

City of Coral Gables

405 Biltmore Way
Coral Gables, FL 33134
www.coralgables.com



Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, December 11, 2024

5:00 PM

Parking Department Conference Room

Sustainability Advisory Board

Chairperson Teddy Lhoutellier
Vice Chairperson Martin Pinilla
Board Member James Brock
Board Member James Covey
Board Member Nicolas Eterovic
Board Member Joseph A. Fadel
Board Member Dipak Joshi
Board Member Dieter Manstein
Board Member Anabella Smith
Board Member Tiffany Troxler

1. Roll Call / Introductions

Present: 7 - Board Member Fadel, Board Member Troxler, Chairperson Lhoutellier, Board Member Etercovic, Vice Chairperson Pinilla, Board Member Brock and Board Member Manstein

Absent: 1 - Board Member Covey

Excused: 2 - Board Member Smith and Board Member Joshi

2. Approval of October SAB Meeting Minutes

Jasper motioned to approve the meeting minutes; Martin seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Yeas: 7 - Board Member Fadel, Board Member Troxler, Chairperson Lhoutellier, Board Member Etercovic, Vice Chairperson Pinilla, Board Member Brock and Board Member Manstein

Absent: 1 - Board Member Covey

Excused: 2 - Board Member Smith and Board Member Joshi

3. Public Comment: 2 minutes each guest

4. Presentation on Coral Gables Water Quality Assessment Project – Tiffany Troxler, Institute of Environment, Florida International University

Tiffany presented an interim report on a two-year assessment of the Coral Gables waterway, focusing on water quality and habitat conditions. The project involved field data collection and nutrient monitoring, in collaboration with UM, NSU, UMass, and Miami Waterkeeper, alongside educational outreach to engage residents and inform water quality management policies. The research aims to identify pollution sources, raise awareness, and develop strategies for restoring and conserving aquatic ecosystems. Key findings highlighted elevated nutrient levels (nitrogen, phosphorus) and fecal bacteria at multiple sampling sites, linked to urban runoff, stormwater discharge, and possible sewage leaks.

South Florida's ecosystems, including the Everglades, developed with naturally low phosphorus levels, fostering unique biodiversity and clear waters. However, human development, agriculture, and population growth have increased phosphorus runoff, disrupting these ecosystems. Pollution and habitat degradation have led to seagrass loss in areas like Biscayne Bay, harming biodiversity and local economies dependent on tourism and recreation.

There were 13-15 sampling stations along the Coral Gables waterway, collecting data on total phosphorus, total nitrogen, chlorophyll A, and fecal indicator bacteria to assess nutrient pollution and contamination. Results revealed nutrient levels often exceeding Biscayne Bay thresholds due to urban runoff, sewage inputs, and stormwater discharge, harming the ecosystem. Elevated phosphorus levels from sediment release and fecal bacteria contamination suggest issues with septic or sewer systems. Addressing these sources is essential for improving water quality, public health, and ecosystem restoration.

Recommendations include regular waterway cleaning, stormwater infrastructure upgrades, and community engagement to promote sustainable practices. The report, based on two years of data, supports water quality management, policy development, and funding for infrastructure improvements. Coral Gables is a leader in water quality monitoring, leveraging academic partnerships and community involvement to advance environmental management.

5. Keep Coral Gables Beautiful Program Updates**i. Recent Events**

- 1. Recycling Drive-Thru – Sat, Nov. 9th**
 - a. 800 cars drove through the Recycling Drive-Thru event, estimating 1,600 participants. 63,097 pounds of waste collected and properly recycled.**
- 2. Holiday Downtown Community Cleanup – Mon, Dec. 2nd**
 - a. 35 volunteers came out to the Holiday Downtown Community Cleanup and collected 209 pounds of litter. We celebrated at L'Artisane Bakery & Bistro after the collection.**
- 3. Phillips Park Cleanup – Wed, Dec. 4th**
 - a. This event was partnered with A Cleaner Planet, 44 volunteers came out and collected 151 pounds of litter. CNN came to interview KCGB and A Cleaner Planet for their Earth Day segment.**
- 4. Fewell Park Native Planting Event with UM – Fri, Dec. 6th**
 - a. UM came out to volunteer at our invasive plant removal and native planting event at Fewell Park. There were 15 volunteers who planted 150 native plants and removed 1,200 pounds of invasives.**
- 5. Business Recycling Drive-Thru – Sat, Dec. 7th**
 - a. 56 participants came to the Business Recycling Drive-Thru and dropped off 15,803 pounds of waste so it can be properly recycled, making this the most successful Business Recycling Drive-Thru to date.**

ii. Upcoming Events

- 1. Holiday Cardboard Recycling – Nov. 29th through Jan. 10th**
 - a. Collections for the Holiday Cardboard Recycling have begun and will run until Jan. 10. There is a recycling dumpster at the Coral Gables Youth Center.**
- 2. Christmas Tree Recycling – Dec. 26th through Jan. 10th**
 - a. The annual Christmas Tree Recycling will begin Dec. 26 and continue to Jan. 10. There will be a drop-off point at the Coral Gables Youth Center for multi-family homes and curbside collections.**

iii. Keep Florida Beautiful Clean Communities Award

- 1. KCGB won the 2024 KFB Clean Communities Award for the first time at the annual KFB conference. This award is to recognize the multiple programs and events KCGB has in the Coral Gables downtown area to keep the downtown beautiful and free of litter.**

6. Sustainability Related City Commission Items**i. America Recycles Day Proclamation**

- 1. Commission made November 15 America Recycles Day in Coral Gables. This was to show the city's commitment to the numerous recycling initiatives we have, including the newest program, the Cigarette Litter Prevention Program.**

ii. Confirmation of Youth Member Appointment

- 1. The Commission approved Dieter Manstein as the SAB's Youth Member appointment.**

iii. Execution of FDEP Grant for Vulnerability Assessment

- 1. \$15,000 was granted to KCGB to use for event supplies and to support the continuation of the program.**

iv. Ordinance on Bird Sanctuary Protections

- 1. The discussion focused on modifying the bird sanctuary protections in Coral Gables to exclude certain domestic birds like pigeons, chickens, and roosters while maintaining protections for other bird species. The ordinance requires humane attempts to manage the populations of the excluded birds before any removal actions can be taken. The changes address concerns about waste associated with the excluded bird species while still protecting endangered and native birds in the area.**

v. Recognition to Maiz y Agave for Winning the KCGB Commercial Beautification Award

- 1. Maiz y Agave were recognized at Commission for being awarded the KCGB Commercial Beautification award.**

vi. Resolution to Encourage MDC to Delay Decision on New Waste to Energy Facility

- 1. A Resolution encouraging Miami-Dade County to delay its decision on the location of a new waste to energy facility in order to explore alternative options, conduct a detailed cost analysis, and adopt an updated solid waste management master plan.**

7. Standing Agenda Items**i. Vulnerability Assessment Update**

- 1. During a recent Commission Meeting, there was an amendment to the FDEP grant that was executed for the Vulnerability Assessment. The vulnerability assessment is focused on evaluating the resilience of critical infrastructure against sea level rise and storm surge impacts. The assessment will include modeling scenarios for different hurricane categories and rainfall events to identify vulnerabilities. Consultants will present their findings to the board for input before finalizing the report in early 2025.**

ii. Block by Block Monthly Report

- 1. The Block by Block program has been moved under the Sustainability division to enhance focus on environmental cleanliness and community engagement. This transition allows for better integration of sustainability initiatives with daily maintenance and beautification efforts in the city. The program will now report directly to the Sustainability team, ensuring consistent updates and collaboration on sustainability goals. Block by Block is responsible for maintaining cleanliness along Miracle Mile and Geralda, ensuring a welcoming environment for visitors and residents. They utilize electric equipment for cleaning, including battery-powered leaf blowers, to minimize environmental impact. The team consists of seven members who operate daily, receiving positive feedback from the community for their dedication and effectiveness. They do amazing work and have a dedicated team.**

8. Member Comments**i. Teddy:**

- 1. Teddy wanted to mention that Board Members should try their best to attend at least one event every one or two months if possible.**
- 2. Suggested an initiative from Debris Free Ocean called Zero Waste Miami that is based on educational incentives. It is in the beginning phases but once it is ready, it would be a good initiative to collaborate with.**

ii. Deiter:

- 1. Deiter wanted to have the Board's input on some items that he would like to do at his school. He was interested in sanctuaries for the endangered Miami Blue butterfly, and he spoke to the director of the Miami Blue Chapter of the North American Butterfly Association to create a sanctuary at Ransom Everglades High School. There is an area that can be used to create a sanctuary on the main campus near mangroves. Coastal native plants would be ideal to plant there.**
- 2. A long-term goal of Deiter's is to bring the program Climate Resilient Schools at the West Lab Elementary School. Teddy offered help in this as there is a UM Chapter near the school and can begin putting this plan in motion.**

iii. Jasper:

- 1. Jasper is very happy with the progress on Granada Blvd regarding the septic to sewer project that has been in construction.**

9. ADJOURNED: 6:45 p.m.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, January 22, 2024

Additional Zoom Meeting Call-In Information Below

Zoom Link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82049614201>

Meeting ID: 820 4961 4201

Phone Number: 305-461-6769

For more information on the Sustainability Advisory Board please visit:

CoralGables.com/SAB

[Email Sustainability@coralgables.com](mailto:Sustainability@coralgables.com)