

CITY OF CORAL GABLES
Economic Development Board Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, April 6, 2016, 8:00 a.m.
Economic Development Department
2121 Ponce de Leon Blvd., Suite 720, Coral Gables, Florida 33134

EXCERPTS

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	Mayor Jim Cason
Olga Ramudo	P	E	P	E						P	P	P	Commissioner Jeannett Slesnick
Stuart McGregor	P	P	P	P						E	P	E	Commissioner Pat Keon
June Morris Chair	P	P	P	P						P	P	P	Commissioner Vince Lago
Alexander Binelo Vice Chair	P	P	E	P						P	P	P	Commissioner Frank Quesada

A = Absent

E = Excused Absence

P = Present

X = No Meeting

V = Vacant

STAFF AND GUESTS:

Javier Betancourt, Director, Economic Development Department
Leonard Roberts, Assistant Director, Economic Development Department
Belkys Perez, Marketing & Events Specialist, Economic Development Department
Mariana Price, Administrative Assistant, Economic Development Department

Meeting Motion Summary:

A motion to approve the acquisition of the six proposed properties to be used as passive parks under the NRP vision was voted for approval 3-1.

3. Neighborhood Renaissance Program - Land Acquisition for Parks (Action)

Mr. Roberts summarized the terms which are detailed below:

Background:

In 2011, the City of Coral Gables adopted resolutions to begin the Neighborhood Renaissance Program (NRP) with the purpose of improving quality of life by investing in the City's neighborhoods. The NRP requirements include specific investment dollars in civic centers, right of way improvements, passive parks improvements, restoration of historic features and other beautification projects with a portion of the funds to be spent by mid-2016. The City has

amended the existing NRP to allow some of the proceeds to be used for a broader spectrum of neighborhood enhancement projects, which include not only improving existing passive parks, but acquiring neighborhood properties to be used as passive parks.

Description:

A passive park is generally an undeveloped space that requires minimal development. The parks/public service departments maintain passive parks for the health and well-being of the public. The focus on the environment and a natural experience is what distinguishes a passive park.

Therefore, the departments of Public Service, Parks & Recreation and Economic Development, search for property that require minimal development; are compatible with and encourage other passive recreation uses; and offer constructive, restorative, and pleasurable human benefits by fostering appreciation and understanding of open space.

Based on this understanding, the City departments established three criteria for identifying ideal spaces to become passive parks:

- (1) Safe & Accessible: one must not need to cross a major thoroughfare to reach the park;
- (2) Spacious: the park is of sufficient size to accommodate the surrounding area as a passive parks;
- (3) Need: demands for open space in the area.

Terms:

Based on the criteria and staff review, the following properties are recommended for purchase:

NRP Parks						
Offers sent						
Address	Offer Price	Lot Size	Offer PSF	Accepted Offer	Accepted PSF	
807 Catalonia Ave	\$950,000.00	13,464	\$70.56	\$950,000.00	\$70.56	
939 Majorca Ave	\$900,000.00	14,300	\$62.94	\$934,500.00	\$65.35	
6540 Marlin Dr	\$605,000.00	19,025	\$31.80	\$665,000.00	\$34.95	
545 San Antonio	\$1,000,000.00	24,300	\$41.15	\$1,100,000.00	\$45.27	
Sarto & Salzedo	\$550,000.00	5,000	\$110.00	\$450,000.00	\$90.00	
1047 Venetia Ave	\$700,000.00	8,250	\$84.85	\$575,000.00	\$69.70	
	\$4,705,000.00	84,339	\$55.79	\$4,674,500.00	\$55.43	

Further deal terms include 10% security deposit, appraisal contingency, 45 day inspection period, neighborhood approval and City Commission approval. Each party will be responsible for their own respective closing costs and closing will occur 60 days from contract execution.

Conclusion:

The funding to acquire and prepare the sites will come from existing NRP funds. Annual maintenance expenses (outside of NRP funds) are estimated to be approximately \$5,800 per site.

Naturalist and author John Muir once said,

I only went out for a walk and finally concluded to stay out till sundown, for going out, I found, was really going in.

This insight captures the essence of what the outdoors provides for the human spirit, so it is especially important that a city invests in and provides for outdoor spaces that foster this interaction between nature and man.

Our City founders clearly understood and championed this idea, as evidenced by the emphasis on the beautiful green landscapes that helps define the character of Coral Gables today. City staff is recommending the purchase of the respective properties in keeping with the tradition.

Questions for the Economic Development Board:

1. *Is the proposed use in keeping with city goals and objectives?*

This transaction is appropriate in keeping with the City's NRP vision of improving the quality of life by investing in its neighborhoods. This use is in keeping with that goal.

2. *What is the economic impact to the city including, i.e. is the proposed use in keeping with a public purpose and community needs, such as expanding the city's revenue base, reducing city costs, creating jobs, creating a significant revenue stream and improving the community's overall quality of life?*

In preserving the City's quality of life by investing in parks is expected to increase surrounding property values as a result of the improved quality of life. The properties will be taken off the tax rolls, resulting in a loss of revenue of \$15,000 annually, but the benefit outweighs the cost.

3. *Are there alternatives available for the proposed disposition, including assembly of adjacent properties and can the project be accomplished under a private ownership assembly.*

There are alternatives for the sites to be used as development, but in keeping with the City's objective in improving neighborhoods the use is considered appropriate. A private developer use as a private park would not be considered highest and best; hence, it's appropriate for the City to acquire.

Mr. McGregor made a motion to accept the three questions and answers and also to vote in favor of the acquisition for the six spaces for passive parks, which was seconded by Mr. Sime. The motion was voted 3-1, with Mrs. Morris providing the dissenting vote citing the need for more study and discussion as to the merits of these purchases.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:08 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mariana Price, Administrative Assistant - Economic Development Department

