

**PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD**  
**Minutes of March 20, 2015, Meeting**  
**War Memorial Youth Center**  
**405 University Drive,**  
**Coral Gables, Florida 33134**

MEMBERS	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	APPOINTED BY
Alisa Weiner	P	P	B	B	B	B	B	B	P	P	P	P	Mayor Jim Cason
Valerie Gelnovatch	P	P	P	P	N	N	N	E	P	P	P	P	Vice Mayor William Kerdyk, Jr.
Kirk Menendez	P	A	P	P	N	N	N	P	P	P	P	P	Comm. Patricia Keon
Robert Ruano	P	P	P	P	N	N	N	P	P	P	P	A	Comm. Vince Lago
Marty Steinberger	P	P	P	P	N	N	N	P	P	E	A	P	Comm. Frank C. Quesada
	V	V						V	V	V	V	V	City Manager Cathy Swanson-Rivenbark
Carlos Hernandez	P	P	P	P	N	N	N	P	P	P	P	P	Parks and Recreation Advisory Board

A = Absent

B = Not on Board at Time of Meeting

C = Cancelled

E = Excused absence

P = Present

N = No quorum

R = Recessed

S = Sick

V = Vacant position

**STAFF:**

**GUESTS:**

Fred Couceyro  
Parks and Recreation Director  
Mitchell Zuriarrain,  
Administrative Assistant

1. Robert Ruano called the meeting to order at 8:24 a.m.
2. **Approval of Board minutes of February 20, 2015 meeting** – A motion was made by Carlos Hernandez to approve the minutes of February 20, 2015 with no changes made. Motion to approve was seconded by Alisa Weiner and was passed unanimously by the Board.
3. **Approval of Excused Absences** – Valerie Gelnovatch
4. **Addition to the Agenda:** Alisa Weiner suggested that swimming scholarships be added to the New Business section.
5. **Update on Board Items to City Commission**

Fred Couceyro reported that he was able to secure a small grant for about 15,000 dollars coming from the National Parks Recreation Association and ESPN, which will be used to create an underprivileged children's tennis program. The money will be used to resurface courts, replace tennis netting and allow for a low cost program. Which will target the Coral Gables prep school children the program is projected to run beginning in May, afterwards a night summer program would be desirable.

Fred Couceyro continued with speaking on giving the Center for Independent Living space at the Youth Center. Allowing partial use of the S.H.I.N.E. office which is used for Medicare education, the Center for Independent Living will be allowed a few days of the week.

Robert Ruano brought up the concern that Riviera Park was renamed to Bill Kerdyk Jr. Park. Discussion continued as to whether or not it had been actually renamed or whether it was only proposed, Robert Ruano reminded the board of Resolution No. 30314-A specifically the section on procedures for name/rename designation, which states a referral from the appropriate City boards is needed. Fred Couceyro gave insight into whether parks are named or given a title based on their location.

## **6. Upcoming Special Events**

## **7. New Business**

### **a. Park Naming Application for San Amaro Triangle**

Robert Ruano opened discussion on the renaming of the San Amaro Triangle, before discussion could begin Alisa Weiner asked to be recused from the discussion based on the fact that she lives a few houses from the applicant and cannot provide a totally biased opinion on the topic. Kirk Menendez asked for the issue to be restated, Robert Ruano began with talking about Henry Cepero's early life. Beginning with his education at the University of Miami and went on to research cancer. At the age of 33 Henry Cepero passed away from cancer. His family currently lives close to the San Amaro Triangle; they expressed the desire to name the park Henry Cepero Park because it currently does not have a name. Fred Couceyro offered clarification on how the original proposal was to rename Alhambra Park, the previous owner of the space before it became Alhambra Park wanted to place a condition on the City purchasing it. The application was moved to the San Amaro Triangle; Fred explained that it is important to look at an application based on its merits. Fred Couceyro began to reference past park naming citing multiple examples since resolution No. 30314-A was put into effect. After going through the criteria Marty Steinberger brought up the point that if you do not follow criteria you begin making personal decisions on each park. A discussion began on the Alhambra Park and the cities position during the acquisition of the park. The discussion continued and reviewed based on Henry Cepero's merits if he met the criteria listed in the resolution. The Board continued to discuss the criteria and how broad the criteria, Kirk Menendez made a suggestion that at the present time the overall process and criteria could not be reviewed, maybe in future meetings agenda items be set to the restructuring of the criteria. Fred Couceyro stated in his opinion as Director of Parks & Recreation, the candidate meets criteria 1 because of his cancer research and his extensive work with the University of Miami. Fred Couceyro does not object to the application because of criteria 1 and 6. Robert Ruano requested that a motion be made on the item, Kirk Menendez motioned for San Amaro Triangle application be approved allowing the triangle to be renamed Henry Cepero Triangle. Marty Steinberger seconded Kirk Menendez's motion and a discussion on the motion proceeded. Robert Ruano asked that the city attorney review the application before they make any decision. Fred Couceyro interjected with it not being part of the

resolution and whether the criteria are a legal question. Fred Couceyro brought up the point it is not always about meeting multiple criteria but also the depth of the criteria you are meeting. Robert Ruano restated his previous request for a review by the City Attorney, if the board approves the application they are setting precedence. Alisa Weiner went on the record to supply the board with factual information, stating that he lived on Mendavia and Alhambra which is about 7 homes from the park. Robert Ruano stated there is a motion and a second on the floor, after discussion Kirk Menendez withdrew his motion and requested for more information and for the City Attorney to give greater clarity on the criteria. Also he requested that the residence supporting the application could come and present more information on the Henry Cepero. Motion was withdrawn no new motion was made. Marty Steinberger motioned to table the discussion on the application to rename the San Amaro Triangle; this was then seconded by Kirk Menendez.

**b. Annual Report**

Robert Ruano began the discussion on the annual report in asking Fred Couceyro to explain the annual report. The annual report is a requirement of each board and it is based off it activities and whether it is still needed as a board. Robert Ruano is going to base his report off recommendation; all members agreed that the board is still necessary. Robert Ruano made the strong recommendation that a youth member be added the board. Alisa Weiner and Marty Steinberger offered the suggestion of having a liaison between boards. Fred offered the suggestion of having a Parks Advisory board member to attend the Youth Advisory board once has begun. Robert Ruano restated his initial request of having a Youth Advisory board member to sit in on the Parks Advisory board. Carlos Hernandez disagreed with this because he felt they youth member would not share the same concerns as the rest of the board. Kirk Menendez made the suggestion of a joint meeting twice a year for the boards to meet.

**c. Turfing of YC Field**

Fred Couceyro began the discussion on the Youth Center turfing, explaining how the light project and lamps are being changed. On April 6<sup>th</sup> after the Egg Hunt some of the light poles will be demoed, the field will be closed for about a month, after talks with the City manager and a capital request will be put in for the artificial turfing of the field. Carlos Hernandez brought up the concerns about the baseball diamonds and whether they also would be turfed over. Kirk Menendez brought up one possible solution which is covers for the actual plates and diamonds. Kirk Menendez also brought up the concern of the distance of home plate and the backstop. Fred Couceyro expressed that the reasoning behind that is used for the older group of players and prevent them from striking foul balls into the neighboring area. Fred Couceyro also brought up how he was approached by a resident who would like to provide a playing field in the south end of Coral Gables, Fred explained there isn't much space but there are multiple parks which need artificial turf. Robert Ruano expressed concern for the steel inside of the light poles to be recycled, Fred acknowledged and assured the board that it would be.

**d. Swimming Scholarships**

Alisa Wiener began the discussion on swimming scholarships, the Venetian Aquatic Club received its 55 year anniversary proclamation and with that Alisa Weiner found statistics which showed that Miami-Dade County leads the state with deaths by drowning. Most of these deaths can be prevented through education, for years now the Venetian Aquatic Club has been giving scholarships to children based off a strict criterion, but as of now they are paying the pool through club funds. The request is that the pool a

lot spaces for scholarships, Fred Couceyro explained that there is precedence and will look into presenting this idea. Fred will put together a commission item which will be based on how many admissions and it costs the City lost revenue. The board suggested to Fred Couceyro to develop an item to take and present in front of the commission. Alisa Weiner gave the update that adult swimming lessons are progressing fine. Fred Couceyro updated the board on the status and opening of the pool, Robert Ruano asked why the bike rack was removed without replacing it with a new rack, Fred will have an answer next meeting.

**e. Phillips Park**

Carlos Hernandez began with saying that the shifting of programs over to Phillips Park has proved to be beneficial. The only issue being is the lighting; the board wants an update on the status of the capital request for new lighting at the park.

**f. Condition of Youth Center**

Robert Ruano expressed his concerns with the outside of the Youth Center where palm fronds are left for an extended period of time. He suggested that someone walk through the building and pick up and trash or palm fronds because it makes the building look unkempt. Fred explained there is a program and staff who should be addressing these issues and he will express the boards concerns to the Youth Center management.

**8. Old Business**

**a. Soccer RFP Status**

Fred explained based on the discussions the Parks & Rec. staff have had it is evident that the right criteria is needed. Fred also suggested to the board that an advisory board based on interested Parks Advisory board members and other interested parties to work with the City, to ensure that this runs properly. The board should expect to hear back about this within the next two months.

**9. Date and Time of Next Meeting**

The next Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Meeting will be held on **Friday, April 17, 2015 at 8:15 a.m.** at the **Coral Gables War Memorial Youth Center** in the **Conference Room**.

**10. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 9:45 a.m.