

CITY OF CORAL GABLES
Communication Committee Meeting Minutes
June 18, 2015
Office of Communications

MEMBERS	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	COMMISSIONERS
	'14	'14	'14	'14	'14	'14	'15	'15	'15	'15	'15	'15	
Herb Levin Chair	*	*	P	P	P	*	*	P	P	*	*	P	Mayor Jim Cason
Luba De Witt	*	*	P	E	E	*	*	P	P	*	*	P	Commissioner Pat Keon
Les Pantin III	*	*	P	P	P	*	*	P	P	*	*	P	Commissioner Vince Lago
Vacant													Commissioner Frank C. Quesada
Connie Crowther	*	*	P	P	P	*	*	P	P	*	*	P	Vice Mayor William H. Kerdyk, Jr.

A = Absent
E = Excused Absence
P = Present
* = No Meeting

STAFF AND GUESTS:

Michelle Cash, Marketing and Brand Manager, Office of Communications
Maria Rosa Higgins Fallon, Public Affairs Manager, Office of Communications
Michael Rocha, Multimedia Production Manager, Coral Gables Television

Mr. Levin brought the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

Motion:

Ms. Crowther made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 31, 2015 meeting. Mr. Pantin seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

New Office of Communications

Maria Rosa Higgins Fallon provided an update of the new Office of Communications and the new functions and structure created by City Manager Cathy Swanson-Rivenbark. Ms. Higgins Fallon is performing her previous Public Affairs Manager functions related to e-News, media relations and community outreach. Michelle Cash talked about her role as Marketing and Brand Manager responsible for integrated citywide marketing, supervising collaterals and working with each department so that every communications piece conforms to brand standards. Both managers have complementary skills and have specific functions, as well as shared responsibilities. Both report to the City Manager.

Ms. Higgins Fallon also talked about the role of Michael Rocha as manager of Coral Gables Television, a great producer and leader. He will be instrumental in moving forward the TV communications through the upcoming social media. There are many new ideas coming forward.

Chairperson Herb Levin commented that he has seen a positive change in e-News. He also commented that it looks very good, and there's also a lot more content. The "Read more..." click allows information to be condensed. He also likes the right-hand bar with important links. He has also noticed a lot more ink in the Herald's Neighborhood with positive coverage about the city's projects.

Ms. Cash commented that there are renewed efforts by the city to be a lot more transparent as a government entity and to involve the public more. In June, the city conducted several focus groups, a North Ponce vision workshop and Commissioner's Lago town hall meeting. To promote these events and draw attendance, the Office of Communications has conducted grass-roots efforts with distribution of flyers, intense media push, which has resulted in good media coverage.

Chairperson Levin asked a technical question: whether a TV link could be embedded on e-News. Mr. Levin suggested adding a link to e-News from an interesting City Commission video that is positive, perhaps with a summary of what the discussion was about. Ms. Higgins Fallon agreed with his suggestion.

Ms. Crowther wanted to know how the new office's structure originated. Ms. Cash replied that the City Manager had the original idea for the new unit's structure, and that Ms. Higgins Fallon and Ms. Cash had come to her with suggestions. They brainstormed functions and responsibilities and each selected the functions that best suited their skills and experience. The City Manager liked their proposal and that's how they are currently operating. Ms. Crowther said that the City Manager has great ideas and that she is very organized.

Les Pantin asked what social media platform they are planning on using. Ms. Higgins Fallon replied that the first platforms would be Facebook and Twitter. Mr. Rocha also replied that the city currently has YouTube. CGTV has about 300 YouTube subscribers. Recent videos have been very popular such as those about the mayoral and commissioner elections. Ms. Higgins Fallon said that before the end of the year they will launch social media sites.

Branding

Ms. Cash talked about the new Branding initiative. She distributed the branding guidelines that have been recently produced. She explained that this process involved 20 hours of focus groups with citizens, residents, stakeholders, as well as board and committee members. The mission was to refresh the identity of Coral Gables and not reinvent it. This toolkit provides the city's primary colors, but also a secondary palette that provides flexibility to build materials consistent with the city's brand and image.

Luba DeWitt asked for clarification on how to use the logo and colors. Ms. Cash explained the usage of colors and walked them through some of the branding guidelines. She suggested that

members review the document and provide any additional suggestions. Ms. Cash also explained that the city's brand tenets are lush, harmonious, cosmopolitan and storied.

New Quarterly Newsletter

Ms. Cash also described the next quarterly newsletter, which will merge the existing Leisure Guide and the Golden Gables magazines. She showed a sample of execution and explained the various segments of the upcoming magazine. She also talked about the concept for a photo cover and possible magazine name. The magazine will be launched in September with 20,000 copies.

Chairperson Levin said that he had met with the Mayor and this is one of the projects he discussed with him. He also suggested the information be distributed not only to residents but also to commercial entities like real estate agents, brokers, the Chamber of Commerce and any other business solicitation for new companies. Ms. Cash agreed with his idea and she will do an overrun of the new magazine for commercial distribution.

Chairperson Levin commented that the invitation for the Memorial Day event was a little somber and that the grey used was not the best color as it was hard to read.

Broadening Communications Reach

Chairperson Levin said that Mayor Cason had invited him a month ago to talk about additional ideas to reach to citizens. He would like ideas to broaden the reach of e-News and suggested an invitation to forward e-News to friends. He also suggested putting e-News sign-up information on bags of the two Publix stores in Coral Gables. Levin suggested asking the Chamber and the BID to forward e-News to their members. Ms. Cash said she would follow up on this suggestion.

Chairperson Levin said that the Mayor was not happy that the editorial coverage was dropped from CBS Magazine. Ms. Cash said that she spoke to the editor and this was a sales decision on the part of the magazine.

Ms. Higgins Fallon mentioned that the *Florida Villager*, a new magazine distributed in Coral Gables, Palmetto Bay and Pinecrest, is now including a message from the Mayor. She suggested increasing the editorial coverage in this magazine instead.

Chairperson Levin also suggested doing a survey on e-News as a way to increase involvement from readers. Ms. Crowther agreed that surveys are a simple and effective way to receive valuable information from citizens. A question of the week or the month could be included in upcoming e-News.

Chairperson Levin said that in the media business a good idea is to have a member card. Research says that those who sign up to these cards are very loyal. There's an affinity issue that is worth exploring. Ms. Cash and Ms. Higgins Fallon thought this was a great idea and will look into it.

Chairperson Levin liked the recent e-News story about the Ombudsman. Ms. Crowther agreed and learned about Tony Silio by clicking on the video.

Upcoming Projects

Regarding upcoming projects, Ms. Cash provided an update on the Miracle Mile Streetscape project. She said that she has been meeting with the construction management at risk to discuss community outreach. They are in the process of defining roles and responsibilities and they are expected to start work in the fall.

Ms. Crowther said that she when she handled the public relations for Turner Construction that she found good use of their community relations staff for events and one-on-one communications with merchants. This concept would be useful for the Streetscape project at this is going to be a make-it or break-it moment for Miracle Mile. She talked about the development of the BID and the importance of merchant's involvement.

Ms. Cash also talked about the Freebee, a 6-person electric vehicle that is being considered as a project that could be helpful during this construction period. However, it's very expensive and she is discussing ways to offset costs with internal advertising. Chairperson Levin suggested talking to Agave for possible sponsorship.

Coral Gables Television

Michael Rocha talked about the upcoming Fourth of July event. He also mentioned the capital budget requests made for next year. CGTV is requesting monies to upgrade their equipment to high definition (HD) since their equipment is 10 years old. He talked about the way signal is currently being transmitted on the web and through Comcast and AT&T. He also explained a funding request to update the studio to give it a more CNN news look.

Motion:

Chairperson Herb Levin made a motion to endorse the funding request to upgrade CGTV equipment to HD and to send a letter of recommendation to the Mayor and the Commission in support of this budget request. Mr. Pantin seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Ms. Crowther mentioned that when she worked on a series of television shows, she received commitments from stores such as Bloomingdales and Macy's to loan furniture in exchange for show credit. She suggested this idea for CGTV.

Chairperson Levin again congratulated Ms. Cash for the new branding protocol as this is a terrific, very well done project.

Committee members and staff wished Connie Crowther a very happy birthday.

The next Communications Committee meeting is scheduled for July 16, 2015.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.