

CITY OF CORAL GABLES
Economic Development Board Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, September 2, 2015, 8:00 a.m.
1 Alhambra Plaza, Suite 617, Coral Gables, Florida 33134

MEMBERS	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	COMMISSIONERS
	'15	'15	'15	'15	'15	'15	'15	'15	'15	'14	'14	'14	
Scott Sime Chair	P	E	P	X	X	X	P	P	P	P	P	P	Mayor Jim Cason
Olga Ramudo								P	P				Commissioner Jeannett Slesnick
Stuart McGregor							E	E	E				Commissioner Pat Keon
June Morris	P	P	E	X	X	X	P	E	P	E	P	E	Commissioner Vince Lago
Alexander Binelo	E	P	P	X	X	X	A	P	P	E	E	P	Commissioner Frank Quesada

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

STAFF AND GUESTS:

Leonard Roberts, Interim Director, Economic Development Department
Jorge Casuso, Business Development Analyst, Economic Development Department

Meeting Motion Summary:

A motion to elect Ms. Morris as chair of the Economic Development Board (EDB) passed unanimously.

A motion to elect Mr. Binelo as vice chair of the Economic Development Board (EDB) passed unanimously.

A motion to approve the minutes of the August 12, 2015 Board meeting passed unanimously.

A motion to require Board Actions only for the leasing of City owned retail spaces passed unanimously, subject to the procurement code.

Mr. Roberts brought the meeting to order at 8:18 a.m.

1. Election of new Chair for the Economic Development Board (EDB) (Action)

Ms. Morris said she would be interested in serving as chair or vice chair. She said she felt that not much had been accomplished over the past two years and that there sometimes needed to be a little more structure to the meetings.

Ms. Ramudo made a motion to elect Ms. Morris as chair of the Economic Development Board (EDB). Mr. Binelo seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

2. Election of new Chair for the Economic Development Board (EDB) (Action)

Ms. Ramudo made a motion to elect Mr. Binelo as vice chair of the Economic Development Board (EDB). Ms. Morris seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

3. Review of August 12, 2015 meeting minutes (Action)

Ms. Ramudo made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 12, 2015 Board meeting. Mr. Binelo seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

4. Agreement for Short-term lease of City owned property to FPL (Action)

Mr. Roberts informed the Board that Astor had asked if it could lease the vacant 350-square-foot City-owned lot on Laguna Street between Altara Avenue and Bird Road for the temporary placement an electrical utility box. The proposed rate would be \$500 a month. Mr. Roberts asked the Board if it wanted to set a minimum requirement for leases to come before the Board. Most lease deals involving City property have been for retail and offices, and any lease over \$100,000 a year was required to go before the Board.

Ms. Ramudo made a motion to require Board Actions only for the leasing of City owned retail spaces, subject to the procurement code. Mr. Binelo seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

5. Establish Goals for upcoming year

Mr. Roberts handed out a copy of the following goals set by the Board last year:

- Improving economic vitality and the quality of life in the City by focusing on:
 - The Miracle Mile and Giralda Avenue Streetscape Projects
 - Major development projects, including the Old Spanish Village site
 - Other similar initiatives that might be proposed by the City Manager's office
- Attracting Class A domestic and international businesses
- Attracting new businesses by approaching business incubators
- Reducing the City's vacancy rate and improving the mix of tenants on Miracle Mile
- Strengthening Tourism through marketing and strengthening relationships with sister cities
- Evaluating the City's online presence and the information available to site selectors

- Encouraging the replacement of the fence at Coral Gables High School
- Establishing a way to measure the success of the Board's efforts

Ms. Morris noted that last year the Board had been given presentations of major developments, including the Streetscape Project and Mediterranean Village, which improved the economic vitality of the City. Mr. Casuso said he would email a list of the presentations made to the Board last year. Ms. Morris noted that attracting Class A domestic and international businesses was a major goal and suggested the Board should look at ways to accomplish this. Mr. Casuso noted that Ms. Ramudo had offered to help showcase Coral Gables with the Beacon Council, which works with site selectors. Ms. Ramudo said she had spoken with executives of the Beacon Council, who were interested in touring the City. She also suggested that the City become involved in events held by organizations tasked with attracting businesses to the region and state. She said she had not seen Coral Gables officials in attendance. Ms. Morris asked for an update on the business video the Economic Development Department planned to produce to showcase the City. Mr. Roberts said the video had been put on hold pending the development of a new branding strategy for the City and the completion of the Streetscape Project. He said the branding had been completed and that the Streetscape Project would likely break ground early next year and take 18 months to complete. Mr. Roberts informed the Board that the City Commission had voted to eliminate the curbs along Miracle Mile. Several Board members mentioned the importance of assisting existing businesses during the project, including possibly offering customers parking concessions or other incentives.

The Board also discussed the goal to attract an incubator that would bring entrepreneurs to the City. Mr. Binelo suggested partnering with a local bank to finance an affordable space. Ms. Morris noted that Endeavor Miami recently leased a space at a building owned by her husband Alan Morris at a discounted rate. Other goals were reducing the City's vacancy rate and improving the mix of tenants on Miracle Mile and strengthening tourism. Ms. Ramudo suggested working with organizations such as the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce, the GMCVB and trade missions to help boost the City's efforts to attract tourists. Ms. Morris said the Board should continue its efforts to find ways to replace the fence at Coral Gables High School. She said the school had improved academically and was sending students to Ivy League schools, but that the exterior of the school did not reflect these improvements. Ms. Ramudo suggested involving the school's alumni association in the effort. Mr. Binelo complimented the new fence at Miami High School and suggested that the Board look at how it was done. Ms. Morris said it was important for the Board to establish a way to measure the success of its efforts, a goal set last year. Board members agreed that at the next meeting they would evaluate whether last year's goals had been met and set new goals for the upcoming year. The Board requested copies of the annual reports for the last four years. Mr. Roberts suggested that Board members email their suggested goals to staff before the meeting to establish if there were common priorities.

6. Update on Business Tax Licenses and New Businesses (Discussion)

Mr. Roberts distributed copies of the new business tax licenses and CoStar's quarterly stats for Coral Gables. The CoStar figures showed the current office vacancy rate was 9.8 percent and the retail rate was 2.9 percent. The rental rate was \$35.40 per square foot (PSF) for office and just

under \$40 PSF for retail. The license tax data showed that 14 businesses had been given licenses between August 12 and September 2.

7. Other City Business

Mr. Roberts informed the Board that Quirch foods would be relocating to Coral Gables. The company, which will move some 150 employees to the City, used the Permit Assistance program, which accelerates permitting for businesses that have a major economic impact. The Economic Development Department planned to give Quirch employees a tour of the City and the City Commission was scheduled to present a Proclamation to the company at its October 13 meeting, he said. Mr. Roberts asked if one of the Board members could be present for the presentation. Ms. Ramudo volunteered.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:04 a.m.

The next Economic Development Board meeting will be held on October 7, 2015.

Respectfully submitted,

Jorge Casuso, Economic Development Analyst, Economic Development Department