

CORAL GABLES SUSTAINABILITY ADVISORY BOARD

ZOOM MEETING

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 26, 2020 @ 5:00 P.M.

MINUTES

MEMBERS	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	APPOINTED BY:
	19	19	19	19	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	
Martin Pinilla	P	E	*	P	P	P	*	*	*	*	*	P	Mayor Valdes-Fauli
Gordan Fales	P	P	*	P	P	P	*	*	*	*	*		Commissioner Fors
Rita Teutonico	E	E	*	E	E	E	*	*	*	*	*	P	Vice Mayor Lago
Greg Hamra	P	P	*	P	P	P	*	*	*	*	*	P	Commissioner Mena
Marlin Ebbert	P	P	*	E	P	P	*	*	*	*	*	P	Commissioner Keon
Enrique Bernal	P	E	*	P	P	P	*	*	*	*	*		City Manager Peter Iglesias
Irela Bague	E	P	*	P	P	P	*	*	*	*	*	P	City Commission-As-A-Whole
Teddy Lhoutellier	P	P	*	P	E	P	*	*	*	*	*	P	U.M. Representative
Monique Selman	E	P	*	P	P	P	*	*	*	*	*	P	C.G. Chambers of Commerce
Piero Gardinali	P	P	*	E	P	P	*	*	*	*	*	P	F.I.U. Representative

A – Absent
P – Present
E – Excused
(*) no meeting

STAFF:

Matt Anderson, Senior Sustainability Analyst
Solanch Lopez, Administrative Assistant City Manager’s Office
Olivia Cosio, Coral Gables Sustainability Intern

CALL TO ORDER:

The Chairperson, Irela Bague called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm.

GUESTS:

Jasper Brock, CG Resident
Rhonda Anderson, CG Resident

MOTIONS:

February 26, 2020 SAB meeting minutes & KAB Workshop meeting minutes – Martin made a motion to approve both meeting minutes, Marlin seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Marlin made a motion to excuse Enrique; Martin seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Rhonda mentioned they should have a location confirmed at Black Point Marina, sometime in January or February to plant the mangrove plants. She will update the board with dates and time as soon as it is available. Lots of volunteers will be needed to help plant the mangroves.

Discussion on Biscayne Bay – Piero provided information on the situation at Biscayne Bay which started around August 10, 2020. A crew was deployed, along with the vehicles needed to do a wide area survey of the Bay. Their findings were a lot of water with very little oxygen. There were large areas of the Bay where the numbers were very low (any number below 2 milligrams per liter, does not sustain life). They were there for 5 to 6 days until the oxygen levels were normal. They believe it is caused by unfortunate events that have been waiting to happen. The Bay was loaded with enough nutrients, the temperatures were very high, the circulation pattern was a little complicated and all that combined depleted the oxygen in the water. In a regular Bay there would've been seagrasses to put all that oxygen back through photosynthesis but sadly with time Biscayne Bay has seen a huge decline in seagrasses. There is a group of stakeholders that involve a number of devoted people who are very dedicated to the Bay, they meet every day at 4:30 pm to figure out how things are, if things are getting better by the day and what's the next thing to do moving forward.

Irela also updated the Board on the Biscayne Bay situation – In 2017 many people participated in the 1st Biscayne Bay Marine Health Summit and the recommendations from that created the Biscayne Bay Task Force. At last year's summit, they re-grouped to try and get everybody together to push hard on the County, the State and Municipalities to address some of these problems. The Task Force's 1st meeting was in June of 2019; they completed their report on June of 2020. The City of Coral Gables plays a huge roll as they are one of the hot spots, but with the work of the Task Force the main crisis point is on the northern part of the basin, 79th Street, the Julia Tuttle, Little River. On the Task Force reports they addressed the septic systems contributing to nutrient pollution and the canals also introducing nutrient pollutions. Most of the pollution is land based making us the cause of the problem, the AG pipe systems that keep breaking or a contractor hitting the AG pipes every now and then causing problems that are preventable as well as other issues like marine debris. The Task Force created themes and cover themes, water quality being the main recommendation that was addressed.

The overarching recommendation of the Task Force are;

1. Create a governing structure
2. Asking the Mayor to hire a Chief Bay officer
3. Address Water Quality, Infrastructure, AG Pipes, Septic, Water Shed, Habitat Restoration
4. Marine problem
5. Education and outreach
6. Funding Sources

Irela has a meeting with the Coral Gables Vice Mayor tomorrow and she is hoping he pushes forward with a resolution. Irela is also hoping the Commission takes appropriate action immediately.

Keep Coral Gables Beautiful – a brief update was provided to the Commission yesterday during the Commission meeting.

Activities;

- What would you like to see this affiliate accomplish in the next 18 months in the 3 focus areas (reduce litter, improve recycling and beautify communities) that fall under the pillars of Keep America Beautiful?
- What do you see KCGB accomplishing in the next 3 to 5 year's?

Marlin suggested recycling bins next to the trash cans.

Rita suggested water cleanup.

Solanch asked that everyone submit their response to the activity questions to her and Matt, she will combine all together and discuss it with the Board at the September meeting.

International Coastal Cleanup Season (September 19 – October 31st) The cleanup is usually a day or a weekend but due to COVID its been turned into an International Coastal Cleanup Season. The City will be doing some small events but will be encouraging the residents or anyone interested, to go out and do cleanups on their own and share their story on the City's Social Media and on the Clean Swell App. They can list, log and track all the trash and everything they are collecting. The City is looking to structure and partner up with ICC, they are looking for two locations (City Hall & BTC-Biltmore Tennis Center) within the City where the residents can go and pick up supplies if needed, to do a cleanup. The supplies will be provided by volunteercleanup.org, during regular operating hours, if you want you can go to either location, sign the participation waiver form and pick up gloves and garbage bags.

FIU Coral Gables Water Quality Projects – the contract was finalized, currently waiting on a purchase order to be issued to start the work and collect all the data. This in-depth water quality and waterway assessment will tell us where possible sources in the water are coming from and where we are at, as far as quality.

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Household Hazardous Waste Collection Event – the event was scheduled in April but due to COVID, it had to be postponed. A date in September was likely until the COVID numbers went up again and therefore it had to be postponed. Tentatively the next event is scheduled for November 14, 2020.

Community Sustainability Training – The City is partnering with the CLEO Institute to do a Community training, there is one tentatively scheduled for September 16, 2020 but that date might change.

Coral Gables Green Business Certification Program - to date, 5 businesses have been certified. The business LOVVETT has reached out to Matt, it is a business run by Coral Gables residents who created an app partnering with restaurants for people to buy food at the end of the day, that otherwise wasn't going to be used. The aim is to reduce food waste. You can buy it at a discounted price. They submitted their application; it is currently under review and hopefully have them certified as a Green Business.

Coral Gables Facility Energy Efficiency Upgrades (LED, etc.) – To date the Public Works Facility has been completely retrofitted and certain portions of City Hall especially around the Commissioners and Mayors area. Fire Station #3 is about 50% completed converting it to LED, unfortunately, due to COVID the job was put on hold, hopefully it can resume in about a month or so. Merrick House is about 98% done and the work on the Venetian Pool will start soon.

MEMBER COMMENTS:

Marlin – was the new Public Safety Building required to put up solar panels? Matt said they were not required to put up solar panels, but it is being built to LEED Silver.

Gordon – mentioned an excellent webinar he saw yesterday by Emirates Foundation about water quality throughout the state and the problems that they've had. Gordon said it was thorough and well done, he will try to find it and send it to Matt to share it with the Board.

Martin – will meet with Vice Mayor about converting the green space into a park. Everything had cooled down during COVID but now he will resume by meeting with the Vice Mayor.

Piero – covered the Biscayne Bay issue at the beginning of the meeting.

Teddy – UM has been busy preparing for opening and the return of the students. They have had outbreaks but not that many. He is very happy about the commitment of James Blake the Athletic Director by signing the UN Framework, sports for climate action (committing to carbon neutrality). On Friday from 8:30 to 9:30 they will have the We Lab.

Greg – he received a call from the person in charge of the Municipal Resolutions for the National Bill asking those who are responsible for bringing on these cities, the 101 local governments supporting the Energy Innovation Act bill that will be re-introduced to congress. Sadly, this will not include Coral Gables because to date the City has not passed a resolution supporting the bill.

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Irela suggested this be added to the September agenda to discuss with the Board on how to reach out to the Commission and get the City's support on this bill.

Irela – finally had FPL confirm a meeting for September.

Rita – channel 10 will do a 1-hour special on September 2nd highlighting all the things that is being done to protect Biscayne Bay.

Next Meeting – Wednesday, September 23, 2020.

ADJOURNED: 6:30 pm.