

CITY OF CORAL GABLES

LANDSCAPE BEAUTIFICATION ADVISORY BOARD

<https://zoom.us/j/83110285038>

THURSDAY, MAY 11th, 2023 – 10:30 A.M.

- MEETING MINUTES -

MEMBERS	M 22	A 22	M 22	J 22	S 22	O 22	N 22	D 22	J 23	F 23	M 23	M 23	APPOINTED BY:
Carolina Estefan-Chahine	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	P	P	P	P	Mayor Lago
Anne Boynton-Trigg	P	E	P	E	E	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	Vice Mayor Anderson
Elizabeth Parnes	.	.	.	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	Commissioner Mena
Carmen Lizama Gaspa -R	P	P	P	P	P	E	A	P	P	P	R	-	Commissioner Fors
Nancy Leslie	P	P	P	P	E	E	P	P	P	E	P	P	Commissioner Menendez
Amy Dash	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	City Manager
Maria Debye Saxinger	-	-	-	P	P	E	P	E	P	P	P	P	Board-As-A-Whole

P – Present
E – Excused Absence
A – Absent
(-) – No Appointment
(*) – No Meeting

STAFF:

Deena Bell-Llewellyn, Assistant PW Director, Greenspace
Pilar Wiese, Recording Secretary, Greenspace

GUEST:

Martha Pantin, Communications and Public Affairs Director
Sandra Rodriguez, Communications Specialist

CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order at 10:35 a.m. The roll was taken, and a quorum was present.

MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL:

The board reviewed the March 9th, 2023, minutes. Ms. Boynton-Trigg pointed out that under the Board’s mission item, she was the one advocating for more sustainable gardening with more native plants. **A motion was made to “Approve the minutes of March 9th, 2023, with the change pointed out by Ms. Boynton-Trigg”. The motion was seconded, voted upon, and adopted unanimously.**

PRESENTATIONS / DISCUSSIONS:

- **CITY SWALE INITIATIVES PRESENTATION:** Director of Communications and Public Affairs Martha Pantin introduced herself and Communications Specialist Sandra Rodriguez. She said that the Communications office will put out a campaign for swale maintenance and would like the board's feedback and ideas.

Ms. Rodriguez did a presentation and said that the goals of the campaign are:

- Educate residents on how to use swales correctly.
- Keep streets free of unsightly trash piles.
- Generate support for correct swale maintenance and give residents ownership over the beautification of their neighborhood.
- Show residents where they can go to receive more information for proper swale care.

Key messaging will be Save it for Six (small household items including trash bags with green matter must be placed out on the swale only after 6pm, the night before scheduled collection day). Green matter (loose green matter such as trees, shrubs, branches, and leaves can be placed out during the week). A trash pit is not a dump (appliances and furniture require a scheduled pick-up). Items that do/do not go in the trash pit (pet waste bags, cardboard, construction materials, or hazardous materials).

Discussion took place about composting as there is not a facility to compost in South Florida. Ms. Bell said that there is great contamination of waste material in trash pits. Christmas trees get mulched internally in the Public Works facility but there is not a large-scale facility for composting. Communications office outreach will include social media messaging (#swaleresponsibly), newsletter (inclusion in E-News through August), ads or written articles in local publications, mailings through annual solid waste bill sent to residents, videos.

Ms. Boynton-Trigg interjected suggesting including an explanation why rules are in place and the reason behind them. Explaining to residents how garbage gets contaminated, why it should not be put in the swale; she thinks that is the only way people will stop doing it. Ms. Parnes asked about how to help to identify owners' responsibility of dumping area and compliance, as most trash holes are shared by two properties. Explanation to residents where the solid waste goes and how it is processed should be included.

Ms. Pantin intervened saying that there is a price differential to dispose trash at the facilities that handle it when green material is separated from garbage; contaminated material (paint, batteries, etc.) should never go into trash piles. Green material can go in the trash piles anytime without a plastic bag.

Ms. Bell said that Greenspace division constantly receives requests to plant and beautify the swale. Residents do not have to have a trash pile if they do not want it. It is the resident's responsibility to maintain their swale.

Ms. Debye Saxinger suggested a pretend Q&A mailer with common questions for residents on how to maintain their swales and trash holes, and to educate where pollutants go. She said that the purpose of the swales is for water mitigation not for trash pits, which

in many cases destroy trees; swales help water to run off the street and infiltrate the water.

- **LANDSCAPE BEAUTIFICATION AWARDS:** Chair Parnes, board members Ms. Boynton-Trigg and Ms. Leslie, and Ms. Bell attended the City Commission meeting on May 9, 2023. A brief power point presentation with pictures of awarded properties was shown at the meeting. Board members presented the landscape beautification plaques to the property owners along with representatives from the Coral Gables Garden Club. Award recipients for 2023 went to 1229 Coral Way (Zone 1), 4614 University Dr. (Zone 2), 104 San Sebastian Ave (Zone 3&4), 5133 Castania Ave (Zone 5) and 5001 Hammock Lake Dr (Zone 6). The proclamation for Arbor Day 2023 was received at the City Commission. Ms. Estefan-Chahine volunteered to hand-deliver the plaques to award recipients that could not attend the City Commission meeting.

- **UPDATE MISCELLANEOUS CITY PROJECTS:**

Ponce Circle Park: A copy of draft concept plans for Ponce Circle Park prepared by architectural firm Urban Robot was distributed to board members. Ms. Bell said the design plan has been approved at Commission level and engineering plans are in the county for review and address comments. The construction phase should be ready to present next fall. After that, it will go to permitting and then the bid process. The concept rendering of the design is a beautiful, formal, classically arranged urban space that incorporates safe ways for pedestrians to walk across the street. Ponce de Leon is completely configured, lanes are being narrowed, additional swale area is being incorporated for drainage around the park. Some features are being designed in the park like a beautiful pavilion on the north side. The architecture is very much in the flavor of old Coral Gables. The Board of Architects urged that the architects incorporate features inspired from George Merrick's original town plans with similar material as to the city's historical entrances. It has beautiful paving, natural oolite, lighting, etc. On the landscaping side, a variety of flowering trees will be planted on the outer ring, exterior swale. Trees will serve as a buffer between the road and the park. On the interior of the park there will be a formal lawn for play, gatherings, festivals, etc. and stone benches and pathways with a combination of shady and palm trees. The park will not be a playground but an urban plaza. Ms. Bell said that the initial request from the board to include Royal Poinciana trees is on the design.

- **DISCUSSION AND AGREEMENT ON THE BOARD'S MISSION AND PURPOSE:** Ms. Boynton-Trigg and Ms. Estefan Chahine were assigned to work on a draft mission statement for the board. Ms. Boynton-Trigg drafted a statement with Ms. Estefan-Chahine's suggestions and it was shown to the board for revision. Mission statement was discussed. It was agreed that having a landscaping role, some type of sustainability/sustainable should be added along with beautification in the first sentence as the board is not just a beauty board. Board members liked the combination of ecological beautification in the first sentence. It was pointed out that the role of the board

is to advise and not to recommend policies. Ms. Parnes suggested Ms. Boynton-Trigg rewrite the first paragraph and send it to board members for feedback.

Ms. Boynton-Trigg requested that the mobility hub item be talked about at the next board meeting. She would also like to discuss having a facility to compost trash in the City of Coral Gables. Ms. Parnes suggested inviting the chair of the Sustainability board, Marlin Ebbert, to the next board meeting. Ms. Parnes informed the board that at the next board meeting she will be out of town but will be participating via zoom and to be excused. She also told board members that her chair position will be open. Ms. Debye Saxinger said that she will be asking not to be a board-as-a-whole member for the next period.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:40 a.m.

THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE HELD ON
THURSDAY, JUNE 8th, 2023, 10:30 AM