

**CITY OF CORAL GABLES**  
**Communication Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**Thursday, July 16, 2015, 8:30 a.m.**  
**Office of Communications**  
**War Memorial Youth Center, Coral Gables, Florida 33134**

| MEMBERS                             | A   | S   | O   | N   | D   | J   | F   | M   | A   | M   | J   | J   | COMMISSIONERS                     |
|-------------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----------------------------------|
|                                     | '14 | '14 | '14 | '14 | '14 | '15 | '15 | '15 | '15 | '15 | '15 | '15 |                                   |
| <b>Herb Levin</b><br>Chair          | *   | P   | P   | P   | *   | *   | P   | P   | *   | *   | P   | P   | Mayor Jim Cason                   |
| Luba De Witt<br><b>Derrek Space</b> | *   | P   | E   | E   | *   | *   | P   | P   | *   | *   | P   | E   | Commissioner Pat Keon             |
| <b>Les Pantin III</b>               | *   | P   | P   | P   | *   | *   | P   | P   | *   | *   | P   | P   | Commissioner Vince Lago           |
| <b>TJ Villamil</b>                  |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     | P   | Commissioner Frank C. Quesada     |
| <b>Connie</b><br><b>Crowther</b>    | *   | P   | P   | P   | *   | *   | P   | P   | *   | *   | P   | P   | Vice Mayor William H. Kerdyk, Jr. |

A = Absent  
E = Excused Absence  
P = Present  
\* = No Meeting

**STAFF AND GUESTS:**

Michelle Cash, Marketing & Brand Manager, Office of Communications  
Michael Rocha, Video Production Manager, CGTV

Mr. Levin brought the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m.

Mr. Levin introduced new committee member Mr. TJ Villamil and went on to introducing current board members Ms. Connie Crowther and Mr. Les Pantin III. Mr. Levin then suggested each committee member provide a brief overview of each's background. Mr. Levin discussed his background in Spanish language radio and media consulting. Mr. Pantin discussed his current role with Port of Miami and his previous role in communications for the Mayor Gimenez as well as providing communications support for his parents. Ms. Crowther then proceeded to discuss her past role as a newspaper reporter for daily newspapers, before going to FIU where she worked for more than a decade as a PR Director. She then explained how she founded her own company Crowther and Company Communications. Ms. Crowther mentioned that she had some fascinating clients and did the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary at FIU. Mr. Villamil then introduced himself mentioning that he had grown up in Coral Gables, lived in Gainesville for 8 years, received his masters and started his own company. He mentioned that he had spent time working in the FIU president's office and that it was an excellent experience. Mr. Villamil then described how he moved back to Coral Gables and initiated his own communications-media company.

Mr. Levin then proceeded to ask Mr. Rocha to provide some background. Mr. Rocha discussed his role overseeing the City's TV cable station and his past work in corporate markets and

experience with Univision and Fox over the past 30 years, including spending time living in London before moving from corporate to government.

Ms. Cash then spoke about her background at the City in Economic Development and then joining the newly formed Office of Communications. She described the department's mission and goals of keeping the public informed and becoming a more transparent, accessible government that will provide information in as many relevant, engaging, ways as possible. She continued with her background of more than 20 years of experience and explained that she had worked internationally in Switzerland, Canada and the US in fields including, technology and advertising.

Mr. Levin asked about the preparation of a report for the Mayor on outreach and providing recommendations on how we will grow the email list and our outreach. He asked if there were currently any recommendations. Ms. Cash responded that she had just met with the Mayor and discussed focusing on preparing and launching a citywide magazine for September 2015 that would go to all residents. She added that with respect to growing the email list and future planning that the Office of Communications had engaged an outside consultant Stan Adkins to assist with strategic planning for 2016. Lastly, she mentioned that immediate key priorities were rolling out the brand identity and the new citywide magazine. Ms. Crowther asked for more information about the magazine and Ms. Cash responded that the magazine was being designed to consolidate the Leisure Guide, the Adult Activity Guide as well as additional information on City events, developments and projects.

Mr. Levin continued the email communications discussion by inquiring about leveraging the email lists of the Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce and the Business Improvement District (BID). Ms. Cash responded that they currently cooperated with both organizations and that they on many occasions were happy to share City related information. Mr. Levin continued that the Mayor's goal included providing increased communication to more citizens and increasing outreach. Ms. Cash responded that the City hopes to move one step closer to that goal with the new citywide magazine, which will be dropped to approximately 18,000 households. Ms. Crowther added that the City needs to include a call to action to sign up for the eNews.

Ms. Crowther and Mr. Levin agreed that eNews is the best most current method of delivering information – and Mr. Levin mentioned that he liked the “interim” or special updates as reminders for important information or events. Ms. Crowther added that she also would like to see everyone using the Mobile app. Ms. Cash concurred and added that the City hopes to get to a place where residents can pick and choose their preference on how to receive or engage with the City.

Mr. Pantin then continued by mentioning that Coral Gables was the only City in Miami-Dade County with no social media presence. Mr. Villamil followed by asking who runs [shopcoralgables.com](http://shopcoralgables.com) and the Facebook page for downtown. Ms. Cash responded that the BID manage these sites and added that the City plans to launch a social media presence in the near future. She added that the City worked closely with its civic partners who have social media to help share information when mutually beneficial. Mr. Pantin also mentioned that it might be

worthwhile to investigate the live video streaming technology Periscope for news interviews and press conferences.

Mr. Levin continued to explain how the City had been working on its brand refresh and guidelines and asked about its status. Ms. Cash updated the team explaining that the guidelines were complete and materials (collateral etc.) were in the process of being executed. Additionally, she added that the guidelines had been reviewed and approved by the City Attorney and the City's Intellectual Property Lawyer as a final step.

Mr. Villamil posed a general question to the committee asking about thoughts on the proliferation of media whereby there are many channels and methods of disseminating information. Ms. Crowther added that this proliferation of information is a challenge for everyone given we are all part of the digital evolution and there are new tools and opportunities being presented almost every day. Ms. Crowther added that while she likes trying new technology and tools/apps, oftentimes she will abandon or cast them aside because they are too complicated or too intrusive personally. Mr. Levin continued that while he was in New York City recently and travelling in a cab, he was watching advertising on a digital screen and thought that might be an interesting venue for Coral Gables.

Ms. Crowther then discussed the article she was writing for the 90<sup>th</sup>, which was comprised of a list of 90 great things to brag about in Coral Gables. Ms. Cash mentioned the Coral Gables recent selection as the top Foodie City in the United States, in Livability.com's 10 Best Foodie Cities list.

Mr. Levin then moved to the next topic of discussion, the City's Streetscape project. Ms. Cash shared the *Miami Herald* front page article on the project. Mr. Levin asked for Ms. Crowther's opinion of the article. Ms. Crowther said she thought it was a great article and that the placement was very good. Mr. Levin mentioned that he thought the journalist came across somewhat negative but was pleased by the length. Ms. Crowther added that the article was simply balanced and that Coral Gables continues to reinvent itself and is in step with the rest of Miami. Mr. Levin then asked about next steps and when construction would begin. Ms. Cash responded that the CMAR (Construction Manager at Risk) has been hired and the team has proposed final design plans. She also mentioned the planning of a public open house event where boards and the stone for the Mile would be shown along with a presentation by the design firm. Ms. Crowther stated that one of the City's key targets for this project would be its merchants. Ms. Cash added that the CMAR has a dedicated Public Information Officer who would be providing ongoing communications, traffic updates – including a 24/7 escalation hotline. Mr. Levin then asked about the duration of the project. Ms. Cash responded that Streetscape was projected to be a year-and-a-half to two years and that the construction would be staggered to minimize disruption to businesses.

Mr. Levin then provided some recommendation on how to communicate the tree succession project. Ms. Cash also discussed the availability of the mytreekeeper website to track progress on the City's tree planting. Mr. Rocha continued that CGTV would be creating a dedicated program that would feature "Our Gables, Our Trees." He added that along with the tree succession plan, the program would also provide a comprehensive overview of how the City has been a Tree City

USA for 30 consecutive years and how dedicated the City is to its trees. Ms. Crowther mentioned that there is a potential downside as there are ancient trees in the City that she felt should be saved. She continued to provide an example of a banyan that was over 100 years old and was cut down. Ms. Crowther added that there should be some sensitivity to how the neighborhood feels about its trees. Ms. Cash suggested speaking with Brook Dannemiller in public works to provide this feedback.

Mr. Levin then asked about the US1 Corridor workshop. Ms. Cash explained that the impetus behind the meeting was to gain input from the community about the future of neighborhoods. Mr. Rocha then added that all the presentations would be covered by CGTV for viewing post-event. Ms. Crowther then asked if the Underline was included in the workshop, and Ms. Cash responded that yes it would be part of the agenda. Ms. Crowther added that the Underline is a critical part of the US1 area's future.

Mr. Levin then mentioned a positive experience that he had at the inspections and permitting office. He stated that the gentleman that helped him could not have been more professional, quick, courteous, friendly and helpful. Ms. Crowther then added that this is great as it is what they had hoped for. Ms. Cash then mentioned that all staff were taking customer services training and asked if she could share the positive feedback. Mr. Levin agreed.

Mr. Rocha then provided an overview of the July 4<sup>th</sup> fireworks event and shared a short recap video of the event. Ms. Crowther asked how many people attended and Mr. Rocha said it was packed and Ms. Crowther added that she believed it to be the biggest crowd she had ever seen. She said she was sure there were more than 25,000 people. Mr. Rocha stated that many people also stayed after the fireworks and the crowd extended all the way to Bird Rd. Ms. Cash added that the department had hired a new photographer who had taken spectacular images of the fireworks.

Mr. Levin then asked for an eNews update. Ms. Cash responded that the team is aiming to implement some changes and to help grow the subscription. She added that they were currently exploring segmentation strategies and updating the eNews templates to be brand compliant. Ms. Crowther then asked for a 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary link to the website for all related events. Ms. Cash shared the City's 90<sup>th</sup> landing webpage, including the digital history and virtual tour. Mr. Levin added that he really like the updated format of eNews with its short descriptions and links back to the website for more information. He also really liked the new inclusion of videos.

Mr. Levin concluded the meeting at 9:40 a.m.