

CORAL GABLES SUSTAINABILITY ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

PARKING & MOBILITY SERVICES OFFICE (IN-PERSON AND ZOOM)

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 25, 2025, 5:00 P.M.

MEETING MINUTES

MEMBERS	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	APPOINTED BY:
	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	
Nicolas Eterovic	A	P	*	*		P	*						Mayor Lago
Jasper Brock	P	P	*	*		E	*						Commissioner Menendez
Martin Pinilla	P	E	*	*		P	*						City Manager
Joe Fadel	P	P	*	*		P	*						Sustainability Board-As-A-Whole
Teddy Lhoutellier	P	E	*	*		P	*						U.M. Representative
Deiter Manstein	P	P	*	*		E	*						Youth Appointment
Dipak Joshi	P	P	*	*		P	*						Vice Mayor Rhonda Anderson
James Covey	A	A	*	*	R	*	*						Commissioner Ariel Fernandez
Anabella Smith	P	E	*	*		A	*						C.G. Chambers of Commerce
--	*	*	*	*	*	*	*						Commissioner Melissa Castro
Tiffany Troxler	E	P	*	*		P	*						F.I.U. Representative

A – Absent
P – Present
E – Excused
R – Resigned
* – No Meeting/Member

STAFF:

Matthew Anderson, Sustainability & Mobility Assistant Director
Diego Cancel, Sustainability & Resiliency Supervisor
Nicole Gautney, Sustainability Coordinator

GUEST:

Frank Hercksen – Resident
Andrea Prado – Resident
Meryl Chertoff – Resident

CALL TO ORDER:

Meeting called to order at 5:02 P.M. by Teddy Lhoutellier.

PHYSICAL QUORUM (6): Teddy, Martin, Nicolas, Joe, Tiffany, and Dipak

Quorum was met at 5:05 P.M.

MOTIONS:

February 26, 2025, Meeting Minutes – Dipak motioned to approve the meeting minutes; Martin seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

July Meeting Reschedule – Dipak motioned to move the July meeting to August 13, 2025, due to many members being out of town; Joe seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Public Comment:

Andrea Prado is interested in becoming more involved with the Board as her and her family are very interested in sustainability issues.

Frank Hercksen is interested in the city's recycling programs and trying to find new activities to improve the local neighborhoods.

Meryl Chertoff expressed interest in expanding household hazardous waste (HHW) recycling options and shared an idea observed in Andalusia, Spain, a multi-compartment recycling bin designed to collect various HHW materials. This concept could provide residents with regular drop-off opportunities for items beyond batteries, supplementing the City's existing bi-annual Recycling Drive-Thru events. Staff will research the feasibility of implementing a similar system locally.

Board Member Status

- i. Teddy, UM – Approved**
- ii. Tiffany, FIU – Approved**
- iii. Jasper, Commissioner Lara – Approved**
- iv. Nick, Mayor Lago – Approved**
- v. Dipak, Vice Mayor Anderson – Approved**

Keep Coral Gables Beautiful Program Updates (KCGB)

i. Recent Events:

1. NexTrex Plastic Bag & Film Recycling Program Update

- a. In its first year, the program achieved its annual goal by collecting and recycling over 1,000 pounds of plastic film between May 31, 2024, and June

1, 2025. In recognition of this accomplishment, NexTrex awarded the city a bench made from recycled plastic film, which will be placed at a location to be determined.

***i.* Upcoming Events:**

1. Girl Scout Matheson Hammock Cleanup – June 28

- a. A Girl Scout Troop reached out to KCGB to organize a private coastal cleanup at Matheson Hammock. The event will take place from 9 to 11 a.m. during the regularly scheduled Matheson Hammock Monthly Cleanup but will be reserved for the troop. KCGB regularly partners with interested groups and businesses to coordinate private cleanup or beautification events within Coral Gables.

2. Summer Downtown Community Cleanup – August 11

- a. The quarterly Downtown Cleanup will take place on Monday, August 11, starting at 5 p.m. Volunteers will collect litter throughout the downtown area, followed by a post-event mixer at Freddo Coral Gables. Prizes will be awarded to groups and individuals who collect the most litter. The event is sponsored by Baptist Health South Florida and the Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce.

3. Adopt & Cleanup: Lend a Hand, Find a Friend – October 4

- a. KCGB is partnering with the Miami-Dade County Animal Shelter to host a combined litter cleanup and pet adoption event. Volunteers will walk adoptable shelter dogs while collecting litter in Kerdyk Park and surrounding neighborhoods. A grant application has been submitted to support the event, and KCGB is awaiting notification on the award.

Sustainability City Commission

***i.* Discussion regarding cleanup efforts throughout the downtown area.**

- 1. Residents have expressed concerns to the Commission about litter accumulating in the medians throughout the downtown area. In response, staff will direct volunteers to focus on cleaning these areas during the next Downtown Community Cleanup event.

***ii.* Update regarding electric police vehicles.**

- 1. The City has ordered its first three pursuit-rated electric police vehicles to the fleet. The Chevy Blazers will be the new EV vehicles. While a Tesla is already in service, it is not pursuit-rated. This addition supports the City's sustainability goals, as the Police Department is one of the largest fuel consumers among City departments.

***iii.* Discussion regarding the use of hazardous pesticides in city parks, land and facilities**

- 1. From May 15 through August 31, residents are prohibited from using nitrogen- and phosphorus-based fertilizers. This policy aligns with Miami-Dade County regulations.

***iv.* Discussion regarding the use of gas-powered leaf blowers.**

1. The City and the Greenspace Management Department are working toward adopting electric leaf blowers. Research is being conducted on other cities' ordinances regarding gas versus electric models, and the Greenspace team has been testing electric blowers throughout the City to evaluate their durability. The City Commission has revisited the topic of transitioning from gas to electric blowers and is considering a phased implementation.

Standing Agenda

i. Vulnerability Assessment Update

1. The consultant responsible for developing the City's first Stormwater Master Plan and Vulnerability Assessment has submitted a draft of the Stormwater Master Plan. The Sustainability team is currently reviewing this draft. The draft of the Vulnerability Assessment is expected to be delivered within the next few weeks. Once received, Matt will share the Vulnerability Assessment draft with the Board and coordinate with the consultant to arrange a presentation for the Board members.

ii. Block by Block Monthly Report

1. The Board reviewed the May monthly report from Block by Block, highlighting the outstanding daily contributions and dedication of the Block by Block employees.

Member Comments

i. Teddy:

1. Updated the on several upcoming events hosted by the University of Miami in July. These include the Edible Garden 101 workshop, which will be presented by the UF IFAS Extension Office's Master Gardener, and the Mangrove and Native Planting event, sponsored by Vice Mayor Anderson. Additionally, Teddy proposed organizing a Composting 101 workshop in collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce.

ii. Nick:

1. Shared his recent experience touring the Waste Management Recycling Facility with the Sustainability team and Coral Gables residents. Although an emergency stoppage prevented observing the system in operation, the visit provided valuable insights. The new facility, set to open in 2026, will include 18 sensors – triple the number currently in use – and will double the processing capacity. Facility staff were noted for their strong dedication and commitment to maintaining smooth operations.

iii. Dipak:

1. Dipak provided an update on his extensive research regarding gas-powered versus electric leaf blowers. Although the Board had previously reviewed this research, the topic was recently revisited following discussions by the City Commission. It was noted that several other cities have implemented bans on gas-powered blowers. For Coral Gables to adopt a similar ban, a lengthy phase-out period would be necessary to allow business owners sufficient time to transition and acquire the required batteries.

iv. Martin:

June 25, 2025

1. Asked Dipak to provide further details regarding Blue Zones, having previously consulted with the company. During his work, he observed that Coral Gables is already implementing many of the measures required to qualify as a Blue Zone. However, Dipak expressed concerns about how the Blue Zones program is currently managed. He noted that when the founder of Blue Zones was approached to assist a city in achieving Blue Zone status, the company's guidance was limited to placing no-smoking signs citywide, despite charging \$100,000 for the consultation. Dipak believes this approach diverges significantly from the original vision and intent of the Blue Zones concept.

Next Meeting – Wednesday, August 13, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. at the Parking & Mobility Services Office

ADJOURNED: 6:40 p.m.