

City of Coral Gables

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



Meeting Minutes

Thursday, March 10, 2022

8:00 AM

Youth Center, Conference Room

Parks and Recreation Advisory Board

Chairperson Monica Segura
Vice Chairperson Carlos Rua
Board Member Nicolas Cabrera
Board Member Ellen C. Chasens
Board Member Laura Hernandez
Board Member Bruce Lecure
Board Member Jennifer A. Marques
Board Member Ruben Rodriguez

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting began at 8:07am

ROLL CALL

a. Roll Call and Excused Absences

A MOTION TO APPROVE THE ABSENCES OF LAURA HERNANDEZ AND JENNIFER MARQUES WAS MADE BY RUBEN RODRIGUEZ AND SECONDED BY ELLEN CHASENS. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Present: 6 - Chairperson Segura, Vice Chairperson Rua, Board Member Chasens, Board Member Rodriguez, Board Member Lecure and Board Member Cabrera

Excused: 2 - Board Member Hernandez and Board Member Marques

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

a. Approval of February's Meeting Minutes

A MOTION TO APPROVE THE FEBRUARY MEETING MINUTES WAS MADE BY NICOLAS CABRERA AND SECONDED BY BRUCE LECURE. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

a. General Updates

Director Fred Couceyro began his report by discussing a recent follow-up meeting with tennis patrons and board member Ellen Chasens regarding tennis social play, pickle ball and memberships. This meeting also led to a commission agenda item on resident vs non-resident fees across all facilities in Community Recreation. It was explained in that meeting the GOB funding that the City received from Miami Dade County for capital improvement projects had the stipulation that there be no discrimination of access or fees based on residency status. These stipulations are in place until the bond monies are returned set within a 25-year term. Some of these funds received went to renovate the Salvador clay courts which in turned allowed for Dade-County residents to pay resident prices. Fred continued the discussion sharing some of the other locations that received bond funding but were not affected due to being considered open access areas or being land acquisitions.

Pickle Ball courts were a big item that was mentioned in the follow-up meeting that was held with tennis patrons. Director Couceyro shared with the Board possible options to increase the amount of public pickle ball courts in the city. One of these options was re-lining the outdoor basketball courts at the Youth Center and creating specific time periods during the day that will allow access to play. Other options include the indoor courts, additional parks with tennis courts, and the Coral Gables Country Club. The interior courtyard at the YC would not be a feasible option due to the unevenness of the concrete. Board Member Ellen Chasens asked if pickle ball courts will be returned to the perks of the annual passes. Couceyro stated they will revisit this option later, however when these courts were initially constructed their purpose was to generate additional revenues.

The Youth Center's fitness center contract has been terminated as Rick Cabrera, owner of Fitness Center Inc, has stepped down. The City has now decided to run the fitness center in-house and is in the process of hiring new GSRs and fitness staff to begin work April 1, 2022.

Director Couceyro also shared that the City was awarded FRDAP Grants totaling \$400,000 earmarked for the Toledo & Alava park space and the Blue Road park space.

Administrative Operations Supervisor Mitch Zuriarrain was named the City's employee of the Month for February 2022.

b. Special Events

Farmers Market Saturdays through March 26 from 8 a.m. - 2 p.m
Movies Under the Gables Moonlight- Mary Poppins Friday, March 18 at 7 p.m
Bike and BBQ at Matheson Hammock Park Sunday, March 20 at 9 a.m.
Hoop-It-Up Teen Basketball League April 25 and run through June 1
Adult Activity Center Annual Variety Show Friday, April 1 at 1 p.m

Director Couceyro briefly shared that the department is trying to host an artesian Bier Garden of local craft breweries at the last Farmer's Market on Saturday March 26th from 12pm to 4pm. Vendors will not be able to sell beer, but they will be able to hand out samples and sell their merchandise. Board Member Nicolas Cabrera offered to mention the event at his upcoming meeting with Wynwood Brewery to see if they would like to participate.

Couceyro highlighted the upcoming Bike and BBQ ride to Matheson Hammock that will take place on Sunday, March 20th, 2022.

The Youth Center will be piloting a Hoop-It-Up Teen League that will begin on April 25th and run through June for ages 15-18. The teams will be 3 on 3 informal league style play. There will be no coaches and game play will be held twice a week with referees. Board Chair Monica Segura asked if the pilot program will be limited to just residents. Assistant Director Carolina Vester responded that they do not want to limit access since they tried to start this earlier in the year and did not have enough participants to continue.

The Youth Center has brought back the theater program and will be hosting a spring break camp with the Evolve Theater company. There are intentions if Spring break is successful to bring back summer camp and theater productions.

c. CIP Updates

Administrative Operations Supervisor Mitch Zuriarrain quickly went through the major CIP updates. He spoke about the Blue Road open space and hopes for community input meetings this summer, the Granada Pro Shop bidder was selected, Lamar Louise Curry Park is ahead of schedule at 55% and Maggiore Park is 50% complete.

Merrick Park is installing an ADA circular sidewalk however the grass in the park was installed late due to supply issues.

Phillips Park planning has begun and Mitch asked that if there are any design elements the Board would like to see, to please email him. Board member Ellen Chasens asked if the tennis courts in Phillips Park will remain. Director Couceyro indicated that the tennis court footprint will remain however if the community input comes back in favor of installing pickleball, there might be a combination of both.

Pierce Park is ready for construction. Salvadore Park Expansion punch list items are still being addressed. Board Chair Monica Segura mentioned that the black underlay surrounding the trees is creating a trip and fall hazard. Mitch explained that the issue has been resolved. Monica also stated that there should be some kind of vendor on site at Salvador Park to accommodate the number of users the park draws. Staff shared that they are increasing signage informing users to purchase drinks and snacks at the Salvadore Tennis proshop and will look at increasing the vending machine option.

Board member Ellen Chasens brought up the lights at Salvadore Park again sharing that the lights remain on and bright enough that park-goers are in the park well after dusk. She stated that most of the park goers are not local and its concerning to the surrounding neighbors. Carolina stated that the lights in the park will match the operational lighting at Tennis which shuts down at 10pm.

Solano Prado Park is now in City owner ship and is pending a design.

NEW BUSINESS

OLD BUSINESS

a. Parks Referendum Update

Director Couceyro spoke about the two commission Sunshine meeting regarding the Parks Master Plan Referendum. From the first meeting, the commissioners gave staff the directive to select the top ten parks projects that should have priority for funding, then additional sets of five projects totaling 20 to present at the follow up Sunshine meeting. Projects were selected based on end of life, public safety, and public desire.

There seems to be a universal approval of the Master plan, the project selections presented and the efforts from the Community Recreation on presenting all this information however, the conversation continued how to finance these projects with either finding other mechanisms to fund these projects or going out for referendum for a much more reduced amount. No solution was determined. There will be an additional meeting on this item at the next commission meeting.

The presentation that was shared at commission was shown to the Parks Board. The top 5 projects were sidewalks & crosswalk improvements, Phillips Park, Salvadore Tennis Center, Venetian Pool structure and vessel, and the Youth Center totaling approximately \$69,137,000. The presentation continued with highlighting each project and the approximate costs. Board member Ruben Rodriguez asked if the revenue producing facilities or projects will have priority in efforts to recoup expenses. Assistant Director Carolina Vester said that they were not prioritized in this way because these facilities are already revenue producing.

Director Couceyro also went into the millage impact (as of 3/8/2022) for taxable assessed values of home in Coral Gables and highlighted potential funding options through projections of existing funding sources and future funding opportunities such as federal, state and local grants in addition to general obligation bonds. A discussion was had amongst the board and staff with suggestions or feelings on whether to proceed with the referendum or defer. There was a lot of hesitation on proceeding without knowing how much from this year's taxes will be allocated to Parks; these numbers will not be made public until June 2022 which would be too late in getting ready for the November ballot.

VICE CHAIR CHARLIE RUE MADE A MOTION REQUESTING THAT A SEPARATE REFERENDUM FOR THE YOUTH CENTER FUNDS BE MADE. MOTION WAS SECONDED BY BRUCE LECURE. ALL IN FAVOR; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

BOARD MEMBER BRUCE LECURE MADE A MOTION STATING THAT GIVEN THAT THE IMPACT OF FUTURE RESIDENTIAL TAX DOLLAR INCREASES IS STILL UNKNOWN, A RECOMMENDATION OF SPLITTING THE YOUTH CENTER MASTER PLAN FROM THIS REFERENDUM AND TO MOVE FORWARD WITH PURSUING THE YOUTH CENTER AS ITS OWN REFERENDUM WHICH WILL ALLOW FOR A CLEARER VIEW OF FUTURE REVENUE SOURCES FOR THE NEED OF A SECOND REFERENDUM OPTION. THIS MOTION WAS SECOND BY CHARLIE RUA. ALL IN FAVOR; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

b. Coral Gables Country Club Update

Assistant Director Carolina Vester quickly provided an update on the Country Club and that they will be presenting a fee structure for charging, anticipated cost expenditures and revenue projections. These numbers have been provided to Budget and city management to be reviewed and vetted. They will formally be presented at Commission at the end of March for the Commissioners to review. Fees to be charged include memberships, banquet rental fees, and fees for programming. The City is also looking to maintain and hire formally the existing contracted staff to aid in the transition.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Board Chair Monica Segura brought up the resodding of Betsy Adams Park. Mitch Zuriarrain shared that supply of sod has been limited but we will be resodding the park using St. Augustine grass and it should be done in the next 30 days.

Carolina Vester wanted to share that the Park Pavilion rental process has been reworked and we will review the new process at our next board meeting.

Board member Ellen Chasens asked if there was a way to view a master list of all the city's parks. Carolina stated as part of the Master Plan, the City will be creating an online interactive map that we hope to have working with the launch of the City's new website.

Board member Ellen Chasens also asked if there are any pests or snake issues in our parks, who are we expected to report these to. Staff shared that there are pest control numbers posted in the park or they can email staff at ParksandRecreation@coralgables.com to report them.

Board member Nicolas Cabrera reported that there has been an influx of dogs off lease at Saturday's Farmers markets. Staff will notify police that are stationed at the event to help enforce this code violation.

ITEMS FROM THE SECRETARY

Our next meeting is scheduled for April 14th, 2022, at 8:00 am

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 9:42am

NOTE

