

Communications Committee
Meeting of October 14, 2020
Minutes

Staff and Guests

Billy Urquia, City Clerk
Martha Pantin, Communications and Public Affairs
Michael Rocha, Communications and Public Affairs
Nicolas Saenz, Communications and Public Affairs

Board Attendance
Connie Crowther-P
Sandra Gonzalez-Levy-P
Derrek Space-P
TJ Villamil- A

After achieving a quorum, the meeting began at 8:35 a.m.

There was no Approval of Minutes.

Introduction and Vision for the Future

Chairperson Gonzalez-Levy introduced Ms. Pantin. Ms. Pantin gave her work background, handling Communications for American Airlines not only in Miami, the Caribbean and Latin America, but most recently for all international locations. She stated this is an exciting opportunity as she's not only worked in Coral Gables but also resided and resides in Coral Gables for 26 years.

Ms. Pantin and Mr. Rocha explain the focus of the department is shifting. It's been known that viewers are changing, and the department has to change with that shift, not only from television to social media but from video to graphics and animated graphics.

Ms. Pantin added she is putting a focus on establishing relationships with the media and gave Gables Insider and the local news channels as examples. The goal is to be effective and efficient.

Ms. Pantin said she is willing to try different things and acknowledged that as media shrinks it's difficult to stand out in the crowd to get noticed. Ms. Pantin stated creativity is important as well as better understanding how people get their news.

Chairperson Gonzalez-Levy agreed change is needed to learn where people are getting their communication. She also wants to understand what situation we're in with the COVID-19. People are staying home, but they're realizing they can do things remotely, and offices are shrinking, and communication has to be sensitive to the audience.

She further stated that the committee wants to be as helpful to Ms. Pantin to get things done and know what resources the division needs to be successful.

Ms. Crowther spoke of her background and stated the most important thing to do is communicate to the residents at this time. This is not business as usual. Be cognizant to what our residents and businesses are dealing with and communicate in a way that is going to help them.

Mr. Space stated his background comes from finance, not PR, and what's exciting is talking about social media, increasing engagement to get a better idea of what the residents Coral Gables are getting from us.

Chairperson Gonzalez-Levy discussed how FIU has been successful in communicating with students in town hall meetings. She hasn't seen many town hall meetings for Coral Gables. Many older residents do not participate with platforms like Zoom, there could be other ways to reach out to them. Another suggestion is the many publications like Coral Gables Magazine, how the City can incorporate itself there.

Ms. Pantin mentioned Vice Mayor Lago had a recent town hall meeting and also commented that there is a larger Participation via the zoom platform for omission meetings.

Campaigns

Ms. Pantin asked for thoughts on a campaign that residents would want to participate in themselves, potentially with the theme I love, or I am Coral Gables.

Ms. Crowther commented campaigns are always good but to also think in terms of what people want to know. Perhaps it's an idea for post COVID. She clarified that this doesn't mean all content should be about the coronavirus, but that there are many stories with creative potential of how people are coping with it, such as the Magical Park story. There are ways to discuss it without exclusively presenting charts.

Mr. Space discussed that from a Healthcare perspective he agrees. There are still many cases, and it hasn't gone away. He acknowledged on the flip side people are getting fatigued hearing about the virus.

Chairperson Gonzalez-Levy stated that people would welcome hearing about something else and that engaging with the City could be helpful for residents to get them out of the Coronavirus 24-hours a day news.

Mr. Space noted that even though at some point people will feel that enough is enough it will still be communicated that people are following the right procedures.

Businesses and restaurants are facing difficult times and re-engagement is important.

Ms. Pantin mentioned that two new types of videos have been created to highlight businesses, "Hotspots" and "We are Coral Gables." There is a meeting with Coral Gables magazine every month to discuss ideas with them and what new events coming out to cover. New restaurants are also opening like Mamey at the Thesis Hotel. The city has done a lot of work to help restaurants during this time. Ms. Pantin said there are upcoming events so if anyone has any thoughts they are appreciated since the department can't only do traditional content.

She mentioned how for example previously the division didn't use to do press releases but is doing so now and showcased successes with placements in local media for Magical Park and Telemedicine. The news clips were shared.

Mr. Space asked about the city's plans for Halloween, and Ms. Pantin went through the plans that will also be featured on that day's e-news.

Chairperson Gonzalez-Levy congratulated Martha once again on her position and vision.

The meeting adjourned at 9:34 AM.