

# City of Coral Gables

405 Biltmore Way  
Coral Gables, FL 33134  
[www.coralgables.com](http://www.coralgables.com)



## Meeting Minutes

Thursday, September 10, 2020

8:15 AM

The Board meets the second Thursday of every month.  
Coral Gables Youth Center, 405 University Drive, Coral Gables, FL  
**Parks and Recreation Advisory Board**

**CALL TO ORDER**

**at 8:21am**

**ROLL CALL**

**Present:**

**Carlos Hernandez**

**Kirk Menendez- CHAIR**

**Nancy Leslie**

**Charlie Rua**

**Felix Pardo**

**Wifredo Fernandez**

**Monica C. Segura**

**Absent: Desmond Gonzalez**

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

**Motion to approve the minutes from August was made by Wilfredo Fernandez, second by Monica Segura. Motion approved, passed unanimously**

**I. DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Director Fred Couceyro began the meeting with going over updates to closures due to COVID and will be meeting with the Manager for update meeting this week.

Virtual Study Hall has begun and has not had that big of a turn out. Fred believes that this is due to our city's demographic, they might be able to provide care takers for their children. Carolina Vester also added the feedback received from families, if children are not allowed to return to school in the long term, they will be more likely to use our study hall program; most feedback shows that parents have found short term solutions.

Felix Pardo asked about the opening of playgrounds and a possible solution of children wearing gloves. Fred believes the playgrounds have taken so long to open because there is no way to clean after children every few hours. However other parts of the country have begun allowing playgrounds and Fred believes its only a matter of time before ours will open with the understanding it will be play at your own risk.

Fred brought up to the board the recent naming of a park in honor of James Barker. At the recent commission meeting, a discussion was had on the Park Naming policy and criteria used. Fred had proposed a new policy and after he receives feedback from the City Manager's office, he will present the policy to the Parks board.

Kirk Menendez asked about the start of athletics and the Skills and Drills programs. Fred responded that logistics are still being worked out by Youth Center supervisor Carlos Pichardo, but we will begin shortly. Sports that will be included will be soccer, volleyball, baseball, flag football; tennis and golf have already started. Registration numbers are still limited so programs will fill up quick.

Kirk also asked about how the opening of schools will impact the timeline of opening and having services available at our facilities. Fred explained to the board that we will open up when we need to however the safety guidelines set forth by the CDC and childcare regulations will need to be laxed in order to go back to semi normal operations. Programs like gymnastics will be very hard to implement with guidelines as is. Our department is continuing to plan the next steps of openings. Plans include special events; Halloween drive thru Trick or Treating, and if playgrounds open, this could include

**Holiday Park playground but no pictures with Santa. The Adult Activity Center will be the one facility that will be the last to open.**

**Charlie Rua asked about how the department plans on monitoring limited capacities for the Holiday Park. Fred responded this is something we have already started considering. Solutions include doormen at the gates, monitors within the park and possible having resident only days and times.**

## **II. NEW BUSINESS**

The Salvadore playground replacement design was presented to the board via Zoom screen share. The community meeting is set to take place October 1st at 6:30 p.m. Fred narrated the presentation and went into detail on the proposed design. The estimated cost of the project will be \$400,000 and its estimated completion date will be March 2021. The timeline is sped up since this is simply a playground replacement, so site mitigation is not as in depth. Replacement also allows for the permitting process and procurement process to be spend up. The biggest time sensitive portion of the project will be ordering the equipment.

A motion recommending approval of the conceptional design of the Salvadore playground replacement was made by Felix Pardo, Second by Nancy Leslie.

Motion was opened for discussion, Kirk asked if the structures are wide enough for children to climb from one side to the other. Fred responded this new playground will be even wider than the existing with an additional climbing feature.

Nancy Leslie asked what will be done to the southwest corner that is always muddy. Fred reminded the board that that location of the park will be used for the new ADA expansion playground and will be grated and turfed. All inclusive playground equipment will be installed, and a portion of the space will be left open for general play. Carolina showed the board the ADA park design to the board via screen share.

Nancy also asked if additional walkways will be included in the design. Fred explained to the board that no additional walkways will be included however the existing paths will be done with safety surfaces that are ADA approved.

Additional bike racks will be included to the redesigned ADA accessible park entrance near the pavilion. All existing bike racks will remain in the park.

There are no plans to address paving areas for parking. If there is enough community feedback, a separate project will need to be funded.

At the last commission meeting, the Mayor had an agenda item recognizing Venice, Italy as a new Sister City. With that, our department has been

approached through that partnership by a soccer club Venetia FC, to partner with them to help grow their program under the Coral Gables programming umbrella. The Youth Center supervisor and Fred under direction of the Mayor, have had a few discussions with club owner Jean Rocha to consider the partnership. The club as is right now are only 5 teams and more recreational based not competitive. Due to COVID operating orders, this might be an opportunity for a pilot program to help us regain lost participates who have defected to other competitive teams that chose not to adhere to COVID guidelines and continued to compete. We anticipate very low registration numbers when we start travel soccer again.

The proposal would include field usage, fees paid to the Youth Center, the City issuing background checks on their coaches, and there would be a joint team name to tie in the Sister City partnership.

Carlos Hernandez asked what protections will be in place for those residents that would be in the program. i.e cap to what the club could charge, expectations of field usage, what would we do after year one. Etc. Fred said everything will mimic the existing contracts we have had in place with travel soccer that has been using the Youth Center. No summer field usage will be granted, and Phillips Park is not being considered at this time. Carlos suggested a cap on charges and to the number of teams allowed to be created in order to not monopolize the Youth Center field from other sports i.e. baseball, flag football. Kirk Menendez and Felix Pardo also voiced their agreeance of creating these caps and regulations.

Kirk Menendez brought up that if the City is going to meet with this smaller recreational style soccer club, that we should also give the same opportunities to interview similar clubs in size geared towards recreational play and developing skills. Fred agreed with a lot of the points Kirk brought up, however this particular club had no desire to control the programming or scheduling; the City would still control the content of the program and have the ability to end after a year because there is no contract in place but an instructor agreement.

Carlos asked the age of participates that will be allowed to play. Fred notified the board it would be U10 and U14 age groups. Carlos instructed Fred to issue a cap to age registration to preserve the field and limit usage.

Carlos Hernandez stated that if it a one-year opportunity to collect revenue and the board could review any agreements the City will engage in, then he is in support of the perusing the partnership. Monica Segura agreed with

Carlos and believes its a great idea.

By bringing up this potential collaboration with the Venice sister-city, Fred would like some direction from the board on how to proceed and would like a point person to be selected to represent the board on providing feedback.

Felix Pardo made a motion to pursue the one-year partnership with Venetia FC and to select Carlos Hernandez as the board representative to assist with the Community Recreation department in working out the details of the agreement. Second by Carlos Hernandez. Discussion on requirements were had. Motion was approved. Passed unanimously.

### III. DISCUSSION ITEMS

Kirk Menendez brought to the board's attention the passing of Lewis Hall, long time Coral Gables resident. Kirk told a quick story of Lewis's connection to the City of Coral Gables, Coral Gables Elementary School and the War Memorial Youth Center. Lewis Hall Passed away August 31st, 2020. Fred also told a story reminiscing his time he spent with Lewis Hall.

### ITEMS FROM THE SECRETARY

The next scheduled meeting will be October 8th, 2020 at 8:30 am

### ADJOURNMENT

at 9:56 am

### NOTE