liaison for the Ponce Business Association;
Mr. Sime - Liaison for the International Affairs Committee for the City;
Mr. Mora - Liaison for the Chambers International Affairs Committee;
Mr. Boyle - Liaison for the Chamber's Tourism Committee;
Mr. Zomerfeld - Liaison for the Business Improvement District.

Staff will provide information about the designated committees for the members.

Mr. Sime suggested inviting a representative from the Brazilian Chamber of Commerce to visit the Board to discuss the Brazilian Chamber's goals in the City, particularly since the Mayor is pursuing a city in Brazil as a Sister City. The Board agreed that Mr. Sime should extend the invitation to the Brazilian Chamber to attend a Board meeting.

Then Mr. Zomerfeld asked that all Commissioners be invited to a future Board meeting to share their thoughts, concerns, and goals for the Board, and the Board agreed.

3. Update on Business Tax Licenses and New Businesses

The Board reviewed the list of Business Tax Licenses and new businesses. Ms. Birdsill reported that Capital Bank had recently moved and expanded its headquarters to 121 Alhambra Circle.

4. New City Website Highlights

Ms. Birdsill announced that the City is trying to be more electronically accessible so that patrons can obtain and process information they need online instead of visiting City Hall. She mentioned that the certificate of use renewals are now available online. In addition, the Planning Department is posting copies of submitted Development Review applications online to make it easier for people to see the status of development projects. She also noted the City's new website is being finalized and the scheduled release is set to occur before the end of the year.

5. Recent Publications

Ms. Birdsill announced the City ranked eighth in the Livability's "Top 10 Cities For Book Lovers," thanks to Books & Books. In addition, the City had a 16 page feature article in the October issue of the Florida Trend magazine.

The City also received an award from the National League of Cities for the Gallery Night Trolley. Mr. Roberts will be attending the National League of Cities conference in Phoenix, next month to receive the award. He will also serve on a panel to discuss the use of the City's trolley system. The City will have an information booth for other visitors at the conference.

The current Art Circuits Guide was produced with each brochure containing a copy of the Gallery Night brochure and 15,000 guides will be distributed before Art Basel.

6. General City Update

Ms. Birdsill informed the Board that the City's 2011/2012 budget was approved. She also mentioned that Mr. Roberts has been actively searching for sites for the senior center. The Board asked how it could help, and Ms. Birdsill replied that if they know of any location in the City to inform Mr. Roberts. She also noted if the center is established in Miami-Dade County Commissioner Rebecca Sosa's district; the center would be partially funded with \$1.5 million in County GOB funds from District 6. Mr. Sime said he could possibly have a few leads for sites that he would submit.

Another project in the works would be to create a civic square in the City, ideally between Miracle Mile and Ponce Circle Park, so board members were encouraged to let staff know about any appropriate sites of which they are aware.

Mr. Sime reported that the trend of multi-family housing is exploding in Coral Gables with approximately 900 units of new multi-family residential planned between LeJeune Road, US1, and the Bird Road corridor.

Ms. Birdsill announced that there is a new Director of Development Services, Jane Tompkins, who will be overseeing three divisions – Building, Planning and Zoning, and Code Enforcement. Ms. Birdsill acknowledged Building & Zoning Director, Carmen Olazabal's, accomplishment in implementing electronic tools to monitor the work flow of the permit process. This process has reduced the time it takes to obtain a permit. There are two case studies, one being the Rockefeller Group in Allan Morris' building, (121 Alhambra building), where the permit process was expedited so they were able to move in on time. In addition, Cherry, Bekaert and Holland merged with another company to maintain 150 accounting-related jobs. The Company needs to be in the new space before tax season. So far the new process has helped ensure they move in by their deadline. Mr. Sime asked if these companies would give a testimonial on the expedited process, which would be helpful for the Board's speaking points about the City. Mr. Zomerfeld added, the examples of the expedited process would be great points to share with several periodicals like the South Florida Business Journal, Miami Today, New York Times, Wall Street Journal, etc... Mr. Thomson mentioned that Bill Ussery Motors could possibly be another testimonial as they had a good experience through their renovation process. Mr. Sime suggested the City write an article and present it to the publications. Ms. Birdsill will approach Maria Rosa Higgins-Fallon, Public Affairs Manager, to see what has been written in ENEWS, and explore creation of an article focusing on these success stories. Mr. Sime requested that all Board members be given a summary about each success story so they can use that information when they are talking about the City.

Ms. Birdsill announced that Economic Sustainability is seeking to employ a Marketing position who will develop a new marketing program for the City. Other tasks will include creating a user-friendly handbook on how to open a business in the City.

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Thomson. Mr. Sime seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 8:53 a.m.

The next Economic Development Board meeting will be held on November 2, at 8 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cindy Dorrel
Special Projects Coordinator
Economic Sustainability Department