

CITY OF CORAL GABLES
Economic Development Board Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, August 5, 2009, 8:00 a.m.
Economic Sustainability Department, 95 Merrick Way, Suite 450, Coral Gables, Florida 33134

MEMBERS	S	O	N	D	J	F	#	M	A	M	J	J	A	COMMISSIONERS
Mr. Bertram "Chico" Goldsmith *								X			E	P	P	Mayor Donald D. Slesnick II
Mr. Raymond Zomerfeld	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	X	P	P	P	P	P	Vice Mayor William Kerdyk, Jr.
Mr. John M. "Jack" Thomson*								X			E	P	P	Commissioner Maria Anderson
Ms. Haydee Polo*								X			P	P	♦	Commissioner Rafael "Ralph" Cabrera, Jr.
Mr. James Casey	P	P	E	P	E	P	P	X	P	P	P	P	A	Commissioner Wayne "Chip" Withers

STAFF:

Ms. Maria Alberro Jimenez, Assistant City Manager
Ms. Jessica Wotherspoon, Business Development Specialist

A = Absent
E = Excused Absence
P = Present
X = No Meeting
= Special Meetings
*** = New Member**
♦=TBD at subsequent board meeting.

GUESTS: Ms. Maria Anderson, City Commissioner; Mr. Patrick Salerno, City Manager; Mr. Rip Holmes, Citizen

Meeting Motion Summary:

The minutes of the July 1, 2009 Board meeting were approved.

Chair Ray Zomerfeld called the meeting to order at 8:08 a.m.

1. Approval of July 1, 2009 Board Meeting Minutes:

Mr. Thomson made a motion to approve the Board meeting minutes of July 1, 2009 as presented.
Mr. Goldsmith seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

2. Discussion with new City Manager, Mr. Patrick Salerno, regarding changes occurring in the City's Economic Sustainability Department:

The City Manager stated that he changed the name of the Development Department to the Economic Sustainability Department primarily because if the City posted a job announcement for a Development Director, the applicants would not have the same skill sets that he is seeking. In today's environment, the term Development conotates planning, building, zoning, and construction, and he is seeking a department director who has experience in managing environments that are economically sustainable for the long-term. One who understands that when it comes to community development and growth, that equal attention must be paid to the environment and social equity issues as well. With this more universal approach to development and the key mission being that "we don't sacrifice the future for today," he modified the director's title to Economic Sustainability Director and the Department name to Economic Sustainability Department. Thus far, there has been over 200 applications from all throughout the country for the Department Director position. The City Manager is trying to move this process along as fast as possible & would like this position to have been filled yesterday, but will fill it as soon at the right candidate is identified. This position needs to be a jack of all trades. In some respects, the position will be the face of the community, and the face of the Board, so the selected candidate must have marketing skills, public/private partnership skills, and the technical skills associated with economic development. There has been some very talented applicants that have applied for the position, and though the City has some good prospects, it

is difficult to find one individual that meets all of these requirements. Economic development, in the City Manager's opinion, is absolutely vital to the future well-being of this community. This Board & its mission are critical to that success.

The new mission of the Economic Sustainability Department is to 'position Coral Gables for sustainable, long term, economic vitality that enhances the quality of life of residents and strengthens the business environment.' The City Manager places high priority on this area. His style is to spend a considerable portion of his time focusing on economic development because his philosophy & perspective from a community standpoint is, "if you are not growing as a community, you're dying. There is no status quo. The status quo is you're dying. But the measure needs to be that the community grows in a smart way. We don't just have growth for the sake of growth. Growth needs to be (1) where it adds to the quality of life, or we don't need it; and (2) that it is not growth that hurts the ability of future generations to be successful. Thus, we (the City) want projects that are good today and are going to be good ten years from now. If they don't meet that test, then we don't pursue them."

The City Manager believes, that with the economy as it is, this is the time we can do our planning and get our ducks in a row, so that when the market turns around, and capital becomes more readily available, we will be positioned to really attract those seeking to jump on board and consider Coral Gables.

One of the focuses with the new director will be that we are more proactive from a corporate outreach standpoint. The City is going to go after companies. With the facilitation through Mark Trowbridge, the City Manager has already reached out to the Beacon Council, met with Frank Nero, and established the beginning of a framework for working together.

The City Manager stated that there will be changes to the upcoming City budget. Staffing-wise, the July 1st budget draft had in it for a director and one additional staff position. The budget proposes the property management function will get moved from Public Works to the Economic Sustainability Department. It is more natural for the Economic Sustainability Department as that is where the deals get done. Now, with this move in responsibility, not only would this Department establish property contracts and relationships, but it would also manage them too.

The City Manager further stated that as the lease is about up for the Economic Sustainability Department's space, the City is seeking to get more strategically appropriate space and for less money.

3. Discussion of 2009-2011 Term Goals:

The City Manager hopes that the goals that the Board establishes for its 2009-2011 term are lofty. In light of this, he mentioned three areas that he would like to see improved in the City from an economic development standpoint. They are (1) Attract Class A office tenants, (2) Become a player with commercial real estate brokers and site selectors, and (3) Address Miracle Mile.

Mr. Goldsmith would like to see the Board devote its efforts to the Mile.

Mr. Thomson suggested the Board take a look back at the Charrette and see if there are some aspects of it the Board should refocus on again.

Mr. Thomson also suggested the Board visit with international corporate companies located in Coral Gables to get some feedback from them. Specifically, find out how they think they are being treated, and how do they think they should be treated? What would make them stay here, and possibly find out who's coming to move here?

Mr. Thomson asked the Board to pinpoint 3-5 objectives that it should focus on this year. One of the critical, he proposed, should be tourism. It is something that the Board didn't focus on until the 1990's when the City gained multiple first class hotels.

In follow-up to Mr. Thomson's comment on Tourism, the City Manager feels tourism is absolutely a major economic engine and Miracle Mile is part of that engine as tourists' number one activity is shopping. He stated this is another reason why the City, Chamber, and Bid should focus their efforts on the Mile.

Commissioner Anderson noted that this is the first Economic Development Board meeting that she has attended in her eight years as Commissioner. She feels that many of the things that the City Manager spoke about are really important and that they resonate with her. She believes that they are right on point to help us grow as a community from an economic standpoint and also to showcase our beautiful City. She really likes what the City Manager said when he elaborated that Miracle Mile should be "a quality experience." She feels the BID has been a fabulous instrument in the last few years in being a unifying force, a good voice, and effective in getting the right tenant mix on the Mile.

Mr. Thomson believes this Board should work more with other boards. And further, in an effort to improve this Board's effectiveness, when there is a concern that lies in another boards' area or when this Board comes across a project that it thinks should be worked on jointly with another board, that this Board consider passing a motion. The motion would be to ask the City Commission to consider the request, and if the City Commission is in agreement with the proposal, that the Commissioners then direct the other board to take on the project or work in cooperation with the Economic Development Board.

Mr. Thomson would also like to see Mark Trowbridge come in and tell the Board what the Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce is up to, and let this Board give the Chamber some suggestions on what it would like to see the Chamber do.

4. Additional Business:

Mr. Thomson commented that this Board was originally formed as the Advertising Board, then in 1963 became the Community Development Board. The initiative began then to make Coral Gables the Latin American headquarters for the world. There were trips to Europe, Japan, all over the world to entice businesses to come to Coral Gables. There were also advertisements in publications such as the Wall Street Journal. After the City had its first 21 multinationals move into Coral Gables, the Committee of 21 was formed by the Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce in collaboration with the Advertising Board. Each year that committee had an International Ball, which invited corporate executives from all over the County, as well as Consuls headquartered in South Florida. Most people paid their own way, and so the Ball really did not cost anything to put on. It provided a good chance for corporate executives to meet each other and gave the City a chance to talk with them.

Mr. Thomson would like one of the top commercial brokers to come chat with the Board to tell them what they are seeing out there in the business world.

Mr. Thomson further addressed the confidentiality issue of what the Economic Development Board and Economic Sustainability Department does and the critical need that it be upheld.

Mr. Zomerfeld thanked the City Manager for coming in to speak with the Board and Commissioner Anderson for attending the meeting.

Commissioner Anderson stated that she appreciates the members of this Board.

Mr. Zomerfeld asked that Mari Molina be made aware that she is always invited to the Board's meetings.

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Mr. Zomerfeld mentioned that Malta is looking to bring an exhibition into a gallery in the Gables in early 2010, and the Ambassador from Malta is expected to attend. Although, this effort is being handled by the City's Arts & Culture Specialist, Ms. Catherine Cathers, & the City's Cultural Development Board, it's something for both the International Affairs Coordinating Council and the Economic Development Board to be aware of.

Motion to adjourn made by Mr. Goldsmith
Seconded by Mr. Thomson.

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned.

Next Economic Development Board Meeting: Wednesday, September 2, 2009 at 8:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Maria Alberro Jimenez,
Assistant City Manager