

**CITY OF CORAL GABLES
COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING**

Minutes of April 17, 2014

Members	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	
Herb Levin Liana Perez	+	+	+	+	+	P	P	*	P	P	P	P	P	Mayor Jim Cason
Luba De Witt Sam Joseph	x	x	*	*	*	E	P	*	A	P	P	E	P	Commissioner Pat Keon Commissioner Maria Anderson
Les Pantin III Carlos Perea	x	x	*	*	*	P	P	*	P	A	P	P	E	Commissioner Vince Lago Comm. Ralph Cabrera Jr.
Jerry Santeiro (deceased)	x	x	*	*	+									Comm. Frank C. Quesada
Connie Crowther David Stiefel	x	x	*	*	+	P	P	*	P	P	P	P	P	Vice Mayor William H. Kerdyk

* No meetings

x No quorum

+ Resigned

Staff in attendance:

Maria Rosa Higgins Fallon, Public Affairs Manager

Guests:

Sonia Succar, Environmental Specialist, Public Works

The meeting came to order at 9:30 a.m.

Approval of minutes

The minutes from the March meeting were circulated for approval.

Motion: Connie Crowther motioned to approve the March meeting minutes.

Luba DeWitt seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Updates

Higgins Fallon provided members an update regarding recent management changes. The City Manager has given his resignation effective tomorrow. City Commission has appointed Assistant City Manager Carmen Olazabal as Interim City Manager. She will not seek this position permanently. The Commission is discussing what steps to take in order to conduct a national search for the replacement of a permanent City Manager. They have also approved having a Citizen Committee that will provide input on the selection of finalists for the position. They expect the process to take from two to six months. If any of the following changes affect the Communications Division or the Communications Committee, Higgins Fallon will provide updates as details develop. Further discussion was held regarding positive messages during this time of transition.

Environmental Initiatives

Higgins Fallon introduced Sonia Succar, Environmental Specialist for the City who works under Public Works Department. She has been hired to move the City toward becoming a

greener city and is here to discuss how this Committee can help in communicating this message.

Succar stated that she has been brought in to help lead programs that would make Coral Gables a more sustainable and greener city. Among her projects is a Sustainability Master Plan. The master plan is twofold: first it will review and audit the fleet, the fuels used, waste management and recycling issues in order to analyze where the City stands regarding sustainability. The next step is to issue recommendations that will showcase cost savings and provides a measuring tool and ways to market these efforts. Succar hopes that this Master Plan will set standards for everything related to sustainability. She welcomes all ideas and thoughts to communicate this message.

Luba DeWitt inquired about Granada Golf Course and if there are plans to educate people to walk on sidewalks and not on the streets. Discussion was held regarding the safety issue for joggers and walkers using the street, especially at night. Succar indicated that the city is unveiling a Bike Plan that includes a safe path for joggers at Granada Golf Course, similar to Kennedy Park at Coconut Grove. The city is trying to balance the needs among golfers, drivers, bikers and joggers. More signage is needed.

Connie Crowther agreed that something must be done so that people biking or walking at night are protected to prevent accidents. Succar said that they are looking at possible educational grant funding.

Chairperson Herb Levin asked if there are any local bike organizations that could be used as resources. Succar said that the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) helps with education and BikeWalk Coral Gables hosts monthly outings at the Coral Gables Museum that are very popular.

Crowther suggested disseminating the information about the Bike Plan and doing public service announcements from both the bikers and drivers perspectives. Higgins Fallon agreed. She will research what existing psas are there so they can air on Coral Gables Television or produce new ones if needed. She will report back to the Committee.

Crowther also asked if they are looking at making Coral Gables more LED certified. Succar said they are looking into doing a fast track permitting for green buildings to set the standards. A good champion, she said, is Commissioner Lago who has an environmentally friendly house.

Levin said that story would make an interesting television special, showcasing the cost savings of green homes. Higgins agreed. She said that they can do a "Green Homes of Coral Gables" show similar to the one they already do on "Historic Homes of Coral Gables." Everyone agreed. Crowther said that Sally Jude is doing renovations to her historic home, and the renovation of older homes is the greenest of greens because you don't have the destruction of the old material. Succar will help identify homeowners with green homes that would be willing to participate in the new show idea.

Communications Committee members thanked Sonia Succar for her attendance and participation.

Projects & Events

Higgins Fallon briefly updated members of the following projects:

- Coral Gables TV is now viewable on AT&T U-verse connected through Channel 99 in Dade, Broward and Monroe counties. Higgins Fallon called resident Ruth Jacobs to inform her that she can now watch CGTV. She was very thankful to Communications Committee members for their assistance and for keeping her in mind in her request.

- On Saturday, April 19, mini eggs will be dropped via helicopter to the Youth Center for a special egg hunt. Other city parks will also host egg hunts on the ground. There will be candy and prizes inside the colorful eggs.

- Earth Day on April 22 will unveil the Million Orchids Program at Merrick Park. It is a very interesting project done with Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden to help beautify the City.

- Higgins Fallon said that she will take it upon herself to translate the promotional materials presented last time by Economic Sustainability. She agrees with Communications Committee members that it is important to be fully bilingual in this business information and she will absorb the work and the cost.

CGTV

Higgins Fallon showcased a video that promotes the new U-verse connection for CGTV and shows how to access it.

Succar asked if the city has a YouTube site. Higgins Fallon said that the city does and that with the current change in management she would like to revisit the possibility of doing other social media. The city has reserved the brand names on Facebook and Twitter for future use. She will like to get the support and guidance of the Communications Committee in establishing guidelines and the internal infrastructure to move forward. Important messages such as the new green ideas discussed today would be ideal for social media.

Crowther agreed saying the Coral Gables will not be the first city that uses social media. Social media is not a bad thing but will help identify issues and be a good source of information for the City Commission. Through her relation with Public Relations Society of America she will research which cities have won awards for social media to use as guidance.

Higgins Fallon agreed that with the power of social media the city could quadruple its communication efforts and will add transparency to our government message. She will continue the discussion about social media in upcoming meetings.

Higgins Fallon also distributed the latest e-News issue. With no further issues to discuss, the meeting was adjourned.