

Communications Committee
Meeting of May 12, 2021
Minutes

Staff and Guests

Martha Pantin, Communications and Public Affairs
Michael Rocha, Communications and Public Affairs
Nicolas Saenz, Communications and Public Affairs
Antonella Nakfour, Communications and Public Affairs
Billy Urquia, City Clerk – Participated via Zoom

Board Attendance

Connie Crowther - Present
Sandra Gonzalez-Levy – Present via Zoom
Derrek Space - Present
TJ Villamil - Present

General discussion and welcome began at 8:35 am. Derrek Space arrived at 8:40 a.m. After achieving a quorum, the meeting started at 8:45* a.m.

Hurricane Preparedness Guide

Pantin discussed possible changes to the Hurricane Preparedness Guide and asked how to best target seniors. She mentioned the current guide is very busy, complicated and highlighted examples of possible changes to make it more visually appealing. There are certain guidelines as to what the guide needs to include and requested ideas on how to best reach out to seniors. She mentioned we have a list of people from the Adult Activity Center as well as from the Fire Department from the list of homebound they vaccinated.

Pantin suggested providing information to managers of the buildings on Biltmore Way. Gonzalez-Levy asked if CGTV would be used for outreach. Pantin advised Public Affairs is moving away from TV since there isn't much viewership.

Gonzalez-Levy suggested doing town hall meetings and promoting them on the City's social media channel so that people they can be advised by different platforms. Pantin showcased the different changes and edits being made to the Hurricane Preparation Guide. She mentioned some items that need to remain because they affect flood insurance rates. Pantin said she will be meeting with Economic Development to finalize what needs to be included.

There was a general discussion regarding mailing the guide to residents. Gonzalez-Levy suggested working with a local TV station since some stations like Channel 6 mail out their guides like Miami-Dade County.

Gonzalez-Levy agreed the current guide is not graphically appealing and should be updated for hurricane season which begins in June.

Pantin mentioned that while the official Atlantic hurricane season begins June 1, Emergency Management has advised that in South Florida the height of the season begins in August. Because she is trying to do a full update it will not be available by June 1.

Pantin also mentioned that it might be more important to highlight the Emergency Assistance program versus the maps and the hurricane categories because that information can be found readily. She also requested ideas on how to get people registered to the program that may require assistance.

Gonzalez-Levy suggested adding links and phone numbers to the guide regarding specific information considering the audience we want to reach might not have the ability to access the internet. She mentioned that we might need multiple tactics to be able to reach that senior audience. She mentioned partnering or co-sponsoring TV stations when they do Hurricane information programming that we may be able to showcase on CGTV. Crowther supported this idea.

Pantin mentioned that currently CGTV has a hurricane preparedness video that is on the city's website that the office is looking to update. A possible idea includes into specific subject short videos.

Crowther mentioned that during the hurricane residents might not have access to electricity so we should create a guide, not as complete as the rest but one with the information needed and could possibly be send out as postcards.

Pantin mentioned the Intelligent App, where people had to sign up to receive information, however, we only had about 140 subscribers. The Commission approved a text message service that is used by most counties and municipalities in the state. While people don't need to opt-in information goes to land lines. There is the opportunity to sign-up for mobile phone updates. This service is exclusively for Emergency Information. She mentioned training will be done so everyone present can be able to handle it. Chairman Gonzalez-Levy agreed with this option and its efficiency.

Crowther mentioned it's important for residents to understand what zone they live in, so providing maps showing this information are important.

Pantin advised E-News has grown more than 20 percent since August 2020. Villamil mentioned that since social media platforms are using high numbers of paid ads businesses are using more targeted emails and texts.

Gonzalez-Levy mentioned considering who are the people that we are targeting. The tactics we use to reach our residents need to be multiple pronged sites to be able to reach as many residents as possible.

Pantin mentioned she will reach out to the Senior Advisory Board to get ideas from them on how to best reach the elderly residents. Villamil also mentioned having a presence in the Palace and places where senior citizens live and/or visit.

Next meeting is scheduled for June 9. In the past there has been a hiatus in committee meetings in July and August. Committee will make a determination in June as to when next meetings will be held.

Staff will provide an update at the June 9 meeting.

Being Part of the Conversation/ April events

Pantin mentioned that Commission Meetings is the most popular programming for CGTV. She mentioned because of complaints on previous election coverage no coverage was provided outside of a scroll with the number results and no complaints were received.

There was a discussion regarding video and social media back in the day. People can barely watch more than 45 seconds of something, that's why the strategies are changing regarding the content we put out in the different platforms.

Pantin mentioned April was one of the busiest months for the department due to the different project undertaken during the month including:

- Police Department Autism car unveiling - all local TV stations covered the event. It also trended positively on social media. Clips and pictures of the unveiling were shared. Crowther mentioned that Coral Gables has a positive history of Autism awareness and education. Additionally the car was taken to Crystal Academy and students had the opportunity to take pictures with the car.
- Earth Month - Communications developed 30 environmental tips that were shared on social media throughout the month. Additionally, former Mayor Valdes-Fauli also had an OpEd on Coral Gables initiatives published in the Herald.
- Clear masks campaign - Miami Today and NBC 6 covered the story.
- Investiture ceremony – Communications team was responsible for the event and sent B-roll out to local TV stations which was picked-up by local ABC Channel 10.

She mentioned that providing B-roll to stations has helped secure coverage.

Other

Billy Urquia, City Clerk discussed reappointment and the start of new terms. If board members want to remain on the committee, they should reach out to the Commissioners that appointed them originally to be reappointed. He also mentioned that a financial disclosure form will be sent and needs to be filled out. Urquia mentioned that the longest time that a board member can consecutively serve is eight years.

Villamil mentioned Francis Suarez's own social media movement about the City of Miami. He considers him as the first Mayor influencer in the country. Villamil mentioned how engaging and involved Suarez is in what's happening now.

Pantin mentioned that Suarez does have a name platform, which is Miami, and the name alone it's a big deal. Even if we know Miami-Dade County is the big guy, other people think Miami is the big city on the block. Even though Suarez doesn't have the power of the commission what he's doing is a big deal. Villamil says we might want to piggyback on what the mayor is doing. Pantin mentioned we are open to ideas to improve the way we approach social media.

Crowther mentioned that Suarez had his rise to fame since he had Covid and was the only mayor talking about it on national TV. She mentioned Suarez became an instrument to pass along the message of do's and don'ts for Covid. He got a taste of the social media influence and just ran with it. Crowther agreed Coral Gables has a lot to gain by working with him.

Crowther mentioned that at some point we would need to address the issue with UM scrubbing the name of George Merrick off their campus. There are many City implications because of that. Crowther believes that ultimately the answer is going to be decided by the community rather than any entity within that community.

Pantin mentioned that the Miami Herald online from Monday had a front-page story regarding the issue of the removal of the George Merrick name with quotes from her. Pantin offered to discuss this at the June meeting.

Crowther stated that years ago a commissioner planned a community charrette which was very successful. They had problems that they were addressing and opportunities that they were pursuing. People sat down and talked about many topics and came up with strategies and tactics that we are still seeing today. Crowther mentioned this change will have an impact on the University's fundraising.

With no other items to discuss the meeting was adjourned at 9:40 a.m.