

CITY OF CORAL GABLES

LANDSCAPE BEAUTIFICATION ADVISORY BOARD

<https://zoom.us/j/83110285038>

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 9th, 2023 – 10:30 A.M.

- MEETING MINUTES -

MEMBERS	D	J	F	M	M	J	S	O	N	APPOINTED BY:
	22	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	
Carolina Estefan-Chahine	E	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	Mayor Lago
Anne Boynton-Trigg	P	P	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	Vice Mayor Anderson
Elizabeth Parnes	P	P	P	P	P	E	A	P	P	Commissioner Fernandez
Sara Lane Conde	-	-	-	-	-	-	P	A	P	Commissioner Castro
Nancy Leslie	P	P	E	P	P	P	A	P	P	Commissioner Menendez
Amy Dash	P	P	A	P	P	A	A	P	P	City Manager
Vacant	E	P	P	P	P	P	A	-	-	Board-As-A-Whole

P – Present
E – Excused Absence
A – Absent
(-) – No Appointment
(*) – No Meeting

STAFF:

Deena Bell-Llewellyn, Assistant PW Director, Greenspace
Pilar Wiesse, Recording Secretary, Greenspace

GUEST:

Orlando Comas, PLA, ASLA Landscape Architect

CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order at 10:32 a.m. The roll was taken, and a quorum was present.

MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL:

The board reviewed the October 12th, 2023, minutes. **A motion was made to “Approve the minutes of October 12th, 2023” The motion was seconded, voted upon, and adopted unanimously.**

PRESENTATIONS / DISCUSSIONS:

- All board members introduced themselves and welcomed the new board member Ms. Sara Lane Conde. Ms. Conde introduced herself to the board members. She is a CPA who works in the Controller's office for the University of Miami. She has been living in the Gables for almost 30 years. She is a member of the Tropical Audubon Society, and she would like to be a part of and help the Gables move in the direction towards native, to benefit fauna.

- **EVENT PLANNING 2024:**

Farmer's Market 2024 – Ms. Boynton-Trigg informed the board that only the first and last Saturday of farmer's Market were taken for presentations. Discussion took place to choose a date for presentation and January 27, 2024, was chosen. Ms. Bell suggested to do the presentation about the swale package for beautifying and parking on the swales; she volunteered to do the talk. She said that the swale package started for parking and for residents who want to protect the roots of the tree, or because trees do not allow enough light for grass to grow. She also explained that swales have a purpose. Car parking has been a constant problem in swales because cars compact the soil, harm the root system and there is no way for the water to runoff and drain, streets get flooded. Everyone agreed is a good topic to educate residents about what they can plant and install in their swales. **A motion was made to “have the topic for the Farmer's Market about swales guidelines and to include parking enforcement in the swales”. The motion was seconded, voted upon, and adopted unanimously.**

Arbor Day 2024 – Ms. Leslie informed the board that she is the liaison for the Garden Club to the board. The Garden Club makes a donation and contributes to the cost of the tree. They also contribute with a plaque for the tree. Ms. Bell suggested to start thinking about type of tree and the location around the city to plant the new tree for Arbor Day 2024.

Beautification Awards 2024 – Ms. Boynton-Trigg explained to Ms. Conde and Mr. Comas that each board member identifies five landscapes they think are beautiful within their zone. Each board member chooses a zone and submit their nominations to be voted on at the board's meeting in March. Zones were assigned as follows: Liz Parnes (Zone 1). Nancy Leslie (Zone 2). Sara Lane Conde (Zone 3 & 4). Carolina Estefan-Chahine (Zone 5). Amy Dash (Zone 6a-north), and Anne Boynton-Trigg (Zone 6b-south). Code Enforcement division will review properties for code violations. Winners will be invited to attend the City Commission meeting to receive a plaque of recognition.

- **STATE OF ROAD AT THE INTERSECTION OF OLD CUTLER AND RED RD.:** Ms. Estefan-Chahine informed the board that she attended the last Transportation Advisory board meeting and showed them the site which is in complete despair. They agreed that the area is dangerous, in despair and that something needs to be done. They will write an email to county representatives to look at the swale area. She would like the Landscape advisory board to do the same to push the issue with the county to take action on this issue. She volunteered to write the letter for the board's review and to be voted on at the next meeting. Discussion took place after Ms. Parnes questioned if this issue was a transportation or a landscaping issue and whether the landscape board should be involved at all. Ms. Estefan-Chahine responded saying even though the county is responsible for the site, it is in the city, the same way the Coral Gables Library is. Ms. Parnes said she is concerned that because it is not a landscape project to be addressed by the board, the board cannot have any input into it, its efforts might not take the board anywhere. Ms. Bell intervened saying that it could be helpful to write a letter expressing interest from the board to the county to take it as a priority to fund the extra paving and transportation project that is within the city.
- **BOARD-AS-A-WHOLE VACANCY:** Ms. Bell informed the board that there is a vacancy for Board-As-A-Whole because Maria Debye Saxinger has officially stepped out. This is a position for the board to elect and prospects need to have a credential in any of following professional categories to qualify: landscape architects, planners, certified arborists, architects or degree horticulturists, botanists or foresters, or any related profession. Mr. Orlando Comas, PLA, ASLA introduced himself to the board as a landscape architect. He brought an extensive resume and portfolio for the board to review. He is not a Coral Gables resident, but his office is in the city. He said that landscape architecture is his passion, that most of his work is in Coral Gables, and he would like to give back to the community. He would be interested in helping in any area the board needs to. He said that Coral Gables has the most beautiful landscapes in Miami-Dade and Broward counties and the city should keep its standards, increase the use of native plants, to limit pulling water from well.
- **UPDATE ON CITY PROJECTS:**
Coral Gables Library: Ms. Bell said that the county is currently tasked with hiring their own landscape architect to come up with a new master plan for the site and the old irrigation well. She is currently reviewing the plans for the city.

Ms. Bell said that there are a lot of new landscaping projects to start planning for the year. New funding has been received to do more landscaping along medians and roads of Ponce de Leon corridor, from Ponce Circle Park to Flagler Street. Also,

thirty-year old plants on US1 medians from Douglas to Red Road are going to be replaced for native plants, to keep it natural and low to the ground.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 11:51 am

THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE HELD ON
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 14th, 2023, 10:30 AM