

CORAL GABLES

THE CITY BEAUTIFUL

Economic Development Board Meeting Meeting Minutes

Wednesday | August 6, 2025 | 8:00 a.m.

Location: Zoom and Economic Development Department
2506 Ponce de Leon Blvd., Coral Gables, FL 33134

EDB MEMBERS	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	APPOINTING ENTITY
	'25	'25	'25	'25	'25	'25	'25	'25	'25	'25	'25	'25	
James Kohnstamm, Vice Chair	X	P	P	X	P	P	P	P					Mayor Vince Lago
Timothy Heffernan	X	P	P	X	A	P	P	P					Vice Mayor Rhonda Anderson
Ivette Arango O'Doski	-	-	-	-	-	E	PZ	P					Commissioner Richard D. Lara
Nguyen Castilla Cabanilla	X	EA	P	X	PZ/ E	P	P	P					Commissioner Melissa Castro
Scott Shuffield	X	P	P	X	A	P	P	P					Commissioner Ariel Fernandez
Aron Aizenstat	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	P					City Manager Peter J. Iglesias
Thad Adams, Chair	X	P	P	X	P	P	E	P					Chamber of Commerce

A=Absent E=Excused Absence P=Present X=No Meeting PZ=Present by Zoom - =Former Board Member

Staff and Guests:

Belkys Perez, Director, Economic Development Department

Solanch Lopez, Business Community Manager, Economic Development Department

Yenisis Gomez, Administrative Assistant, Economic Development Department

Paulson Jean, IT Network Analyst II, Innovation & Technology Department

Chairman Mr. Thad Adams brought the meeting to order at 8:11 a.m.

1. Welcome and Introductions

Mrs. Perez welcomed new members of the Board, Ms. Ivette Arango O'Doski, appointed by Commissioner Lara, and Mr. Aron Aizenstat, appointed by City Manager Iglesias. All members both existing and new were asked for self-introductions.

2. Review and approval of June 4, 2025 and July 2, 2025, Economic Development Board Meeting Minutes.

Ms. Castilla Cabanilla made a motion to approve the meeting minutes and Ms. Arango O'Doski seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. There was no discussion regarding the minutes.

3. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

Mr. Heffernan made a motion to re-elect Mr. Thad Adams for the position as Chair and Mr. Mr. James Kohnstamm as Vice-Chair. Ms. Arango O'Doski seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. Mr. Adams accepted the nomination, and Mr. Kohnstamm was not present to accept his nomination.

4. Business Survey Results

Ms. Lopez provided the Board with a presentation regarding the Business Community Survey Results. The National Business Survey (The NBS) which gives local businesses the opportunity to provide feedback about the community characteristics and local government services that help support the local economy. It was developed by the survey experts from National Research Center (NRC) at Polco.

Polco's online community engagement polling platform provides the information tools local governments and other public sector leaders need. Today, hundreds of organizations nationwide use Polco for strategic planning, budgeting, and empowering resident voices. National Research Center (NRC) at Polco gives local governments, and other public sector organizations, the data they need to make more informed decisions. Since 1994, we've worked with hundreds of jurisdictions nationwide. NRC and Polco merged in 2019 to more effectively serve local government and project resident voices.

All private sector businesses within the City were eligible to participate (4,000 mailed postcard invites; 3,746 delivered; Promotion through Business Brief and LinkedIn and Chamber of Commerce Newsletter). The results show national benchmark comparison. Because the survey was intended to be taken by all businesses in the community, no traditional margin of error was calculated. However, because not all businesses responded, NRC recommends using plus or minus ten percentage points as the "range of uncertainty" around any given percent reported for the city as a whole.

With this report, the City of Coral Gables gains an important perspective from its businesses across six core indicators of the business environment in the community:

- Community amenities
- Business climate
- Employment opportunities and workforce support
- Workforce readiness
- Business growth
- Governance

The key findings were:

- A higher-than-average proportion of businesses plan to hire in the next 6-12 months. Of those planning to hire...
 - 74% plan to hire for skilled jobs
 - 57% plan to hire for highly skilled jobs
 - 51% plan to hire for semi-skilled jobs
 - 37% plan to hire for unskilled jobs

- When asked about closing hours, 16% of businesses reported closing before 5p.m., 61% of businesses have closing hours between 5p.m. and 6:30p.m., and 18% have closing hours sometime after 7p.m.

Potential areas of focus:

- Parking availability was also a concern for owners and managers, with 3 in 10 positively rating the ease of parking at workplaces, and 4 in 10 doing the same for the amount of parking in commercial areas, both ranking lower than the benchmark.

The Board had several questions that Ms. Lopez addressed.

5. Business Tax License Report

Mrs. Perez updated the Board on the new and soon-to-come businesses in Coral Gables.

6. Open Discussion

Mr. Adams updated the Board that the Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce has narrowed down their search for their next President to two candidates. A selection and announcement should be made soon.

With no further discussion, the meeting adjourned at 8:53 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Yenisis Gomez, Administrative Assistant, Economic Development Department.