

City of Coral Gables

*405 Biltmore Way
Coral Gables, FL 33134
www.coralgables.com*



Meeting Minutes

Thursday, February 10, 2022

8:00 AM

Youth Center, Conference Room

Parks and Recreation Advisory Board

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting began on 8:09am

ROLL CALL

a. Roll Call and Excusal of Absences

Present:

Jennifer Marquez

Ruben Rodriguez

Laura Hernandez

Monica Segura

Charlie Rua

Nicolas Cabrera

Absent:

Ellen Chasens (zoom)

Bruce Lecure (zoom)

A MOTION TO EXCUSE THE ABSENCE OF ELLEN CHASENS AND BRUCE LECURE, AND NOTE THAT THEY WERE PRESENT BUT COULDN'T MAKE IT PHYSICALLY WAS MADE BY JENNIFER MARQUEZ AND SECONDED BY CHARLIE RUA. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

A MOTION TO APPROVE THE JANUARY MEETING MINUTES WAS MADE BY LAURA HERNANDEZ AND SECONDED BY RUBEN RODRIGUEZ. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

PERSONAL APPEARANCES

a. Coral Gables Family Literacy Festival Presented by Sam Joseph

Vice Chair of the School Community Relations Committee Sam Joseph began his presentation by thanking the Community Recreation department for doing a wonderful job on the inaugural Family Literacy Festival last year and how he is excited to do another one this year. Mr. Joseph then shared some statistical information on children's literacy with the Board and the efforts the School Community Relations Committee is making on trying to increase those numbers. Mr. Joseph continued by announcing the changes and excitement regarding the Family Literacy Festival initiative for this year by making it "Not Bigger, But Better". These changes include having children be more involved as vendors and merchants, working with neighboring schools to increase participation and transportation to the festival, and have the even more City involved with an international component. Tentative date for the event is May 28th, 2022. Sam Joseph has asked the Board to help promote the Family Literacy Festival initiative by word of mouth.

The director of the department, Fred Couceyro included to the discussion about their focus in conducting this event in an organized manner. For example, contingencies for parking, overflow possibilities and analyzing how COVID-19 rates will play out in order to decide whether to open more space or close more space.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

a. General Department Updates

Department Director Fred Couceyro began his report by announcing they will have an agenda item about the Country Club in the next Commission Meeting scheduled on Tuesday February 15th. Couceyro explained to the Board where the situation stands, as well as all the processes required for a successful launch of the Country Club. The City's intention is to have an exclusive country club with reasonably priced membership packages geared predominantly towards our Coral Gables residents which will include programming opportunities and rentals. He emphasized that one of the biggest goals is to bring residents back to the club for them to gather and create relationships. Board Chair Monica Segura suggested to include more family friendly memberships to the Country Club, so people of all ages have activities to benefit from.

Director Couceyro spoke to the Board about the City wanting to have a seamless transition of operations but there will have to be a phased capital improvement plan to address the club's much needed maintenance including the pool and rental areas. Board member Ruben Rodriguez added that however the City plans on utilizing the club, any increase of users to the country club will accelerate the already existing maintenance issues. Director Couceyro stated that the department has already began to plan to hire maintenance workers along with extending the City's custodial contract to include the country club.

Board member Ellen Chasens also brought up a suggestion about creating a fitness environment geared towards our growing senior population and programs for adults within the divisions. The Director and Assistant Director added to Ellen's suggestion by mentioning the different activities where adults can participate in already at the Adult Activity Center and at the Youth Center. Ellen Chasens also asked how the country club's tennis facilities were going to be operated. Assistant Director Carolina Vester shared that the tennis operations will be phased into the overall operational plan at a later date due to the current contractor Neighborhood Tennis that is using the court space. Once taken over, the City would like to see if Pickle Ball could also be incorporated.

Board Member Nicolas Cabrera asked if the department could look in to the Lifetime Memberships that were sold prior to the current contractor that were never honored. Both directors said that this item was already brought up in discussions and will need to be further investigated. It is believed that there was a settlement that the City did with the original company that included those memberships but we have not had access to those records yet.

Assistant Director Carolina Vester shared some of the history that was uncovered as the department planned for the take over of this property. And with that history, a hundred years later, the Coral Gables Golf and Country Club will once again return to the City and the Parks department. Board Member Nicolas Cabrera, added to the discussion his desire to maintain this history as being a country club neighborhood and to maintain that community culture surrounding it. Fred Couceyro and Carolina

Vester emphasized and made clear about their focus on bringing back that special environment the Country Club once had.

b. Event Calendar

The Director of the Department Couceyro went through all the upcoming events like Movies Under the Gables Moonlight, Daddy Daughter Dance, Romance under the Stars, and the Visits with the Easter Bunny event. The Fourth of July Biltmore event will take place this year.

c. CIP Updates

Administrative Operations Supervisor Mitchell Zuriarrain quickly went through the CIP updates. He talked about the Granada Pro Shop bids, Lamar Curry and Maggiore park are 40% complete, the Merrick Park ADA circular sidewalk, Phillips Park proposal has been completed , Salvadore Park Expansion punch list items, Solano Prado, Venetian Pool concession which is in review, and the Venetian Pool pump assessment inspection.

NEW BUSINESS

OLD BUSINESS

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Director Couceyro spoke directly to Board member Ellen Chasens to setup a Zoom meeting with her and people that have reached out about tennis and to clear up any issues with annual passes, social play, pickleball etc. Administrative Assistant Sarah Espino will set it up.

Assistant Director Carolina Vester announced an impact calculator for the referendum which makes a projection on the taxes residents will pay by solely providing their home address. Vester mentioned that this is not officially available yet because it is currently in development.

Board Member Jennifer Marques wanted to bring up the item of bathrooms being added to more of our neighborhood parks. Staff said it will be at the discretion of the community but we can make an effort to include restrooms in future design plans, however they have not done well with community input.

ITEMS FROM THE SECRETARY

Next meeting is scheduled on March 10, 2022 at 8am.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting concluded at 9:17am.

NOTE