

# City of Coral Gables

405 Biltmore Way  
Coral Gables, FL 33134  
[www.coralgables.com](http://www.coralgables.com)



## Meeting Minutes

Thursday, October 14, 2021

8:30 AM

The Board meets the second Thursday of every month.

### Parks and Recreation Advisory Board

## **CALL TO ORDER**

**Meeting began at 8:11am**

## **ROLL CALL**

**A MOTION TO APPROVE THE ABSENCES OF JOAN VALDES, ELLEN CHASENS AND LAURA HERNANDEZ WAS MADE BY RUBEN RODRIGUEZ, SECOND BY CHARLIE RUA. NO DISCUSSION WAS HAD. PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**Present:** 4 - Chairperson Segura, Vice Chairperson Rua, Board Member Marques and Board Member Rodriguez

**Excused:** 3 - Board Member Chasens, Board Member Hernandez and Board Member Valdes

## **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

**A MOTION TO APPROVE THE SEPTEMBER MEETING MINUTES WAS MADE BY JENNIFER MARQUES, SECOND BY RUBEN RODRIGUEZ. NO DISCUSSION WAS HAD. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

## **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Community Recreation Director Fred Couceyro began his report by going over a listing of upcoming events. Board members were handed a printout of our online Parks E-News to reference. Upcoming events include our Pittman Park Pumpkin Patch, the first annual Harvest Market, Adventure Day for All combined with the ribbon cutting of the new playgrounds at Salvadore Park. We will finish up the month with the Youth Center's Haunted House and a new event at the Venetian Pool called the Pumpkin Float.

Director Couceyro briefly discussed our Holiday Park, the Holiday Tree Lightning event, and the VIP experience leading into the tree lighting. We are scheduled to purchase a new holiday Christmas tree for 2022. Funding has already been approved but materials have been delayed for this year.

Director Couceyro continued with updates on our current capital improvement projects that are in process. Completed projects include Salvadore Park and the completion of the Krydyk Family Park fitness trail. Maggorie park has started construction but playground material is back ordered pushing the completion date. Pierce park is pending a contractor to start with construction, Cooper park has been awarded funding. Lamar Lousie Curry Park should be beginning construction.

Fred continued with his report by sharing with the Board news on the recently approved design of the Mobility Hub that will be replacing the parking garage on Andalusia. Although this project is not explicitly a Community Recreation department project, we will however oversee the upper deck rooftop park. The conceptual layout that was presented at commission was shared with the Board. Areas of interest will include event space, children play areas, fitness stations, a walking track, terrace seating space, solar panels that will shade the roof area as well as power the structure, and there will be an open turfed green space. Groundbreaking needs to take place by October 2022.

The Board commented favorably on the design of the Mobility Hub and were excited to see a rooftop activation on top that serves multiple community uses. The Board felt this would meet the park need for the Business District which currently is lacking. However, the Chair did voice her concerns to the design and preferred to incorporate the more traditional Mediterranean style elements into the design.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Director Fred Couceyro shared both community meeting presentations with the Board for Toledo and Alava Neighborhood Park and the Blue Road Neighborhood Park.

He quickly reviewed the purpose of these community meetings by explaining what the Florida Recreation Development Assistance Program is and how it benefits the City of Coral Gables by offering grants for both park acquisition and development of park space. He also went into some of the requirements to be eligible to be a FRDAP grant recipient.

Director Couceyro continued with the presentation by explaining and showing the Board the current locations of each park and shared the reasoning for needing to develop these parks at this time. When discussing the three lots off of Toledo and Alava, it allowed the City to meet a level of service without crossing any major roadways in the North Gables area. The Blue Road park has been city property since 1949 and has been maintained as a park, but due to safety concerns without having any physical barrier to water access, the park is currently closed to the public but is being used to provide water way access for canal maintenance.

As part of the presentation, Director Couceyro showed example rendering of park designs used at other locations to create a visual aid to what could be utilized in both park spaces. He then went on to show examples of amenities and children's play structures that have been included in some of our recently completed parks along with the department's standards on park furnishings.

Much like the residents that attended the community meetings, the Board voiced their concerns about the traffic on Blue Road & Biltmore and the speed of which vehicles enter the roundabout in front of the proposed park space. They also had concerns if there would be parking available. Director and staff explained that there is no current design proposed that would add any designated parking to the Blue Road park. Accessibility to this park would be for those in the surrounding neighborhood that are in walking distance.

a. Neighborhood Information Meeting on FRDAP Grant-Toledo & Alava Neighborhood Park

A MOTION OF SUPPORT TO PURSUE GRANT FUNDING FOR TOLEDO & ALAVA NEIGHBORHOOD PARK WAS MADE BY BRUCE LECURE AND SECOND BY RUBEN RODRIGUEZ. NO DISCUSSION WAS HAD. PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

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**b. Neighborhood Information Meeting on FRDAP Grant-Blue Road Neighborhood Park**

A MOTION OF SUPPORT TO PURSUE GRANT FUNDING FOR BLUE ROAD NEIGHBORHOOD PARK WAS MADE BY JENNIFER MARQUES AND SECOND BY BRUCE LECURE. NO DISCUSSION WAS HAD. PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**a. Coral Gables Country Club**

The City has entered into a separation agreement with the contractor that runs the Coral Gables Country Club. The City is currently going through an RFP process and is looking for bidders. The Community Recreation department has been asked to enter an operational plan with a proposal for budgeting needs. Our intentions will be to return to a country club style management with tiered membership style packages. Facility rentals and event rentals will continue. Staffing will be a mix of contracted vendors and city staff and we would like to sub-contract any specially programs. Membership rates will vary based on amenities.

Board member Charlie Rua was approached by the tennis instructor at the Country Club and she has voiced that she would like to stay at the Country Club to continue to run tennis.

**b. Master Plan Updates**

The Master Plan was adopted by the City Commission during the September 28th meeting. The Commission was in favor of demolishing the War Memorial Youth Center. At this time, internal meetings have occurred about funding and implementation and we will be having a Sunshine meeting with the commissioners to decide on how to proceed. A viable option could be a parks bond by voter referendum.

**c. Parks Maintenance Standards**

Staffing has become difficult to obtained. We are working with the City Manager's office and the Human Resources department to look at increasing all part time staff wages in order to increase the candidate pool. We have found many of the applicants that have applied do not show up to the interview portion of the hiring.

We will continue to ask for additional funding to purchase the necessary maintenance equipment and personnel but due to deficits in revenues, funding has not been granted. As we return to normal operating budgets, we will phase in new maintenance standards and improvements as items are approved.

**DISCUSSION ITEMS**

**ITEMS FROM THE SECRETARY**

The next meeting is scheduled for November 11th, 2021 at 8am.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Adjourned at 9:36 am

**NOTE**