

CITY OF CORAL GABLES
Economic Development Board Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, October 7, 2009, 8:00 a.m.
1 Alhambra Plaza, Suite 617, Coral Gables, Florida 33134

MEMBERS	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	COMMISSIONERS
Mr. Bertram "Chico" Goldsmith						X		E	P	P	P	P	Mayor Donald D. Slesnick II
Mr. Raymond Zomerfeld	P	P	P	P	P	X	P	P	P	P	P	P	Vice Mayor William Kerdyk, Jr.
Mr. John M. "Jack" Thomson						X		E	P	P	P	P	Commissioner Maria Anderson
Ms. Haydee Polo						X		P	P	E	P	P	Commissioner Rafael "Ralph" Cabrera, Jr.
Mr. James Casey	E	P	P	P	P	X	P	P	P	A	P	P	Commissioner Wayne "Chip" Withers

STAFF:

Mr. Alberto Delgado, Public Works Director
 Mr. Kevin Kinney, Parking Department Director
 Ms. Jessica Wotherspoon, Business Development Specialist

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

GUESTS:

Ms. Mari Molina, Business Improvement District Executive Director;
 Mr. Mark Trowbridge, Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce President;
 Ms. Sarah Artecona, Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce Chair;
 Mr. John Knowles, Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce Small Business Czar

Meeting Motion Summary: (No Commission action requested)

- The minutes of the September 2, 2009 Board meeting were approved. [Item 1.]
- Mr. Casey made a motion that the Board recommend that the City, when possible, share its resources and waive whatever City fees that can be waived for the BID's proposed monthly street closing of Restaurant Row for the *Giralda Under the Stars* event, and that the Board supports this project in general with the intent to keep these businesses in business. [Item 4.]

Chair Ray Zomerfeld called the meeting to order at 8:06 a.m.

1. **Introductions**
2. **Attendance**
 All members were in attendance.
3. **Approval of September 2, 2009 Board Meeting Minutes**
 Mr. Goldsmith made a motion to approve the Board meeting minutes of September 2, 2009.
 Mr. Thomson seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.
4. **Brief presentation by and discussion with the Coral Gables Business Improvement District's**

Executive Director, Mari Molina, City Public Works Department Director, Alberto Delgado, and City Parking Department Director, Kevin Kinney, about the proposed Streetscape Project for Miracle Mile and Giralda Avenue.

Ms. Molina presented the proposed Streetscape plan for Miracle Mile and the Restaurant Row portion of Giralda Avenue. After handing out the brochures of the new streetscape project, she described the project as it currently stands. She noted that on Restaurant Row, the plans do not include any type of curb between the street and sidewalk area, which will allow for flexibility between on-street parking and outdoor dining areas. On Miracle Mile, she noted the inclusion of bike racks, benches, and additional trees lining the sidewalks. Ms. Molina shared that there is a little over \$1 million in the General Obligation Bond fund that was allocated for this project, and under Show Me the Money, there is \$246,000 to be used toward alleyway improvements. Ms. Molina stated that the next step is to go over the project with the new City Manager

Mr. Delgado said that the City has retained the services of a consultant to move ahead with the plans and specifications for the project. He further mentioned that now is a very good time to do construction as bid estimates are coming in roughly 25 percent lower than before the economic downturn. Whereas estimates were once in the \$10 million dollar range, they are now in the \$7.5 million dollar range for the Miracle Mile & Giralda Ave. Streetscape project.

Ms. Molina also mentioned about the BID's proposed plan to close the restaurant row portion of Giralda Avenue once a month to stimulate energy on the street and in the Downtown. She's reached out to the University of Miami's School of Music to see if some of their students would like to perform on Restaurant Row during that event. Mr. Goldsmith noted that perhaps bringing in antique cars for the event might be something to consider as well. Mr. Zomerfeld, asked what needs to happen from the City's standpoint to make this event happen. Ms. Molina noted the considerable expense that putting together such a program in the Downtown would entail, but that she fully understands the budget sensitivity that everyone is going though. She would like to see how the BID & City could combine forces to economize. For example, it would be great if instead of the BID having to rent barricades for this type of event, if instead the City could permit them to use theirs instead.

Mr. Casey made a motion that the Board recommend that the City, when possible, share its resources and waive whatever City fees that can be waived for the BID's proposed monthly street closing of Restaurant Row for the *Giralda Under the Stars* event, and that the Board supports this project in general with the intent to keep these businesses in business. Mr. Goldsmith seconded & the motion passed unanimously.

5. Discussion with Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce President, Mark Trowbridge; Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce Chair Sarah Artecona; and Small Business Czar John Knowles about the Chambers' goals for the upcoming year.

Ms. Artecona addressed that the Chamber is supportive of the proposed Streetscape Project and is continuing to work with the BID and knows the new City Manager

She noted that the Chamber is working with the City Manager to put forth a permitting assistance program for small businesses. The Chamber looking to hold a biannual proactive permitting

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assistance workshop for the public to attend and where representatives from the City's Building & Zoning Department would be present. The Chamber thinks it would be great if the City & Board would be willing to co-host the event

Mr. Trowbridge mentioned that on October 22, the Chamber will be conducting its annual luncheon with the Realtors Association of Greater Miami and the Beaches. It will be on the *2010 Residential Real Estate Outlook*, and will specifically focus on *Engaging the International Investor*. It will be held at the Westin Colonnade from 11:30-1:30pm.

Mr. Trowbridge further mentioned that the Chamber's Committee of 21 was very popular and was phased out many years ago with the creation and evolution of the City's Economic Development Board, the Beacon Council, and other resources that assisted with growing Coral Gables through international investment and projects.

Mr. Trowbridge also noted that in the end of January, the Chamber will showcase Coral Gables to the realtors in an exciting and informative morning event. The Chamber would love the Board's participation in this event. It will likely be held at the Youth Center and there are plans to get mix of local private and public schools involved as well.

John Knowles, as a member of the Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce and the appointed Small Business Czar spoke about the Blue Ribbon Panel he comprised of community constituents and business people. They will track the trends in the community, make recommendations for future programming as well as currently put on programs and forums. The first such program will be a small business seminar. Mr. Knowles will be moderating the Chamber's October 21st seminar focusing on the topic: *Financial Reality of Today: The Inside Scoop*. It will be held at Berenfeld Spritzer Shechter & Sheer LLP at 2525 Ponce de Leon at 8:00am.

Mr. Trowbridge mentioned in response to the question about a survey of the business community, that the Chamber has not done such a survey, but there has been recent discussion between the Chamber and the City's Economic Sustainability Department to consider doing one.

6. Additional Business:

- The Board's completed 2008/2009 annual report and Voting Conflict of Interest forms were distributed to the Board members

Motion to adjourn made by Mr. Casey and seconded by Mr. Goldsmith.

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 9:15am.

Next Economic Development Board Meeting: Wednesday, November 4, 2009 at 8:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Maria Alberro Jimenez,
Assistant City Manager