

CITY OF CORAL GABLES
Economic Development Board Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, December 2, 2009, 8:00 a.m.
1 Alhambra Plaza, Suite 617, Coral Gables, Florida 33134

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

STAFF:

Mr. Patrick G. Salerno, City Manager

Ms. Cynthia S. Birdsill, Economic Sustainability Department Director

Ms. Jessica Wotherspoon, Business Development Specialist

A = Absent

E = Excused Absence

P = Present

X = No Meeting

= Special Meetings

GUEST: Mr. John O'Rourke, Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce Liaison to Board & Miracle Mile business owner

Meeting Motion Summary: (No Commission action requested)

- **Approval of November 4th, 2009 Board Meeting Minutes**
-

Chair Ray Zomerfeld called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

1. Introductions

2. Attendance

All members were in attendance

3. Approval of November 4th, 2009 Board Meeting Minutes

Mr. Goldsmith made a motion to approve the Board meeting minutes of November 4th, 2009.

Mr. Thomson seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

4. In-depth discussion with City Manager regarding the Board's goals

Mr. Zomerfeld identified to the City Manager the Board's four main goals of: 1) bringing class A businesses to Coral Gables, 2) moving forward with the streetscape improvements on Miracle Mile and Giralda, 3) focusing on strengthening tourism, and 4) facilitating the City approval processes for new and existing businesses. The City Manager commended the Board on their identified goals and expressed

that they are important and timely, in addition to being significantly interrelated. The City Manager indicated that he supports the Board in the pursuit of these goals, and commented on each in turn as follows:

Attracting Class A Businesses

The City Manager stated that Coral Gables needs to be better known by the commercial brokerage community. Therefore, the City through Economic Sustainability is reaching out to key brokers, developers and decision-makers in Miami-Dade and Broward Counties. This includes forging stronger relationships with the Beacon Council and Enterprise Florida. In order to facilitate the marketing of Coral Gables, the City will also plan an event early in the coming year to bring brokers to Coral Gables with the primary goal of educating them on what the City has to offer. Creating relationships and trust is of paramount importance so that when a viable prospect is looking in the area, brokers and decision-makers think of Coral Gables. We also want to support the great office building developers who are already in the Gables, and help them fill their buildings.

Mr. Zomerfeld commented that we already work closely with the Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce, and we may also want to collaborate with the University of Miami's Launch Pad at the Toppel Career Center, or Dean Barbara Kahn at the School of Business with its undergraduate and graduate programs in Real Estate to help get the word out about Coral Gables.

The City Manager followed Mr. Zomerfeld's comments by expressing his respect and appreciation for the Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce. He said the Chamber is an excellent partner to the City as an organization, and the degree of interest that the Chamber's leadership team shows in facilitating and partnering with the City to make us all better from an economic development perspective is a real asset to our community.

Mr. Thomson noted that in the past, in its efforts to promote Coral Gables to the larger national corporate community, the City hosted events in other large Cities around the Country such as Atlanta and New York. The City Manager responded that, while we may someday get to that point, the first priority now is to become well-known in our own backyard.

Ms. Polo asked if the City had an inventory of available commercial office space in Coral Gables. The City Manager responded that having such a database was one of the first things he spoke about with the new Director. He said the City does need to know the most current commercial inventory available, particularly in terms of large spaces available, and that we will be working to develop such a resource for current vacancies.

Streetscape Improvements

The City Manager agreed with the Board that after a long history of discussions, the time has come for the revitalization of Miracle Mile, which is the front door of Coral Gables. The Mile needs to portray a sense of excitement and energy, and, unless the stakeholders address the work that needs to be done, we will be hampered in our efforts to attract Class A businesses. The BID has shown real leadership by shepherding the plan and striving for consensus. The City Manager noted that one aspect that the plans have not yet addressed is a refreshing of building facades along the Mile, and that the impact of the streetscape improvements might not reach their full potential if the facades are not also addressed. In addition, a method of funding needs to be formulated. The City Manager stated that we will only get one shot to do it right, so it is critical that the plan that moves forward is the right plan that provides the greatest value and impact in making Miracle Mile a destination.

Mr. Thomson asked if the Board's priority to focus on the Mile should also include the rear approaches and garages. While all of these items need to be addressed, the City Manager noted that focus should first be along Miracle Mile. Mr. Thomson also asked how the Board could best assist the City in this effort, and the City Manager responded that the Board will be most helpful reviewing plans for improvements and financing once plans are brought to the Board for comment. The Board's support for plans or additional suggestions will be valuable to the process.

Strengthening Tourism

The City Manager stated that our best opportunity to impact tourism is through making the community more desirable and more significant as a destination. The hotels in Coral Gables have relationships with the Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau and are tied into what is going on in South Florida, and they already work hard to bring tourists here. While the City can assist with tourism efforts, it can have the most impact by enhancing the City as a destination and desirable community.

Facilitating City Approval Processes for Businesses

The City Manager shared that the City has an experienced outside consultant, who is currently reviewing the organizational structure for the development operations in the City. He anticipates that the study will be completed soon, and that the City will thereafter be able to address the recommendations for promoting better facilitation of the permitting approval processes.

Additional comments:

Mr. Zomerfeld remarked that the Board would like to bring in a couple commercial brokers for a future meeting to discuss the current state of the market in Coral Gables and to discuss what is critical to the brokers in trying to attract Class A tenants. The City Manager agreed that this is a good time for the Board to learn more so that when presented with a plan for the streetscape improvements they will be able to take into account the perspective of the brokers.

Mr. O'Rourke asked if the City was or had thoughts of looking at the retail tenant mix on Miracle Mile, as he felt creating a cohesive retail mix would make the Mile not only a destination for specific activities, but also an environment where people want to spend time in general. The City Manager responded that the right tenant mix is indeed very important. The City needs to learn what is needed on the Mile, and when we do, we will target those types of businesses. Ms. Birdsill noted that the BID has also discussed hiring a retail consultant for a study of the optimal retail mix. Ms. Polo suggested that the Mile be looked at not only in terms of the right retail mix, but also in terms of the right 24-hour usage mix, so there is a steady flow of people coming to the Mile in the mornings, afternoons, and evenings. She also noted that she thinks it is imperative that the City look at a long-term master plan to draw people into the downtown, specifically in the later evenings.

5. Additional Business

It was discussed that Friday, December 4th will be the BID's first Giralda Under the Stars event. It will run in conjunction with Gallery night for the next five months. It was mentioned that also on Friday, December 4th, there will be the Kiwanis Club's Art in the Park at Ponce Circle Park, as well as the annual tree lighting at City Hall. It was noted that on January 29, 2010 the Pro Bowl's Official Super Celebration in Coral Gables will take place at Ponce Circle Park. The City is partnering with the Chamber, BID, Kiwanis Club, and the South Florida Super Bowl Host Committee for this event. Mr. Casey shared that he will be out of town for the January meeting and asked in advance to be excused from it.

Motion to adjourn made by Mr. Goldsmith and seconded by Mr. Casey.

Economic Development Board Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, December 2, 2009
Continued

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 9:20 a.m.

Next Economic Development Board Meeting: Wednesday, January 6th, 2009 at 8:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Jessica Wotherspoon
Business Development Specialist
Economic Sustainability Department