

**CITY OF CORAL GABLES**  
**Communication Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**Tuesday, March 31, 2015, 9:30 a.m.**  
**Economic & Cultural Development Department**  
**1 Alhambra Plaza, Suite 617, Coral Gables, Florida 33134**

MEMBERS	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	COMMISSIONERS
	'14	'14	'15	'15	'14	'14	'14	'14	'14	'14	'14	'14	
Herb Levin Chair	P	*	*	P	P	P	P	P	*	*	P	P	Mayor Jim Cason
Luba De Witt	E	*	*	P	E	P	A	A	*	*	P	E	Commissioner Pat Keon
Les Pantin III	P	*	*	P	P	E	P	P	*	*	P	P	Commissioner Vince Lago
Vacant													Commissioner Frank C. Quesada
Connie Crowther	P	*	*	P	P	P	P	P	*	*	P	P	Vice Mayor William H. Kerdyk, Jr.

A = Absent  
E = Excused Absence  
P = Present  
\* = No Meeting

**STAFF AND GUESTS:**

Michelle Cash, Marketing Manager, Economic and Cultural Development  
Belkys Perez, Marketing and Events Specialist, Economic and Cultural Development  
Rodolfo Roman, Public Affairs Specialist  
Letty Ellis, Adult Activities Coordinator

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**Meeting Motion Summary:**

**A motion to approve the minutes of the February 19, 2015 meeting passed unanimously.**

**A motion to approve the amended 2013-2014 Annual Report passed unanimously.**

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Mr. Levin brought the meeting to order at 8:40 a.m.

**1. Review of the minutes of the September 18, 2014 meeting**

**Mr. Pantin made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 19, 2015 meeting. Ms. Crowther seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

## **Marketing & Communications**

### **2. e-News: Technology Transition Update (Discussion)**

Ms. Cash informed the Board that the e-News transition to Constant Contact had been “seamless.” Using Constant Contact instead of hiring an outside designer gave the City more control of the product and reduced the yearly cost from approximately \$10,000 to \$800. Ms. Cash handed out a report outlining the user statistics for the first few issues that shows the e-News data base currently includes about 7,400 subscribers. Ms. Cash also reported that the open rate averaged between 23 and 25 percent, which is not considered high for government agencies, which typically have open rates of about 30 percent. She said that of those who opened the first regular issue, only three clicked through to the Spanish version. She said the numbers were low even though the link had been moved from the bottom to the top of the page. She noted that the short paragraphs on the Spanish-language version’s homepage linked to web content that had not been translated into Spanish due to the lack of resources. Mr. Levin suggested putting the Spanish links at the end of the paragraphs on the English version’s homepage. Ms. Cash agreed that would be a good idea. Mr. Levin suggested that e-News be made available to Chamber of Commerce and BID members, and Ms. Crowther and Mr. Pantin agreed. Ms. Crowther suggested that the Chamber and BID be asked to send e-News to their members and/or post a link on their web sites. Ms. Cash said emails could be collected at events such as the Miracle Mile and Giralda Avenue Streetscape Project workshops. Mr. Pantin noted that members of the City’s business community should be interested in receiving the newsletter for its coverage of the Streetscape Project. He also suggested that links to Facebook and Twitter be added to the e-News homepage.

### **3. Brand Identity (Discussion)**

Ms. Cash informed the Board that three brand concepts would be presented to the City Manager the following day. All three were “on strategy” and played off the image of Coral Gables as a lush, harmonious, cosmopolitan and storied community. She said the concepts were respectful to the City’s history while looking forward and featured images of the City’s architecture, natural environment and careful planning. Ms. Cash said the concepts will be presented to the City Commissioners.

### **4. Adult Activity Center**

Ms. Ellis updated the Board on changes to the Adult Activity Center’s publications. She said that the Golden Gables newsletter and the activities’ calendar would be combined into one 8 to 15-page newsletter published every quarter. The publication would be sent via email to some 800 subscribers and hard-copy issues would be made available at the Youth Center. She said that only about 20 subscribers indicated they read the hard-copy version. Previously, both Golden Gables and the activities calendar were printed in a glossy format and mailed to subscribers. The new publication would be printed on a less

expensive paper stock that is more sustainable if possible. Ms. Ellis noted that the Adult Activities Center scales down in classes during summer to make room for more youth activities at the Youth Center. Ms. Ellis said there is a high demand adult for classes, which are free and not restricted to Coral Gables residents. She said the adult center is exploring possibly charging a small membership fee. Ms. Cash said that you can find the activities calendar and e-News on the City's mobile app, which now has been downloaded by approximately 4,000.

## **5. Visitor Data (Discussion)**

Ms. Cash said the visitor data program had been shelved for now so staff can focus on other projects, including Streetscape.

## **City Projects**

### **6. Streetscape: Communications Planning Update**

Ms. Cash informed the Board that the City had launched a landing page for the Streetscape project to inform people about the process. The page includes links and attachments for public and Commission meeting held. It will also include images of the evolving designs, as well as related videos. Ms. Cash said the City would host an event April 17 where the design team from Cooper Robertson and Partners would show preliminary design concepts, make a presentation and answer questions. Mr. Levin suggested that there be an architectural model of the design for one block that can be shown at meetings. He also suggested that the storefront where the event would be held should be kept open to showcase the design. Ms. Cash said she was not sure the design was far along enough to be showcased in a model and that keeping the storefront open would require staffing. Ms. Crowther said that the design concepts could be placed in the window of the vacant storefront. Mr. Pantin suggested that a possible storefront design could include a television that showed before and after images of the project. Mr. Levin said he worried that some merchants might react negatively to the streetscape, fearing it could price them out of the area. He said that he took part in the City of Miami's Eighth Street renovation project and that the City had hired a consulting firm that went block by block and visited the merchants. He said that several merchants were interviewed on television criticizing the project. Ms. Cash said that the construction manager hired for the project may provide two team members who would conduct outreach. She agreed that it was important to publicize the benefits of the program and noted that the Miami Herald had planned to write a potentially negative article on the project's impact on merchants, but that a press release sent proactively to the press resulted in positive stories about the project instead. Ms. Cash also reported that South Florida Business and Wealth Magazine published an article that showcased Coral Gables as a great place to do business. Mr. Levin noted that the New York Times had written several recent articles about Jeb Bush that described Coral Gables in a very positive way.

## **Events**

## **7. 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Branding, Media and Event Plan**

Ms. Perez told the Board that the goal of the planned events was not only to celebrate the City's history but to educate the public and get people excited. She said that so far 98 events have been planned, starting with a celebration at the April 28 City Commission meeting that would include a proclamation and a cake in the shape of City Hall. The City web site now has a landing page for the 90<sup>th</sup> that includes a logo and anniversary info that also will appear on a full-page ad in Around Town magazine. She said CityTV would air a video showcasing 90 years in 90 seconds and that the Merrick Moments videos aired on the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary would be included in future issues of e-News as well as on YouTube. Ms. Perez also said she would like to reach out to a travel writer who would do a story on what to do in Coral Gables in 36 hours. Mr. Levin said the New York Times has a regular feature with that theme and suggested pitching Coral Gables as a subject. The Board also agreed that Southern Living magazine would be an ideal venue for a feature on the City. The Board agreed that the City had a colorful history with many intriguing details. Ms. Crowther suggested having a "did you know" featured in future issues of e-News, and Mr. Pantin suggested including a "this month or week in Coral Gables history."

### **Other Topics (Discussion)**

Ms. Cash said Economic Development was updating some of its key collateral, including the City Beautiful brochure that includes demographics, the site selector tear sheet and the power point shown at numerous events.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:40 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jorge Casuso, Business Development Analyst, Economic and Cultural Development