

**CITY OF CORAL GABLES**  
**Economic Development Board and Property Advisory Board Joint Meeting Minutes**  
**Wednesday, November 4, 2015, 8:00 a.m.**  
**City Hall, 405 Biltmore Way, Commission Chambers, Coral Gables, FL 33134**

EDB MEMBERS	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	COMMISSIONERS
	'15	'15	'15	'15	'15	'15	'15	'15	'15	'15	'15	'14	
Scott Sime	P	E	P	X	X	X	P	P	P	P	P	P	Mayor Jim Cason
Olga Ramudo								P	P	P	P		Commissioner Jeannett Slesnick
Stuart McGregor							E	E	E	E	P		Commissioner Pat Keon
June Morris Chair	P	P	E	X	X	X	P	E	P	P	P	E	Commissioner Vince Lago
Alexander Binelo Vice Chair	E	P	P	X	X	X	A	P	P	P	P	P	Commissioner Frank Quesada

PAB MEMBERS	A	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	COMMISSIONERS
	'15	'15	'15	'15	'15	'15	'15	'14	'15	'15	'15	
Luis Espino Chair	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	X	P	X	P	Mayor Jim Cason
Ariel Fernandez			P	P	P	P	P					Commissioner Jeannett Slesnick
Luba DeWitt			P	P	P	E	P					Commissioner Patricia Keon
Valerie Quemada Vice Chair	E	P	P	P	P	P	P	X	P	X	P	Commissioner Vince Lago
Tony Gonzalez	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	X	P	X	A	Commissioner Frank Quesada
Andrew Nadal			E	P	P	P	E					City Manager
Vacancy												City Commission

A = Absent  
E = Excused Absence  
P = Present  
X = No Meeting

**STAFF AND GUESTS:**

Jim Cason, Mayor  
Cathy Swanson-Rivenbark, City Manager  
Anthony Silio, Ombudsman, City Manager's Office  
Glen Kephart, Director, Public Works  
Javier Betancourt, Director, Economic Development Department  
Leonard Roberts, Interim Director, Economic Development Department  
Belkys Perez, Marketing and Events Specialist, Economic Development Department  
James Carles, Intern, Economic Development Department  
Jorge Casuso, Business Development Analyst, Economic Development Department  
Larry K. Williams, President and CEO, Beacon Council  
Susan Greene, Chief Marketing Officer, Beacon Council  
Steve Beatus, Executive Vice President, Beacon Council

Mario Sacasa, Senior Vice President, Beacon Council  
Ernie Diaz, TD Bank President, Florida, Chair, Beacon Council  
Donna Abood, CEO, Colliers Abood, Past Chair, Beacon Council  
Ron Shuffield, President, EWM Realty International, Executive Committee, Beacon Council

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**Meeting Motion Summary:**

**A motion to select Mr. Sime as the Economic Development Board's representative on the Garage 1 and 4 RFP Evaluation Committee passed unanimously.**

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Mr. Betancourt brought the meeting to order at 8:10 a.m.

**1. Welcoming Remarks by Mayor Jim Cason**

Mayor Cason thanked the guests for coming. He said Coral Gables has more than 150 corporate headquarters and a dozen foreign consulates. The City is near the airport, offers great services and its bond rating was recently upgraded by Moody's to a Triple A, with Standard & Poors expected to follow suit. Businesses are always looking for space and new developments are expected to meet the demand, the Mayor said.

**2. Welcoming Remarks by City Manager Cathy Swanson-Rivenbark**

Ms. Swanson-Rivenbark praised the Board members' experience and gave an overview of their role as advisors to the City Commission on economic development goals and on the leasing of City-owned properties. She said she has been in the economic development business since she joined the City in 1989, then served in the City of Hollywood as assistant City Manager and City Manager before returning to Coral Gables last year. She said she has lived in the same house in Coral Gables for more than 30 years, choosing to make a 26 mile commute in order to live in the City. Coral Gables, she said, understands the international business community, and its Mayor is a distinguished former U.S. ambassador. The City also understands the importance of offering a superior quality of life. It provides some of the best public safety services in the State and has won numerous awards for its quality of life, most recently as a top "Foodie City" that offers meals from \$5 to five-star. Most of the City's schools are A-rated and the City Commission this year successfully lobbied the School District to revise its feeder polices in order to ensure Coral Gables residents can attend local schools. She noted that the City Commission has set aside more than \$40 million in unrestricted reserves, made significant changes in its pension system and identified \$178 million in capital infrastructure improvements. The Commission also lowered the daily parking rate Downtown from \$8 to \$5 in anticipation of the \$23 million Miracle Mile and Giralda Avenue Streetscape Project being undertaken in partnership with the Business Improvement District. The project will feature 23-foot-wide sidewalks that will offer the "miracle" people expect when they visit Miracle Mile. The Streetscape is one of the major projects underway in the City. "One of the secrets in Coral Gables is knowing when to say yes

and how to say no,” she said. “We are not desperate, we are not looking for anything, we’re looking for what’s right for the City, and the City Commission has the discipline in insuring that.” That is the reason property values did so well during the recession of 2008-09. The Coral Gables economy did not decrease as much as other cities and bounced back faster. The City is friendly to the business sector and has an ombudsman in the City Manager’s office to help facilitate the permitting process for both residents and businesses. Ms. Swanson-Rivenbark introduced Mr. Silio, who has been in the new post since February, as well as Mr. Kephart, who is in charge of the City’s capital improvement projects both above and below ground, as well as landscaping. Coral Gables offers diverse housing options that make it possible to live and work in the City. It also offers such popular amenities as the Granada Golf Course, which is currently undergoing \$700,000 in renovations, and the Biltmore Hotel. Coral Gables also is home to the University of Miami, the City’s largest employer. The City offers a diverse economy, which is one of the reasons for its high bond rating. “We don’t have all our eggs in one basket,” she said.

**3. Economic Development Board selection of Board Member to serve as a representative on the Garages 1 and 4 RFP Evaluation Committee (Action)**

Mr. Betancourt gave a brief overview of the project, which calls for the replacement of Garages 1 and 4 on Andalusia Avenue. Mr. Betancourt informed the Board that a Committee had been formed to review a number of proposals that had been submitted. The Committee is composed of a member of the PAB and the EDB, as well as staff from different City departments and being a member requires “a substantial time commitment,” he said. Mr. Sime volunteered to serve on the Board. Ms. Morris recused herself saying her husband had responded to the RFP.

**Ms. Ramudo made a motion to select Mr. Sime as the Economic Development Board’s representative on the Garage 1 and 4 RFP Evaluation Committee. Mr. Binelo seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

**4. Introduction of Larry K. Williams, CEO of the Beacon Council**

Mr. Williams introduced the Beacon Council officials who were present, adding that several of them live and work in Coral Gables. He said that this was an important meeting and thanked Ms. Ramudo for coordinating it. Mr. Williams said he moved to South Florida from Atlanta and has served two years with the Council, which is Miami-Dade County’s official economic development public-private partnership and one of fewer than 50 accredited by the International Development Council in Washington D.C. That means that the Council is accountable for both its performance and finances, he said. The Beacon Council is “a great world class organization,” Mr. Williams said, noting that the organization recently celebrated its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The Beacon Council’s challenge is how to grow jobs and investment throughout the County, which has 2.6 million people, and to market the county internationally. “We need new businesses to bring the investments that create the jobs,” he said. Beacon officials will visit New York next year to meet with site selectors, who are an important source of leads, and Barcelona for a technology conference that will focus on the use of mobile devices to increase business. There

are challenges, Mr. Williams said. “People still have old impressions of Miami but that is improving, and the data is telling a different story,” Mr. Williams said. Beacon officials also will visit Coral Gables as an important part of the Beacon Council’s mission, Mr. Williams said. “People think of Coral Gables as a brand,” he said. The Beacon Council has established three pillars on which to build its efforts, Mr. Williams said. The first is marketing. Miami-Dade County offers more than the hospitality industry for which it is known. It has long established aviation, medical and logistics industries, as well as growing IT, creative, banking and finance industries. “We’re trying to build those clusters,” he said. The second pillar is business growth, which includes recruiting new businesses and fostering entrepreneurship and startups, Mr. Williams said. The third is having a voice to help shape the County’s future. The County needs to create job opportunities and fill them with local talent. To this end, the Beacon Council is working with universities, including the University of Miami, which is the largest employer in Coral Gables as well as the County. It’s an important asset in economic development today. “Thirty years ago when companies thought about relocating they focused on the costs,” Mr. Williams said. “The most important thing that people think about today is talent. That is at the top of everybody’s list.” People don’t think of Miami as a college town, although it has several universities and research institutions, including UM. These universities are not only sources of talent but “hubs of innovation,” Mr. Williams said. The Beacon Council helps businesses find locations in the County through incentives and coordinates with local jurisdictions that companies are interested in, he said. The Council is always looking for partnership opportunities and is open to new ideas.

Mr. Diaz said that Miami-Ft. Lauderdale is the fourth largest MSA (Metropolitan Statistical Area) in the country and that Coral Gables is an anchor. “Executives want to live in Coral Gables, we have quality of life in Coral Gables,” he said. The Gables is very attractive for corporations looking to relocate. Ms. Abood agreed and said she has lived in Coral Gables for 30 years and opened her new office in the City. Mr. Shuffield said Coral Gables government is accessible. Coral Gables should think of the Beacon Council as a partner that can help attract and retain businesses, Mr. Williams said. Mr. Beatus recalled how Mayor Cason helped retain HBO Latin America with the help of the Beacon Council. The Council also helped attract Cable & Wireless to the City, Mr. Williams said. Mr. Betancourt thanked the Beacon officials for coming and said one of his key objectives as the City’s new Economic Development director was to strengthen relationships with partner organizations. He said one of the first groups he met with when he assumed his new post was the Council. The City’s relationship with the Beacon Council is a “critical” one, and Coral Gables is committed to working closely with its members, Mr. Betancourt said. The Board members then briefly introduced themselves before embarking on the tour.

The next Economic Development Board meeting will be held on December 2, 2015, and the next Property Advisory Board meeting will be held on December 9, 2015.

Respectfully submitted,

Jorge Casuso, Economic Development Analyst, Economic Development Department