

City of Coral Gables

405 Biltmore Way
Coral Gables, FL 33134
www.coralgables.com



Meeting Minutes

Thursday, July 14, 2022

8:00 AM

Youth Center, Conference Room

Parks and Recreation Advisory Board

Chairperson Monica Segura
Vice Chairperson Carlos Rua
Board Member Nicolas Cabrera
Board Member Ellen C. Chasens
Board Member Laura Hernandez
Board Member Bruce Lecure
Board Member Jennifer A. Marques
Board Member Ruben Rodriguez

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting began at 8:10am

ROLL CALL

a. Roll Call and Excusal of Absenses

A MOTION TO EXCUSE THE ABSENCES OF ELLEN CHASENS, RUBEN RODRIGUEZ, AND LAURA HERNANDEZ WAS MADE BY BRUCE LECURE. MOTION WAS SECONDED BY JENNIFER MARQUES. ALL IN FAVOR, MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Present: 5 - Chairperson Segura, Vice Chairperson Rua, Board Member Hernandez, Board Member Lecure and Board Member Cabrera

Excused: 3 - Board Member Chasens, Board Member Marques and Board Member Rodriguez

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

a. Approval of June Minutes

A MOTION APPROVING THE JUNE MEETING MINUTES WAS MADE BY BRUCE LECURE AND SECONDED BY CHARLIE RUA. ALL IN FAVOR, MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

STAFF APPEARANCE

a. Greenspace Management Assistant Director Deena Bell-Llewellyn

Assistant Director of Greenspace Management, Deena Bell-Llewellyn, was asked to speak to the Board to better explain Greenspace Management's role when maintaining our city's parks and open spaces. The Board was also asked to present any concerns that they might be having during this time.

Deena shared a brief history of the department and broke down what the Greenspace Management division maintained versus what the Community Recreation Park's division maintained. Included in GM are over 370 public areas, triangle green spaces, swales, and small parks while the Park's crew provides maintenance to our larger activated parks with playground structures and building spaces. However, all trees are maintained under Greenspace Management. Coral Gables has the second largest tree canopy in the state of Florida, second to Gainesville.

Board member Bruce Lecure brought forward questions on whether the division is experiencing staffing issues that might be causing the delay of items being repaired at Lisbon Park. Bruce had expressed his concerns within the park weeks earlier via email. Issues include standing water in several areas, overgrowth of a large Strangler Fig around the main oak tree, mulching, park lighting is off time, and the repair of the water feature. Mrs. Bell-Llewellyn expressed her appreciation for the feedback of the park and shared that all her staff at this time has been allocated to tree pruning and weed removal due to the summer wet season and the City's ban on Round-up weed killer products. The Public Service Division has been notified of the broken fountain and has been to the site to investigate. Parts have been ordered but Deena will provide an update when possible. Deena also let the Board know that the city works with a contracted tree trimming service and any workorders placed with them take between 8-10 weeks. The company works in zones throughout the whole city. She also explained the process of removing the invasive Strangler Figs and the time needed to not damage the host tree's root systems.

Community Recreation Director Fred Couceyro added that most of the Public Works Department is experiencing staffing shortages so there will be delays of service due to these shortages. Board member Bruce Lecure appreciates the feedback and requested additional follow-up via email to better understand the timeline as things progress.

Board member Bruce Lecure also asked that the smaller rocks near the water feature be removed or secured in place to avoid them being thrown into the water feature causing the pump to burn out.

Board Chair Monica Segura asked Deena about the fountain space off Granada and Alhambra and if the landscaping will be cleared and beautified. Deena replied that the mulch will be replaced by crushed oolite within the next few months. Monica Segura also brought up the area located northeast side of Granada that also needs attention. Deena will look at the location to see what can be done.

Board member Nicolas Cabrera inquired about the pickup of items placed in the street swales and maintenance of those swales. He should report any issues to the Solid Waste Division of Public Works along with Code Enforcement if he believes there is any illegal dumping or issues with residents putting out their items to soon. Board Chair Monica Segura would like to see the Waste Division receive additional training on how to collect from the trash puts to better protect the tree's roots.

Vice Chair Charlie Rua asked about the status of the city's hurricane preparedness. Deena shared with the board that the city holds monthly EOC Activation meetings for all directors involved in disaster relief efforts. GM also does yearlong tree pruning of the city with hurricanes in mind while focusing on safety, health and welfare of trees and residents, not aesthetics. However, FPL is responsible for any utility line pruning.

In closing statements, Deena asks that the Board please email her at DBell@coralgables.com with any issues or concerns.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

a. General Updates

The department is experiencing staffing issues especially at the part time level which is compounded by the nation's cost escalation and supply chain issues. Contracts for services including maintenance, special events, concession supplies have all gone up at least 20%.

Summer programming has begun.

The 4th of July Event also took place and had an estimated 35,000 to 40,000 spectators. With limited parking and trolley usage being at a low, it is believed many of the spectators were residents who walked or friends of residents that parked at their homes and walked over.

Some issues occurred and shared with the Board. We had two minor reported accidents where EMS were contacted but both patrons were able to leave on their own.

There was some minimal damage made my vehicles on the course however, this is an already anticipated repair and is budgeted for. The sand traps also experience minor damages during the event.

With the increase to the cost of fireworks and the expenses associated with the event, Vice Chair Charlie Rue suggested that the City look into charging for the event to try to recoup expenses. Director Couceyro shared that the City is already considering this option for the next event however we need to devise a way to secure the parameter to not allow for guests to sneak in.

Director Couceyro continued his report with sharing with the board the progress on the country club. Updates included progress on the pool, the concessionaire agreement has been signed with the café space, expected opening dates for both will be sometime in mid-august. The new Country Club Divisional Director Candy Kakouris has now been hired and will begin August 1st. Her experience includes being the Membership Director for the Biltmore Hotel as well as the hotel's Historian.

The department has continued to work on construction of a temporary dog park at Catalonia Park and the dog area at Salvadore Park. Design drawing have been approved. Once material has come in then the neighborhood will be notified of construction.

The possible park space that the Board approved for the TDR transfer was approved by the Commission and we will be given instructions on how to proceed in the next few months. There was another lot across the street from the Mercedes Benz that the City might be acquiring and could be a possible 10,000 sq ft park.

We also were approved for the FRDAP grant money for both the Toledo and Alava Park space and the Blue Road Park space. We will be receiving \$200,000 per project from the grants and due to the timeline of when the grants need to be used, we will be hiring an architect soon.

b. Special Events

Pollinators and Popsicles in the Parks Event - Toledo & Alava July 21 at 3:30
An Afternoon at the Cinema, "LOVE and DEATH" - Gables Cinema August 21 at 1pm

c. CIP Updates

Lamar Louis Curry Park is complete and a ribbon cutting will take place in October.

Merrick Park sidewalk designs are complete and is pending public comment. The landscaping of the park will be handled by Greenspace Management and they were able to source a rare Yellow Poinsette tree for the park.

Salvadore Park light ballards are being redone and will finish around the time of the dog run area of the park.

Phillips Park conceptual design has been created and is pending approval of funding for final design approval.

Maggiore Park is complete and will be open within the week. We are waiting on the permit to be approved. However, there will need to be additional shade structures added until the trees mature and produce a big enough canopy to shade the park.

Vice Chair Charlie Rua brought up the bridge design at the completed Lamar Louis Park and wanted the bridge measured for head entrapments. Staff will look at it after the conclusion of the meeting.

Granada Pro Shop permit is approved and construction should be begin soon. Fencing and the trailer will be on site within the month. Expected construction of the Proshop side of the building is 8-10 months. The diner side of the building might take longer depending on the concessionaire agreement put in place.

NEW BUSINESS

OLD BUSINESS

a. Salvadore Park Staffing

Board Chair Monica Segura recapped the July agenda item ending with the Board requesting additional staffing at the Salvadore Park on a permanent/semi-permanent basis due to the park's increase popularity. At this time, procedurally, the best option seeking to obtain that additional Park Ranger to Salvadore Park would be to pass a resolution requesting the Commission to review.

Prior to any motions being brought forward, Director Couceyro advised the Board that the monitoring of the park would take multiple staff members to cover peak usage hours and as staffing needs increase, filling any positions might be deemed difficult with the hiring process as is even if funding is granted.

A MOTION REQUESTING A RESOLUTION BE MADE TO HAVE A PERMANENT OR QUASI-PERMANENT STAFF MEMBER OR PARK RANGER BE DEDICATED SPECIFICALLY TO SALVADORE PARK DURING PEAK HOURS OF USAGE WAS MADE BY BRUCE LECURE AND SECONDED BY JENNIFER MARQUES. ALL IN FAVOR, MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

A MOTION DESIGNATING BOARD CHAIR MONICA SEGURA AND/OR NICK CABRERA IF AVAILABLE TO SPEAK ON BEHALF OF THE PARKS ADVISORY BOARD PERTAINING TO THE ITEM OF THE SALVADORE PARK STAFFING REQUEST DURING THE AUGUST COMMISSION WAS MADE BY BRUCE LECURE AND SECONDED BY CHARLIE RUA. ALL WERE IN FAVOR, MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Board Member Nick Cabrera requested that the green space on located on Ponce De Leon Blvd and 7th Avenue be added to the agenda for August.

Board Member Nick Cabrera also requested that an item be added to the August agenda discussing Bike Walk Coral Gables and community input on bike lanes.

ITEMS FROM THE SECRETARY

Next meeting is scheduled for August 11th, 2022

ADJOURNMENT

Adjourned at 9:35am

NOTE