

CITY OF CORAL GABLES
COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING
Minutes of January 15, 2009

Members	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	
Leslie Pantin Jr.	E	P	P	P	P	*	*	x	E	P	P	E		Mayor Donald D. Slesnick II
Richard Chimelis	P	P	E	P	P	A	*	*	x	A	+	+		Commissioner Maria Anderson
Sam Joseph													P	
Katherine deBlij	P	P	P	E	P	P	*	*	x	P	P	P	P	Comm. Ralph Cabrera Jr.
Vivian More	P	P	P	E	P	P	*	*	x	P	E	E	E	Comm. Wayne "Chip" Withers
David Stiefel	P	P	P	P	P	P	*	*	x	P	P	P	P	Vice Mayor William H. Kerdyk Jr.

* No meetings

x No quorum

+ Membership discontinued

Staff in attendance:

Maria Rosa Higgins Fallon, Public Affairs

Belkys Perez, Public Affairs

Margarita Cardenas, Information Technology

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

Approval of minutes

The minutes from the December meeting were circulated for approval.

Motion: Katherine deBlij motioned to approve the December meeting minutes. Sam Joseph seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

New member

David Stiefel welcomed new member Sam Joseph to the Communications Committee.

Information Technology

Margarita Cardenas from the IT Department handed out a report on web page statistics. The report includes number of hits of the City of Coral Gables website from January through December 2008. It indicates the top searches which are consistent with last year's report. The Department will use this report to make decisions on web site improvement. She also distributed another report that summarizes the City's web page use by hour of day, day of week and page requests by month. In summary, people are visiting the City's webpage more each year.

Yearly Goals

Maria Rosa Higgins Fallon distributed the 2009 Strategic Communications Plan as the guideline for the projects that the Communications Division will accomplish this year. She reviewed the first goal of maximizing internal and external communications and went over the performance indicators. The report lists the tasks that are funded this upcoming year, as well as those that were not funded because of budget cuts. The second goal of promoting city services and programs is accomplished through effective media relations. Higgins Fallon also explained the goals for Coral Gables Television, showcasing the production done for the Junior Orange Bowl. A pre-parade

show was produced and aired 30 minutes before the parade. Additional shows that will continue to produce this year include the public affairs "Coral Gables Now," the entertainment show "On The Scene," the informational "What's Happening Coral Gables," and the senior oriented "Golden Gables." One goal for this year is also to upgrade equipment in the seven year old production truck.

Higgins Fallon also reported that an additional project this year is the informational campaign for the Referendum Election of April 14 which includes four proposed Charter Amendments. The City is not taking a position on any of these issues. The goal is just to inform the electorate about the issues prior to Election Day. City Commission has approved an expenditure of \$40,000 to inform and educate the public. This will include the production of a Voter's Guide which will be sent to all homeowners in Coral Gables. She will report additional information on this at the next meeting. Higgins Fallon requested input from the Committee about the strategic plan.

Stiefel asked if there were any funding concerns. Higgins Fallon replied that if CGTV equipment fails the Division is not properly funded to respond. For example, Mediastar video programmer is an expensive piece of equipment that would require large amounts of money to fix or replace. Same issue if the production truck breaks. Also, if there are additional personnel cuts, production and coverage would be affected. The majority of CGTV staff are part-timers and funding was cut this year. Stiefel asked if administration was aware of these conditions. Higgins Fallon said that she will bring the new City Manager up to speed on these issues.

Samuel Joseph inquired if the equipment at CGTV is HD compatible. Belkys Perez explained that we currently have a DVCPro 50 camera, however our editing equipment is DVCPro 25 compatible. CGTV would have to invest in changing all the equipment to edit on DVCPro 50 to upgrade the definition. Higgins Fallon said this is one a goal she would like to accomplish in the future when more funding is available.

Joseph also asked if the City has a partnership program for TV sponsorship. Higgins Fallon replied that last year, as result of budget cuts, the City Commission was interested in finding new sources of revenues. As a result, she prepared a sponsorship media plan which was approved by Management last April and is now at legal for review. The challenge is to get with Comcast to agree to this sponsorship without negatively affecting the franchise agreement. Her office is proceeding carefully on this since it is a first attempt and will not proceed without the endorsement of the City's legal office. The idea for additional revenues through sponsorship is there, but the details have not been worked out.

Joseph also pointed out that this will increase the workload at a time when staffing is being reduced. Higgins Fallon agreed that this is another issue, especially if her office will be asked to do more with less personnel support.

Katherine deBlij inquired if the calendars received had any contribution from the establishments highlighted. Higgins Fallon reported that this design was done by a printer who donated the graphic services and picked the photographs included in the calendar. She considered the calendars to be a good design and decided to purchase some for the City to use.

deBlij also like to include as an additional goal the translations of the City Commission due to the large Hispanic population in the City. Higgins Fallon said currently certain productions are done in Spanish, such as e-News which is translated every week. Also, after each Commission Meeting, CGTV tapes Newsdesk which is a recap of Commission meetings. A version of this Newsdesk is also taped completely in Spanish. It is not an item by item translation of the Commission meetings, but a recap of the most important stories. Other important programming is also done in Spanish such as hurricane preparation video. deBlij will review this programming and Higgins Fallon will bring a copy of Spanish Newsdesk at the next meeting for review.

Joseph asked if there is a document at City Hall that lists all the Spanish programs available. Higgins Fallon will work on putting together a compilation.

Golden Gables

Belkys Perez talked about the upcoming *Golden Gables* issue for February, March and April she is working on. The main story will be Coral Gables@Home a new project of the Community Foundation. This program helps seniors to find resources available so that they can age at home and not have to go to a living facility. Also, a new social worker with enormous experience in assisting seniors will be conducting lectures every month on topics from Medicare to caring of the elderly. The annual Senior Lunch and Lecture will take place at the Biltmore Hotel and hundreds of seniors are expected to attend. Featured speaker is the director of Florida Department of Elderly Affairs. This upcoming issue also has lots of local stories. Perez also talked about an article that she submitted and was published in the *Elder Update*, a publication of the state of Florida. The article provided information about seniors in Coral Gables registering for computer classes. There are currently 5,000 subscribers to the *Golden Gables*.

News Update

Higgins Fallon talked briefly on the main issues at City Hall. The search for a new City Manager continues and the City Commission is to receive a short list of 10-13 applicants for review. From this list, they will pick their top choices for individual interviews and a final selection is expected to happen in February. The other main news is the upcoming April elections.

Stiefel inquired if there have been any reactions to the switch from printed to online publications. Higgins Fallon replied that there have been no massive reactions. The only population affected would be the seniors but a decision was made to continue to print the *Golden Gables*.

With no other business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned.