

PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD
Minutes of August 22, 2008 meeting
Coral Gables Youth Center
405 University Drive

MEMBERS	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	APPOINTED BY
Joan I. Valdes	R	P											Mayor Donald D. Slesnick II
Darby Plummer	R	P											Vice Mayor William Kerdyk, Jr.
Robin Symons	R	P											Commissioner Maria Anderson
Haydee Polo	R	P											Comm. Rafael "Ralph" Cabrera, Jr.
Marty Steinberger	R	P											Comm. Wayne "Chip" Withers
Martha Serola	R	P											City Manager David Brown
Manny Seage	R	P											Parks and Recreation Advisory Board

A = Absent
 C = Cancelled
 E = Excused absence
 P = Present
 N = No quorum
 R = Recessed
 S = Sick

STAFF:

Fred Couceyro
 Parks & Recreation Director

Norma-Milena Gavarrete
 Recording Secretary

GUESTS:

Laura Russo – DYL Development Project

1. Darby Plummer called the meeting to order at 8:05 a.m.
2. Approval of Board minutes from June 20, 2008 meeting – Darby Plummer - The minutes of the June 20, 2008 Board meeting were unanimously approved by the Board.
3. City Projects Update – Fred Couceyro
 - Judy Kries – Fred Couceyro said Judy had retired and the Parks and Recreation Department had a party for her. Darby Plummer suggested bringing Judy back to a Board meeting and having a little something for her as a appreciating for her year of service with the Board.

- Youth Center Field Turf - Fred Couceyro said the field turf is done and they will continue to roll it out and mow it down to let it grow to eventually get rid of the seams of the rolls. The grass is nice and plush. Darby Plummer asked if the field was leveled and Fred said yes. The field was laser leveled as per specification. When the field was built, it was never flat, it was built with crowns, it has drains in the middle and on the sides. It looks like rolling hills because that is how it was built, to drain the water. The first rain we had, it did not effect the drainage; it was great. Now we are working with staff and the contractors regarding the maintenance of the field and what we would do when we get our first hole and how we would fix it for us to prevent what we had 3 or 4 years ago. Mr. Seage asked if we were closing off all team activity. Fred said that Jonathan started Flag football in Phillips Park and did not want to delay the season and will ask him today how it had gone especially due to the limited parking spaces.
- Youth Center Outside Basketball Lighting – Fred Couceyro said the lights we installed during Maintenance Week. In addition, the canisters are up and staff is looking forward having them turn on and see how bright they are.
- Youth Center Shade Poles and Canopy – Fred Couceyro said the installation of the shade poles were installed during Maintenance Week and the canopy would be installed at the end of the next week. Dan Keys has trimmed the trees so they do not fringe the canopy. Darby Plummer asked if that was only happening at the Youth Center. Fred said that he had a meeting with city architects and it was approved to move forward because it was administratively approved. Now we go to the Board of Adjustment meeting in October, and this is for Sunrise and Phillips Park.
- Rotary Park – Fred Couceyro said we are moving on zoning issues and got Board of Adjustment approval for the zoning change for the park and while we were there we also got approval on the zoning for Maggiore and San Sebastian Park and this was accomplished last week. It will go to commission on September 9th and then we can go ahead with the construction when all the hearings are completed.
- Riviera Park – Fred Couceyro said we had met at the park several times and have showed you the parks design and the 1st part of the improvements that are not part of the park bond money, the street improvement, has started. We did take 5 feet of park, added a sidewalk, and made it more accessible for park use and there is a separation of grass. It looks great. One of the residents said that we were doing it for the school, a private entity. Fred said that is not why we are doing it. First and foremost is a safety issue, and we are going to install parking meters to make it public parking, not school parking. We had a meeting with the neighbors on this. This is a public works issue, we are moving with this, the grants papers are finalized, and we are almost ready to begin the next phase of the project.

- Salvadore Tennis Center – Fred Couceyro said that they started breaking concrete walls and taking sections down, fences, and lights. They were doing section by section but when they started doing the lights, the wiring is in much worst shape than originally thought. The electrical contractor gave us a price, which was ridiculous. Public Works turned around, inspected the electrical area, and put in a RFP. Now, the contractor has stopped for 2 to 3 weeks. They found someone that would do the wiring for much less but that could take a chunk of the grant that we had left for the park. Therefore, what we had for the park is going to be less now. We were hoping to get this to where we would be able to get rid of the wood playground features. But, now we do not know if we are going to have money to do it.
- Youth Center Maintenance Week – Fred Couceyro said it had gone well and many things were fixed and accomplished throughout the facility.
- Youth Center Indoor Basketball Court - Fred Couceyro said due to some humidity issues we have had some weak spots in the court. We are going to have to do a more intense renovation like the one we had in 2001. We are going to sand down all the way to the wood, reline and add 5 to 6 coats of finish. We did not do it during maintenance week because the company was booked that week. It will take place in September and it will be a 3-week process.
- Summer Camp – Darby Plummer asked how summer had gone well and Fred Couceyro said that it started good and then went down from there. In terms of the program we provided, it went well and we had great feedback from the parents. However, Revenue was down. We had a decline in the Youth Center and at Venetian Pool. The Pool felt the competition from the new Grapeland Waterpark. We are looking for different ways to combat that. The good news is our life guard camps were jam packed and what we are going to do is expand our size and not let in so many groups. We could have fit 75 children, it was popular, and my child loved it. Youth Center big issues were that any program for the ages of 11 and up saw drastic drops. We went from 80 children to 30 children in teen camp. The younger age groups were higher than last year. Our specialty camps were on the money but couldn't cover a huge drop in our teen camps and the teen age group in our Basketball and half day camps. It was good three weeks into it but after 4th of July it went down. What we think it is that anyone old enough to stay home, the parents just let them stay home due to the economic conditions. They younger age of 5 and 6 we had more than last year. Darby asked if we had looked into other facility revenue and Fred said that there was some drop in the Youth Center revenue, but wouldn't know the extent until the year is closed and tabulated against expenditures..

- Country Club of Coral Gables – Fred Couceyro said that they did the RFP; they did the bids and did receive the one bid that was qualified. It is a Canadian company. Based on what he had seen on the packet was that the Granada golf was not included. The committee will evaluate it and the bid includes Tennis, they will start sometime in the New Year because they will have to make some improvements before. Burger Bob was taken out of the bid because of Commission.
- Discussion on Park of the Month –Venetian Pool –Fred Couceyro said we are closing after Labor Day and start with the improvements.

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4. New Business

- DYL Development – Fred Couceyro said DYL Development had asked to come and meet with the board to propose their project. Laura Russo representing the DYL Development was present. The group want to take the City parking lot in from the City and in exchange for the city's surface parking lot provide a City park. They will be exchanging with the City up to 300 hundred thousand dollars towards the design and the implementation of up to one million in implementation, maintenance and preparatory for the park. They wanted to build this park in the form of a plaza, but Fred envisions a park with an interactive urban water feature, with timed fountains, similar to an existing park in Charleston, S. C. Laura Russo said that the water feature got a lot of negative feed back from the commission, they want more green and it was up to the board to make suggestions on what we would want to have in the park. Fred said he believes that the negative feedback was due to waer feature design that was a passive fountain. His idea is for an interactive area that has shooting water spouts or fountains with different urban design markers that encourage activity within the park. Fred said that the main points of the Boards discussions and recommendations were proper delineation of the park area , signage of a park name, interactive water features, as a wild card a pet friendly area, a green area, maintaining safety measures. The Board said that as the board we welcome the idea of the project but want to see the area be an active park. The Board did not feel that they could comment on whether the proposed land exchange was equitable in terms of land values or other factors, but they did support the idea of a park if the swap was agreed to by the City.

5. Date and time of next meeting –The next Parks and Recreation Advisory Board meeting is scheduled for **Friday, September 19, 2008**. The meeting will start at **8:00 a.m.** and will be held in the **Conference Room at the Youth Center**, located at 405 University Drive. The **Park of the Month for August** is **Nat Winokur Park** located at 150 Ruiz Avenue. Please visit Nat Winokur Park before the next meeting.
6. The meeting adjourned at 9:15 a.m.