

CITY OF CORAL GABLES
Economic Development Board Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, March 2, 2016, 8:00 a.m.
2121 Ponce de Leon Blvd., Suite 720, Coral Gables, Florida 33134

EDB MEMBERS	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	COMMISSIONERS
	'16	'16	'16	'16	'16	'16	'16	'16	'16	'15	'15	'15	
Scott Sime	P	P	P							P	P	P	Mayor Jim Cason
Olga Ramudo	P	E	P							P	P	P	Commissioner Jeannett Slesnick
Stuart McGregor	P	P	P							E	P	E	Commissioner Pat Keon
June Morris Chair	P	P	P							P	P	P	Commissioner Vince Lago
Alexander Binelo Vice Chair	P	P	E							P	P	P	Commissioner Frank Quesada

A = Absent
E = Excused Absence
P = Present
X = No Meeting

STAFF AND GUESTS:

Javier Betancourt, Director, Economic Development Department
Belkys Perez, Marketing & Events Specialist, Economic Development Department
Mariana Price, Administrative Assistant, Economic Development Department
Mark Trowbridge, President & CEO, Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce
Matthias Kammerer, General Manager, Biltmore Hotel; Chair, CGCC Travel & Tourism Task Force

Meeting Motion Summary:

A motion to approve the minutes of the February 3, 2016 meeting passed unanimously.

A motion to approve a resolution in support of Transportation Network Entities (TNE) in Coral Gables (such as Uber & Lyft, etc.) passed unanimously.

Mrs. Morris brought the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

1. Review of the February meeting minutes (Action)

Ms. Ramudo made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 3, 2016 Board meeting. Mr. Sime seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

2. Chamber Update: Mark Trowbridge, *President & CEO, Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce*

Mr. Trowbridge shared some publications that the Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce produces, which included a magazine on Coral Gables restaurants called, "Let's Eat." This and other vignettes are mailed to approximately 20,000 households per issue, and delivery to different neighborhoods is rotated for each issue (e.g., one issue is mailed to Downtown Miami, Gables, and Coconut Grove and the next issue is distributed to South Miami, Pinecrest, Palmetto Bay & Cutler Bay). Mr. Trowbridge said print advertising is making somewhat of a comeback, and noted the necessity for the Chamber's recent decision to become a member of the Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau (GMCVB) in order to gain access to more marketing opportunities and networking resources, as well as the inherent value in being connected with the largest tourism bureau for the Greater Miami area. Case in point, he mentioned Coral Gables was noticeably absent from the publication, *Invest Miami 2015*.

In collaboration with the City and the Welcome Channel, the Chamber created a five minute video that runs in Miami hotels to feature Coral Gables and what it has to offer. Mr. Trowbridge said this video should be upgraded once the streetscape project is complete to showcase the finished product at these hotels.

Mr. Trowbridge introduced Matthias Kammerer as the General Manager of the Biltmore Hotel who has also been extensively involved with the Chamber as the head of the Travel and Tourism Committee, created ten years ago.

3. Hospitality Update: Matthias Kammerer, *GM, Biltmore Hotel; and Chair, CGCC Travel & Tourism Task Force*

Mr. Kammerer spoke about how Coral Gables as a travel and tourism destination has grown and formed a stronger identity of its own. For example, Trip Advisor will show the Biltmore Hotel to be in Coral Gables, Florida (and not, as previously shown, to be in Miami, Florida). Signature events include Swine & Wine, a festival where local restaurants create delicacies based on pork. For the second year in a row, the Biltmore Hotel restaurant Palme D'Or has received the Five-Diamond Award from AAA (only three restaurants in the entire state of Florida have that recognition, and only 67 nationwide). Moreover, the chef from Palme D'Or, Gregory Pugin, was voted No. 5 in the Top 50 culinary professionals in South Florida. ADR and occupancy at the Biltmore have been trending upward. Challenges exist, such as Air BnB, which is becoming more and more prevalent, despite its illegality. They [Air BnB] have the advantage because they do not pay accommodation tax, they are not subject to ADA compliance, fire code compliance, or any other regulations that apply to hotel operators. There are 536 (net) and 740 (gross) new hotel rooms coming to the city with the three new developments on the way: Aloft, Paseo de la Riviera, and Mediterranean Village. Ms. Ramudo suggested that the City could do more to promote itself internationally (such as attending Pow Wow). Mr. Betancourt suggested that a Board member be appointed to the Chamber's committee on hospitality issues to act as the official liaison to keep the EDB engaged and informed. Olga Ramudo volunteered for this role.

Mr. Kammerer credited Uber for its part in the growth and development of Coral Gables, saying that once Uber came on the market, everything started to change. Mr. Trowbridge explained that while unfortunately it is not yet legal, the matter is before the Commission on its second reading

and awaiting approval. Coral Gables suffered more significantly (for lack of rider-share options like Uber) due to the short-haul nature of the City because cab drivers logically prefer riders who have farther destinations (e.g., to South Beach).

Mr. Sime asked if there was anything the board could do to show support for Uber. **A motion to approve a resolution in support of Transportation Network Entities (TNE) in Coral Gables (such as Uber & Lyft, etc.) was made by Mr. Sime and seconded by Ms. Morris, which passed unanimously.** Mr. Trowbridge informed the board that a resolution was already passed by the City in support [of TNE] as well as a subsequent resolution urging the county to stop issuing citations for use of these services.

4. Restaurant Recognition & Promotion (Discussion)

Of the top 50 restaurants recognized in South Florida by the Miami Herald, eight are in Coral Gables. Belkys Perez presented the list of eight restaurants, and said that at the March 18th Commission meeting they would be recognized and given an award for their efforts. Ms. Perez also informed the board of an event in the works to help promote these restaurants through a “Dine & Indulge Night,” a culinary tour. Those who partake will be taken on a trolley ride to each of the eight recognized restaurants and served a signature dish. Moreover, “Taste of the Gables” will be on Thursday, June 2nd during Restaurant Week which will help to bring recognition to the other outstanding restaurant options Coral Gables has to offer, 33 of which are Zagat-rated. These events will be promoted on Facebook, e-news, CGTV, and the Miami Herald Neighbors ad.

5. Entrepreneurship Workshop Reminder

The Entrepreneurship Workshop will be held today, March 2nd at the Coral Gables Museum from 5:00-7:00 pm. This event was advertised in the Business Update and the Miami Herald. Economic Development is partnering with SBA and SCORE to provide panelists to give a broad introduction on entrepreneurship and what it takes (e.g., financing, low cost measures to market your business, and how to hone in on ideas.) Mr. Betancourt will be the moderator. If it goes well, ED will look at holding more workshops.

6. Other City Business

Mr. Betancourt informed the Board that Economic Development will have an official grand opening for the new office on Friday, March 18th at noon. The most current Business Update was presented to the Board, which was inserted in Miami Today and distributed to Gables, the Grove, and Downtown Miami.

The Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce and the City of Coral Gables have agreed upon a path forward to develop a retail strategy (this is in conjunction with the streetscape project, which is the physical element to the improvement of Miracle Mile). The idea is to engage a retail expert to conduct an assessment of the existing conditions and based on that, build a retail strategy for what would be an appropriate merchandising mix. A retail advocate would be hired to implement that strategy, which would include prospecting desirable retailers. The Chamber’s board is

supportive, the City Manager has already indicated her support, and now eyes are on the BID to get their backing. Ideally, these three entities would work together.

Another Overlay District public workshop is set to take place at the Coral Gables Museum on March 14th at 6 pm. The Overlay District is a set of regulations being proposed for downtown, and this public workshop offers the opportunity to discuss it publicly and perfect it.

The parking garage RFP is officially now in Stage II of the process, and proposals are due April 11th. Since it is still under a Cone of Silence, not much more can be said. The goal is to have the proposals back before the City Commission and to choose a developer by late spring/early summer.

Economic Development Department has been charged with leading the US-1 corridor study, which will help to determine how the area should be developed. A consultant has been identified already and a contract is pending review and approval.

A Community Open House will be held in celebration of the purchase of 2506 Ponce on Saturday, March 19th beginning at 10 am. This event will provide an opportunity for members of the community to see the original interior of the building.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:14 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mariana Price, Administrative Assistant - Economic Development Department