

CITY OF CORAL GABLES
Economic Development Board Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, May 4, 2016, 8:00 a.m.
2121 Ponce de Leon Blvd., Suite 720, Coral Gables, Florida 33134

EDB MEMBERS	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	COMMISSIONERS
	'16	'16	'16	'16	'16	'16	'16	'16	'16	'15	'15	'15	
Scott Sime	P	P	P	P	P					P	P	P	Mayor Jim Cason
Olga Ramudo	P	E	P	E	P					P	P	P	Commissioner Jeannett Slesnick
Stuart McGregor	P	P	P	P	P					E	P	E	Commissioner Pat Keon
June Morris Chair	P	P	P	P	Ph					P	P	P	Commissioner Vince Lago
Alexander Binelo Vice Chair	P	P	E	P	P					P	P	P	Commissioner Frank Quesada

A = Absent E = Excused Absence P = Present X = No Meeting Ph = Present by Phone

STAFF AND GUESTS:

Javier Betancourt, Director, Economic Development Department
Leonard Roberts, Assistant Director, Economic Development Department
Mariana Price, Administrative Assistant, Economic Development Department
Ramon Trias, Director, Planning & Zoning Division, Development Services Department

Meeting Motion Summary:

A motion to approve the minutes of the April 6, 2016 meeting passed unanimously.

Mrs. Morris brought the meeting to order at 8:03 a.m.

1. Review of the April meeting minutes (Action)

Mr. McGregor made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 6, 2016 Board meeting. Mr. Binelo seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

2. North Ponce Study (Presentation) – Ramon Trias, Director, Planning & Zoning

Mr. Ramon Trias presented the North Ponce Study before the Board and provided an outline of ideas of the different things that can be done for North Ponce. The Building & Zoning Dept. had public meetings to reach the community as well as a trolley tour of the area and intense

workshops. The recommendations outlined in the document plan for (1) Two Zoning Overlays (mixed-use overlay for Ponce De Leon and Conservation Overlay for the neighborhood); (2) Planning/Preservation Studies; (3) Capital Improvements; and, (4) Community Amenities.

The Conservation Overlay allows for preservation of the character without having to deal with historic preservation issues only (as opposed to a “historic district” designation, which is more limited). Mr. Trias cautioned that the gradual change of building larger (and losing green space as a result) could affect the value and uniqueness that Coral Gables offers.

Mr. Trias also reviewed Capital Improvements initiatives which include Landscaping and Open Space (includes parks acquisitions, tree succession plan, and specific work done on Alhambra Circle, Madeira, Majorca, Navarre and portions of Zamora, Mendoza, and Menores); Bicycle and Pedestrian Mobility (includes ADA intersection improvements and Alhambra Circle & Alhambra Plaza bike lanes); and, Public Parking. He stressed the need to get back to emphasizing the community and creating quality places. Tomorrow, Mr. Trias will hold a North Ponce Community Meeting at the St. James Church at 6:30 pm to seek public feedback.

3. Downtown Overlay District (Update) – Ramon Trias, Director, Planning & Zoning

The proposed Downtown Overlay District, which Mr. Trias initially presented for the board a few months ago, is not as complex as the North Ponce study. It entails more simple ideas that encourage better quality and smaller buildings. The main focus is how to deal with parking. The Downtown Overlay District has the same parking issues seen with the North Ponce area. They need to figure out a way to have more effective parking requirements by allowing remote parking, by waiving some of the requirements, and by encouraging a walkable environment and alternative to the car. The ideal scenario would be no parking requirements for ground-level uses such as restaurants and then any kind of parking for residential above. For example, a building with five apartments and a restaurant downstairs would be required to have five parking spaces. Mr. Trias explained that this type of building is not possible today. These issues are still being debated. A lot of people think more parking is better when the reality is that it is not. The parking does not create any more activity. Automobile traffic is generated by the parking associated with the building (plentiful and available parking invites frequent traffic).

4. Other City Business

Mr. Betancourt informed the Board that the Miracle Mile & Giralda Avenue Streetscape Groundbreaking event was held on April 28th. There is a hotline for merchants to call 24/7 with any questions or concerns regarding construction.

The Streetscape project will take 18 months for Miracle Mile and four to six months for Giralda Avenue.

Coral Gables teamed up with the Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce to exhibit at the eMerge Americas Conference on April 18th and 19th, for which a tri-fold pamphlet was made to showcase

Coral Gables as a tech industry destination.

In addition to the Streetscape and Overlay, which are two components to a three-pronged approach to revitalizing downtown and the core, the third component is a retail strategy. All the funding is now in place, with the City contributing half, and the rest of the costs split between the BID and the Chamber. The retail consultants will be down in mid-May and they will be seeking interview opportunities and do an analysis of the street.

There are a few Green Initiatives underway in the City that may directly impact business. One of them is the polystyrene (or Styrofoam) ban, passed by the City Commission. The State Legislature then preempted that and said municipalities could not ban the product after January of this year. The City Commission then revised the effective date for the ordinance prior to January; therefore, the ban is in full effect in Coral Gables unless a court of law mandates otherwise. Some exemptions may include the packaging material that comes with online orders that may be out of the control of the buyer. There is a six-month grace period through the end of the year for businesses to adapt. The City is working on educating businesses of this new provision.

Another green initiative recently taken on by the City was an ordinance passed that requires the developer for any new buildings over 20,000 feet to be LEED Silver-certified, or its equivalent.

Five of the six lands discussed at the last Economic Development Board meeting have been approved for purchase. There are a few other potential land acquisitions for passive park conversion. Mr. Sime inquired what happened to the sixth property up for consideration. Mr. Betancourt responded that the purchase of these lots were contingent on community support and for this particular location, on San Antonio Ave, the neighbors were nearly unanimous in their opposition because of its proximity to a high school.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:01 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mariana Price, Administrative Assistant - Economic Development Department