

**CITY OF CORAL GABLES**  
**Economic Development Board Meeting**  
**Wednesday, May 7, 2008**  
**Development Department Office Conference Room**  
**95 Merrick Way, Suite 450, Coral Gables, Florida**

MEMBERS	M	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	COMMISSIONERS
	(3)														
Richard DeWitt	P	P	P	P	X	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P*	P	Mayor Donald D. Slesnick II
Ray Zomerfeld	P*	P	P	P	X	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	E	Vice Mayor William Kerdyk, Jr.
Gladys Diaz Jourdain				P	P	X	P	E	P	P	P	E	P	P	Commissioner Maria Anderson
Dr. Al Smith	E	E	P	P	X	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	Commissioner Rafael "Ralph" Cabrera, Jr.
James Casey	P	P	P	P	X	P	E	P	P*	A	E	P	P	P	Commissioner Wayne "Chip" Withers

\*Present via telephone.

(3) - Emergency meetings per Procurement Code

**STAFF:**

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

**A = Absent**

**E = Excused Absence**

**P = Present**

**X = No Meeting**

**( ) = Special Meetings**

**GUESTS:** Mari Molina, Executive Director, Business Improvement District (BID)

Chair Richard DeWitt called the meeting to order at 8:07 a.m. A quorum was reached.

**I. Meeting Attendance:**

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

**II. Approval of April 2, 2008 Board Minutes:**

**Mr. Casey made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 2, 2008 meeting as presented. Dr. Smith seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

**III. Update about Miracle Mile Streetscape Plan: Mari Molina, BID Executive Director:**

After reviewing a written background report about the streetscape planning process, Ms. Molina updated the Board on current BID plans. She added that, at present, three streetscape options generated by the Public Works Department were "on the table."

Ms. Molina described the two greatest streetscape-related challenges for BID members as money and streetscape options. Therefore, the BID board approved the establishment of a Streetscape Advisory Committee comprised of volunteers with specific areas of expertise to evaluate and recommend the best option for the continued success of the commercial owners and the broader vision consistent with the walkable features recommended by the 2002 Charette. The committee will include design professionals, urban planners, engineers, a transportation professional, retail expert and BID leadership, will be supported by an independent facilitator, and will be viewed as a long-range project.

Once the committee addresses its five planning objectives (reviewed for the Board by Ms. Molina), the findings will be presented to several City boards, the Chamber of Commerce, downtown residents and, ultimately, to the City Commission.

During discussion about how the Board might help with the process, Ms. Molina requested support and input. She explained possible collaborative efforts between the BID and some City departments and board that could generate additional downtown revenue sources. Discussion included increasing parking meter prices. Ms. Diaz

Jourdain suggested focusing on the merchants and ways to increase visitor traffic on the street as a marketing tool. She also recommended exploring grant funding through the Florida or National Main Street Program. Ms. Rivenbark explained the requirements of the program that accompany these grant awards. Remaining discussion focused on parking, outdoor meal seating charges and the objectives of the Streetscape Advisory Committee.

#### **IV. Workforce Housing Update:**

After defining workforce and affordable housing for the Board, Ms. Diaz Jourdain summarized housing needs assessment issues addressed at the May 6 meeting with the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce as follows:

- The median income set by HUD for Miami-Dade County this year is \$42,000 for a family of four.
- 83% of our population is eligible for workforce/affordable housing.
- At the top of the range (80% to 120% of the median) are teachers, fire fighters, police; at the bottom of the range are the retail, restaurant and hospitality industry workers.
- Large local businesses, including Baptist and U.M. are having problems with housing their nurses and professors because they can't afford to live near where they work.
- The median income in Coral Gables is \$80,000 annually.
- The Chamber realizes that to keep companies coming and settling here, the area must provide a way for people to live.
- Strategies for subsidizing housing need to be developed.
- The consensus among participating mayors, including Mayor Slesnick, was to collaborate to create a regional vision.
- One of Coral Gables' challenges is high land prices, but the City could work in partnership with another municipality to develop a strategy.
- The County's Office of Community Development will issue applications in July for funding requests for surtax monies (\$23 million this year). The money may be earmarked only for home ownership (not rental) and are planning their course.
- At the State level, it was decided that every municipality has to do its fair share. There is an ordinance that says that Coral Gables has to provide 443 units over a ten-year period. The City also has to provide the State's Department of Community Affairs a strategic plan about how the City will address the issue. If this is not done by a date certain in 2008, the comprehensive plan will no longer be allowed to be changed. At present, the Planning Department is in the process of re-writing the comprehensive plan.

Discussion included better public transportation for people who live far from the primary business areas, the cost of car travel, new buildings that could be converted to affordable housing with subsidy money, retrofitting existing buildings and using tax credits. Ms. Diaz Jourdain will make the summary of decisions reached at the meeting available to the Board.

#### **V. Presentation of Proposed Small Business Workshops for 2008/2009**

Ms. Wotherspoon presented a selection of free, evening small business workshops proposed for this coming year. Ms. Rivenbark explained that the workshops are typically free, held at the Youth Center and have been presented with FAU's Small Business Development Center and approved by the State of Florida. Ms. Wotherspoon reviewed workshop topics and received strong Board support. Consideration is being given to developing programs specifically designed to help small retailers. Ms. Molina suggested conducting a joint BID/small business workshop at the Westin Colonnade during the day. Ms. Rivenbark and Board members discussed how the workshops would be publicized to generate participation, adding a How To Do Business In Coral Gables presentation, incorporate an interactive workshop and ask developers to notify their purchasers about the workshops.

#### **VI. Quarterly Business Update:**

Ms. Wotherspoon distributed a 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter FY 2007/2008 update report based on City business tax receipts. She summarized her report as follows:

- No notable large companies moved into the City during the last quarter.

- The most notable aspect of the report was the decrease in new business license fees received.
- The vacancy rate for non-condominium office space is very low.
- The report shows a 43% decrease in activity from this time last year.

**VII. General City Updates:**

- a. Assistant City Manager Dona Lubin will provide an update at the next meeting about cellular coverage.
- b. The City Manager asked all departments to submit three budgets for FY 2008/2009 by next week.
- c. Staff is drafting an RFP for the Country Club of Coral Gables. Mr. DeWitt summarized actions by some of the Country Club members to develop solutions.
- d. The Venetian Pool will close for eight months beginning in September for repairs.

**VIII. New Business:**

- Dr. Smith recommended that public transportation be considered more strongly to help with affordable housing needs. He recommended encouraging expansion of the trolley routes in an east/west direction along Miracle Mile, and pointed out that the City is providing an important part of the overall County transportation system and lessening the County's need to provide buses along certain routes.

The meeting adjourned at 9:25 a.m.

**Next Board Meeting: Wednesday, June 4, 2008, 8:00 a.m. in the Development Office**

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Swanson Rivenbark  
Development Director  
Secretary to the Economic Development Board