

# City of Coral Gables

405 Biltmore Way  
Coral Gables, FL 33134  
[www.coralgables.com](http://www.coralgables.com)



## Meeting Minutes

Thursday, May 9, 2024

8:00 AM

<https://coralgables.zoom.us/j/89943974263>

Youth Center - Conference Room

**Parks and Recreation Advisory Board**

## **CALL TO ORDER**

Began at 8:16 am

## **ROLL CALL**

### **a. Roll Call and Excusal of Absences**

Present: 8 - Board member Erik Rodriguez, Board member Maite Halley, Board member Yamilet Rodriguez, Board member Ellen Chasens, Chair Carlos Hernandez, Board member Aaron Aizenstat, Vice-Chair Jennifer Marquez and Board member Antonio Gonzalez.

## **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

### **a. Approval of April Informational Meeting Minutes**

A MOTION TO APPROVE THE MARCH AND APRIL MEETING MINUTES WAS MADE BY MAITE HALLEY AND SECOND BY JENNIFER MARQUEZ. ALL IN FAVOR; PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

## **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

**a. General Updates**

Deputy Director Carolina Vester began her report by reminding the board that owing to the previous meeting, they did not reach the minimum attendance requirement, and most items were referred. They were going to have a full agenda this morning.

The Coral Gables Golf and Country Club Divisional Director Mitch Zuriarrain has formally parted ways to assume a position in the private sector, according to Deputy Director Carolina Vester. She continued by saying that until a suitable candidate is found to fill that position, Deputy Director Carolina Vester will be covering at the Country Club.

**b. Special Events**

Deputy Director Carolina Vester proceeded to update the board on the forthcoming events for the month of May, including The Gables Family Literacy Festival – Saturday, May 18 at 11 a.m., Athletic Club Open House – Sunday, May 19 at 10a.m. and Memorial Day Remembrance Ceremony – Monday, May 27 at 9a.m.

**c. CIP Updates**

**a. Phillips Park - Community Meeting - Wednesday May 15th, 2024 at 6 p.m.**

Deputy Director Carolina Vester continued her report on Phillips Park. She also stated that they would have a community meeting for that park on Wednesday, May 15th at 6 p.m. Deputy Director Carolina shared the conceptual design with the board members by sharing meeting information, brief site history, Florida recreation development assistance program, map view of site, proposed enhancements, proposed improvements, proposed concept, building concept, legend, adventure playground, splash pad, fitness court, additional activation areas, athletic soccer field with fencing, traditional park elements, traditional park amenities, and community meeting.

**A MOTION TO APPROVE THE CONCEPT OF PHILLIPS PARK WAS MADE BY MAITE HALLEY AND SECOND BY ELLEN CHASENS. ALL IN FAVOR; PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**NEW BUSINESS**

**a. Adding pickleball courts on the pony side of the youth center field**

Chair Carlos Hernandez expressed concern over the pickle ball courts' location and future as the parking garage may or may not happen. He supports pickle ball but has a concern. The youth center fields are being considered for pickle ball. As a longtime city resident. He informed them that the field is being actively being used by flag football, softball, and baseball. If we built pickle ball in that back section by Segovia, numerous things would reduce the city's only truly central park's green space. He likes Phillips' two new pickle ball courts to compensate. We can't take the youth center field's kids' green section for pickle ball.

Chair Carlos Hernandez reminded staff and board members that the war memorial youth center board, as property owners, will weigh in. Deputy Director Carolina said. There's a reversed clause on city youth center use and operations. To Carlo's point, the reversed clause states that they could take that parcel back if it wasn't for the primary dominant use. So that's always been a heated container topic. We once hosted adult activities here and across the street at the church. It was long debated if this was a youth center. We looked for a new home; it became the adult center. There are many things that give employees an opportunity. It surprised us during the commission meeting. We were unprepared. Director Couceyro will try his best to navigate the different options. Many community people attended the last commission meeting, so the commission deferred the subject until they could further review it.

**A MOTION STATING THAT THE PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD DOES NOT APPROVE OR SUPPORT CONVERTING ANY OF THE YOUTH CENTERS' GREEN SPACES INTO DEDICATED PICKLE BALL COURTS, AND THAT THE SPACE MUST BE DEDICATED TO THE YOUTH WAS MADE BY JENNIFER MARQUEZ AND SECOND BY ANTONIO GONZALEZ. ALL IN FAVOR; PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**OLD BUSINESS**

**a. Nellie B. Moore Park and William & Leona Cooper Park**

Deputy Director Carolina Vester shared a report on Cooper Park. She added that they held a community meeting for that park on Thursday, April 25th. It's the one in the Golden Gate neighborhood, closer to Carver Elementary. Deputy Director Carolina also shared the conceptual design with the board members by sharing meeting information, brief site history, Cooper Park renaming, park remaining in honor of Leona and William Cooper, property folios and aerial views, map view of site, concept inspirations, concept site plan, play structure, planting options, cross section, proposed features, and estimated project budget.

**A MOTION TO APPROVE BOTH PARKS' DESIGNS AND COMMEMORATE THE PIONEERS AND THEIR FAMILIES AT MOORE PARK WAS MADE BY JENNIFER MARQUEZ AND SECOND BY MAITE HALLEY. ALL IN FAVOR; PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**b. Project development - 130 Almeria**

During the presentation on the 130 Almeria Park project development, Deputy Director Carolina, and the developers Devon and Jose discussed the park's projects plans, criteria, guidelines, map view of site, concept inspirations, concept site plan, play structure, planting options, cross section, proposed features, and estimated project budget.

**A MOTION TO APPROVE THE USE OF THE 130 ALMERIA LOT AS A CHILDRENS PARK WAS MADE BY JENNIFER MARQUEZ AND SECOND BY ANTONIO GONZALEZ. ALL IN FAVOR; PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**c. Youth Center overnight/ overflow parking**

The Youth Center overnight parking will be moved to the next agenda item because there is a long agenda.

**DISCUSSION ITEMS**

**ITEMS FROM THE SECRETARY**

Date of the meeting: Thursday, June 13th at 8:15 a.m.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**A MOTION TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 9:40 A.M. WAS MADE BY MAITE HALLEY AND WAS SECONDED BY ELLEN CHASENS. ALL IN FAVOR; PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**NOTE**