

CITY OF CORAL GABLES
COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING
Minutes of March 18, 2010

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

* No meetings

x No quorum

+ Membership discontinued

Staff in attendance:

Maria Rosa Higgins Fallon, Office of Public Affairs

Gee Ming Chow, Information Technology Department

Raimundo Rodulfo, Information Technology Department

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

Approval of minutes

The minutes from the March meeting were circulated for approval.

Motion: Sam Joseph motioned to approve the March meeting minutes. David Stiefel seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Census 2010

Matt Bokor thanked members for attending the previous City Commission meeting where they were presented a Census Day Proclamation.

New Committee Member

Higgins Fallon introduced new Communications Committee member Mr. Chuck Martinez, appointed by Commissioner Chip Withers. Members welcomed him.

Information Technology Update

Gee Ming Chow was present to report on what the City is doing regarding connectivity and to update the members on a RFI project with Google.

Raimundo Rodulfo informed members about a bandwidth expansion from 10 mbps to 100 mbps conducted two weeks ago. This upgrade allows faster connectivity to the City's website, especially for public safety purposes. City employees doing business on the field also have now faster internet connection.

Rodulfo reported the existence of a redundant internet path. The City has a collocation site in the NAP of the Americas building which is important for disaster recovery. If the City loses connection to a server, this redundant path allows connectivity to the other server.

The City now also has its own IP addresses. This is the equivalent of having the same phone number even if you change carriers. These internet upgrades provide more efficient use of streaming video as well as faster web portal services.

Regarding the Google Fiber project, Rodulfo explained that Google has requested information from interested municipalities to build a high speed internet, which will provide fiber to homes with 1 gigabit connection. Information Technology has been working with other City departments to fill out the request for information which has a deadline of March 26.

Stiefel asked what the benefits are for Google. Chow replied that this is a business model and Google is trying to move into the carrier business beyond just being a search carrier. He assumes Google's plan is to compete with Microsoft and to extend their reach to browsers for PC users and future Google phones. They want to compete with the Iphone. Google will most likely identify certain cities to push their fiber services and in turn charge them competitive prices.

Joseph commented that they are probably pre-empting the FCC's broadband plan which is trying to even out the market. He was glad to see the City is applying for the Google project.

Bokor inquired if the City is applying by itself or with other entities. Chow informed members that the City is part of the Broadband Coalition, an organization which is trying to receive round two of stimulus funds for broadband technology. Unfortunately, each city wants to apply alone and not share ownership of new technology. To the city's advantage, Google Latin America has an office in Coral Gables.

Rodulfo also talked about cellular carriers. The City is working with all carriers for cellular services and it has been troubleshooting problems with carriers' engineers and working on cell tower coverage. There is an arising issue with young people using their mobile devices for video streaming which is heavily congesting the airwaves.

Bokor brought up the issue of cellular coverage because he is having to go the backyard to use his Iphone and he sees his neighbors doing the same.

Chow reported that there is new 4 generation technology that is coming up in the near future which should alleviate this problem. Sprint is using wi-max which should be here by this summer and will be the new standard. He anticipates seeing better cellular phone performance toward the end of the year.

Martinez shared that his daughter's university uses wi-max and it's a very fast service.

Stiefel commented that since the City's new internet upgrade was completed, he has been able to receive his emails. Due to a prior commitment, Stiefel left the meeting.

Members thanked Chow and Rodulfo for the Information Technology update.

Upcoming Events

Higgins Fallon reported about upcoming events including the Kings Bay Guardhouse plaque unveiling and the Employee of the Year Breakfast scheduled for March 19. Her office is also promoting the upcoming Ponce de Leon Median Installation to begin in April.

Martinez inquired about construction work around City Hall. Higgins Fallon replied that this is the Biltmore Way/Segovia roundabout. Higgins Fallon also informed the upcoming re-pavement work at Coral Way from SW 57th Avenue to the traffic circle. Joseph commented about Coral Way being a very busy road. Other members agreed.

Higgins Fallon reported on a special video project she is working with Benihana for Fathers' Day. On April 29, the City will celebrate its 85th anniversary and a small event at the Merrick House is being planned.

Martinez suggested contacting St. Theresa School since it's also celebrating 85 years. Joseph also suggested contacting the Historical Museum of Southern Florida as they have a lot of exhibit materials about Coral Gables. Higgins Fallon will follow up.

The Office of Public Affairs continues to conduct census awareness. Phase 2 will be informing residents who did not filled out the questionnaire to expect someone from the census to knock on their doors to collect census information. Martinez said that the Census Office has done a really good job in marketing this census.

Higgins Fallon reported that she attended a recent Disability Affairs Board meeting at their request. About a year ago, this board made a presentation to Communications Committee regarding upgrading the information on the city's web to include resources available for people for disabilities. The Disability Affairs Board has new members who have asked for an update of their webpage. Higgins Fallon will keep this committee informed of their requests as she has been asked to come back to future meetings of their board.

Coral Gables Television

Higgins Fallon showed two Coral Gables What's Happening videos. She also distributed the latest copy of e-News.

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