

**CITY OF CORAL GABLES**  
**Economic Development Board Meeting**  
**Wednesday, June 4, 2008**  
**Development Department Office Conference Room**  
**95 Merrick Way, Suite 450, Coral Gables, Florida**

MEMBERS	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	COMMISSIONERS
Richard DeWitt	P	X	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P*	P	P	Mayor Donald D. Slesnick II
Ray Zomerfeld	P	X	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	E	P	Vice Mayor William Kerdyk, Jr.
Gladys Diaz Jourdain	P	X	P	E	P	P	P	P	E	P	P	E	Commissioner Maria Anderson
Dr. Al Smith	P	X	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	Commissioner Rafael "Ralph" Cabrera, Jr.
James Casey	P	X	P	E	P	P*	A	E	P	P	P	P	Commissioner Wayne "Chip" Withers

\*Present via telephone.

**STAFF:**

Cathy Swanson-Rivenbark, Development Director  
Jessica Wotherspoon, Business Development Specialist

**A = Absent**  
**E = Excused Absence**  
**P = Present**  
**X = No Meeting**  
**() = Special Meetings**

**GUESTS:** Assistant City Manager Dona Lubin; Director Gee Ming Chow and Mark Hebert, IT Department; William Holly; Raymond Zomerfeld, Jr.

**RECORDING SECRETARY:** Nancy C. Morgan, Coral Gables Services, Inc.

Chair Richard DeWitt called the meeting to order at 8:01 a.m. A quorum was reached.

**I. Meeting Attendance:**

**Dr. Smith made a motion to excuse the absence of Ms. Diaz Jourdain. Mr. Casey seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

**II. Approval of May 7, 2008 Board Minutes:**

**Dr. Smith made a motion to approve the minutes of the May 7, 2008 meeting as presented. Mr. Casey seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

**III. Update on Cell Phone Coverage in the City: Assistant City Manager Dona Lubin; IT Director Gee Ming Chow:**

After distributing an article pertaining to Wi-Fi/wireless networks, Ms. Lubin commented on exploration of a concept to provide digital kiosks on Miracle Mile which, she pointed out, was in very early stages of possible development. She met with BID Executive Director Mari Molina, the City Manager and various department directors on the concept, and said she would keep the Board informed if the project develops further. During discussion, Ms. Rivenbark mentioned that one of the Board's objectives was to encourage the wireless cloud, and said the implementation of this concept might be one way to achieve that objective. Meeting attendees commented that digital signage technology was already in use throughout Europe.

Regarding cell phone coverage, Mr. Chow reported that cellular carriers wanted coverage that emanated from the Biltmore Hotel; however, the request was denied. He said Verizon was in process of installing a tower at Old Cutler Road Fire Station 3, which also required installation of a larger generator.

When Mr. DeWitt pointed out the Board's understanding that an RFP was going to be issued to tower providers to install at various City facilities to provide improved coverage and generate City income, Mr. Chow replied that the carriers failed to produce the promised engineering drawings. Mr. DeWitt denied the carriers would ever produce such drawings since the issue for the carriers was marketing, and to allow the carriers to bid on

installations at City facilities. Mr. Chow said his department was working on a Wi-Fi RFP to wholesalers/resellers of carrier tower space.

Mr. Chow reported that other carriers wanted installation at Old Cutler Road Fire Station 3, and Verizon wanted to replace the tower at Riviera Fire Station 2, a process that is underway. The City has not yet issued a RFP for tower coverage.

The City is considering a RFP for Wi-Fi coverage for the entire City, and currently examining business models and talking with carriers to determine interest. Mr. Chow said carriers indicated that the model to provide free Wi-Fi installations for municipalities was no longer a consideration. They are seeking anchor tenants who will help fund the investment.

Mr. DeWitt reminded the group that the primary issue of the Board was the public safety/general application to improve cellular service throughout the City, and urged a wide-ranging RFP beyond just the carriers to respond to these needs. Ms. Lubin said that such an RFP was possible, and also pointed out that the City met with each of the carriers, who identified three areas they thought would suffice to provide improved coverage throughout the City: Old Cutler Road Tower 3, the Biltmore Hotel, and the Riviera Fire Station Tower 2. Ms. Rivenbark pointed out that other sites, including not-for-profits, could augment City public spaces.

Mr. Chow said a parallel effort was being made on a Comcast fiber project, for which Comcast provided a \$300,000 grant to the City to install dark fiber in specific locations to provide enhanced telecommunication services. IT is currently preparing specifications for the electronics for these locations.

Mr. DeWitt expressed concern about cell coverage throughout the City, saying that without reliable cell phone service, connections were often difficult. He pointed out that many people rely on their cell phone as their only personal telephone. Mr. Zomerfeld reiterated the Board's strong concerns about safety and security. Ms. Lubin said the tower carriers would be contacted to address this issue. For clarity of the Board's objective, Ms. Rivenbark summarized that the Board wanted a RFP issued to tower providers that would place towers at aesthetically-appropriate facilities to service multiple carriers in order to dramatically improve cell phone coverage City-wide. Ms. Lubin and Mr. Chow agreed to provide a status report on the RFP at the next meeting.

#### **IV. Green Incentives and Green Construction: William Holly, Holly Real Estate:**

Welcomed back to continue earlier discussions about green building programs, Mr. Holly updated the Board on fast-track green programs to facilitate building construction, stating that the City of Miami and Miami-Dade County implemented expeditious, "fast-track" processes for green building permitting and construction for anyone seeking green or LEED (Leadership Environmental and Energy Design) Certification, the levels for which are Certified, Silver, Gold (600,000 to one million square feet), Platinum (commercially unfeasible in Florida's climate). Miami-Dade Water and Sewer will also fast-track its reviews for green projects. The State of Florida and the County are considering making their own municipal buildings green.

Mr. Holly's recommendation to the Board:

- That all commercial buildings which apply for LEED pre-certification be placed in priority position, i.e., fast-tracked or expedited position, for permitting and approvals, and to qualify for a) expedited inspections, or b) private provider inspections, for commercial projects above 30,000 square feet in the City of Coral Gables.

After making this recommendation, Mr. Holly comprehensively explained each aspect of the recommendation, stating that his recommendation was limited to commercial buildings. The reasons for the limitation are: a) LEED certification and pre-certification processes are expensive; b) if a developer had to wait until a project was LEED certified, they would already be halfway through the permitting process, negating any benefit from expedited permitting; c) his recommendation is expense neutral to the City as the cost is borne by the developer.

During discussion, it was agreed to research projects currently in the pipeline that are 30,000 square feet and above. Ms. Rivenbark pointed out the significant energy and waste savings for the community that would result, and the positive example the City would set for the community. Mr. Holly commented that green buildings also attracted higher quality corporate tenants and other positive revenue models.

Mr. DeWitt suggested tabling the discussion until the next meeting, and including Interim Building and Zoning Department Director Ed Weller and Mr. Holly in the discussion. Discussion continued with Mr. Holly, focused on the background of the advance of the philosophy and technology, the competitiveness of green building development, advantages to the community and effects on the economy.

**V. Updates:**

- a. The Palace at Coral Gables project is moving forward through City processes. The 2009 completion and December 2010 opening dates are still anticipated. Ms. Rivenbark will update information on The Paladin, and said the Yumuri project, the nursing home component, was moving forward slowly.
- b. U.S. News and World Report listed Coral Gables High School as one of the top 200 schools in the country. Jessica had the school recognized for their Silver Knight awards for math, vocational technology and art. Ms. Rivenbark suggested that the School Community Relations Committee manage the Educational Compact program, and is awaiting a response from them.
- c. Ms. Rivenbark is in process of preparing a Country Club of Coral Gables RFP, slated to be issued June 10. On June 25, a tour of the facility and responses to pre-submitted questions will occur for interested bidders. Proposals are due July 31, to be followed by the certification and evaluation process, with hopes for a recommendation to the City Commission on September 9. Also included in the RFP is the right for a bidder to include in their proposal the Granada Golf Course and tennis courts.

**VI. General City Updates:**

- a. Art Cinema: Construction proposals are due June 10. The Commission approved a lease agreement on first reading, but second reading will not be scheduled until construction costs are known.
- b. City budget sessions begin July 16. Valuations are at approximately \$13.5 billion, which is the basis for taxes and a good message for the City. New construction increased the tax base, which will reduce the impact on cutbacks.
- c. Ms. Wotherspoon distributed an updated list of projects currently in the City's pipeline.

The meeting adjourned at 9:25 a.m.

**Next Board Meeting: Wednesday, July 2, 2008, 8:00 a.m. in the Development Office**

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Swanson Rivenbark  
Development Director  
Secretary to the Economic Development Board