

**CITY OF CORAL GABLES**  
**COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**Minutes of November 19, 2009**

Members	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	
Leslie Pantin Jr. Matt Bokor	P	P	E	P	P	P	P	E	*	*	+	P	P	Mayor Donald D. Slesnick II
Richard Chimelis Sam Joseph	+	+	P	E	P	P	P	A	*	*	P	A	P	Commissioner Maria Anderson
Katherine deBlij Maria Garcia	P	P	P	E	P	P	P	+	P	*	*	P	P	Comm. Ralph Cabrera Jr.
Vivian Moré	E	E	E	P	E	P	P	P	*	*	E	A	+	Comm. Wayne "Chip" Withers
David Stiefel	P	P	P	P	P	E	P	P	*	*	P	P	P	Vice Mayor William H. Kerdyk Jr.

\* No meetings

x No quorum

+ Membership discontinued

**Staff in attendance:**

Maria Rosa Higgins Fallon, Office of Public Affairs

Gee Ming Chow, Information Technology Department

Raimundo Rodulfo, Information Technology Department

**Guests:**

Patrick Salerno, City Manager

The meeting came to order at 9:30 a.m.

Approval of minutes

The minutes from the October meeting were circulated for approval.

Motion: Sam Joseph motioned to approve the October meeting minutes. David Stiefel seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Vivian More's resignation

Higgins Fallon distributed copies of email from Communications Committee member Vivian More resigning from the board. Commissioner Withers will have to appoint a new person to serve on the Communications Committee.

Golden Gables

Higgins Fallon distributed copies of the latest November/January 2010 issue of *Golden Gables*.

Information Technology Update

Raimundo Rodulfo conducted a live demonstration of list server system developed for the Public Affairs Office.

Higgins Fallon explained that currently the e-News database is maintained in Outlook and the number of subscribers requires a more sophisticated system. This new program has been developed in-house by Raimundo from the IT Department.

Gee Ming Chow explained that this new system will detect invalid emails and will avoid duplication. Also, the database can be manipulated to generate customized reports. Other than the number of staff hours used to develop this program, no other cost has been incurred by the City. Typically, companies will charge \$10,000 to \$20,000 to develop a similar program and they also charge an annual maintenance fee.

Rodulfo proceeded to do a live demonstration on how to add an individual contact to e-News. Through the contact administration, users can subscribe via the [www.coralgables.com](http://www.coralgables.com). The system, now in test mode, can handle up to a million subscribers. When subscribing, users will see a disclaimer that the information provided is subject to public disclosure. There is a “captcha” security feature which displays numeric characters that only a human or a very intelligent program can perform. This component will prevent the system from being invaded by hackers.

Rodulfo continued with the demonstration showing how users can automatically unsubscribe. This process requires a confirmation to ensure that people unsubscribing are not impersonating other email users.

Higgins Fallon inquired if we can use dual subscription systems. Rodulfo replied that the new program is in test mode but at some point a transfer of information from one system to the other is required to avoid confusion.

Matt Bokor inquired if the e-mail information will be kept regarding those users who unsubscribe. Rodulfo replied that the deleted records are flagged but will remain in the database.

Bokor thanked the Information Technology Department for a job well done.

#### Branding

Matt Bokor welcomed City Manager Pat Salerno to the meeting. Bokor indicated that he had distributed the City Manager’s remarks made at the last Chamber of Commerce meeting where he talked about the concept of branding. The Committee had invited Salerno to get to know more about his ideas on the subject and to see how they can move things along.

Salerno said that he believes that branding and communications are of the outmost importance, especially to this community. It is his opinion that the trademark of “City Beautiful” is the right message, but if this city is going to compete with other communities, we must go beyond that. Businesses today want to know what “you can do for me.” He indicated that “City Beautiful” does not capture enough of a message. To just say that we are beautiful or pretty is not enough in a competitive environment. The City Manager explained that he started thinking about what else we want to tell people about us. “The City Beautiful” could use a tagline that would provide additional information. The tagline should indicate what we value as a community. There were three things that he thinks could be added to the “City Beautiful” notation: the words “Progressive ~ International ~ Historic.” He continued saying that perhaps artwork of beautiful palms could frame this tagline to send the message that we are also tropical. These are suggestions that the City Manager is offering. This concept was presented at the Chamber of Commerce’s meeting. The City Manager was curious to see what the Communications Committee members thought of this

concept. He indicated that he has not had discussions with the City Commission on the subject because there have been other more pressing items to deal with. The City Manager said that the opinion of the Communications Committee on this matter was important. The tagline would allow the City to compete for the best of everything as he wants to attract our share of the wealth that is out there. This could be one more tool in the box that we can use to promote Coral Gables.

Sam Joseph agreed with the City Manager that the term “City Beautiful” is not enough. We are international and inclusive. Services are outstanding and that’s the reason why people move here. Joseph suggested looking into old Merrick advertisement. George Merrick was a great salesman and we should look into this, especially with the new Museum coming up.

David Stiefel was also in agreement with the City Manager. He explained that branding has been an issue with the Commission. During the past attempt, the concept got so narrowed that it was unworkable. He thinks a branding program should be citywide and adopted by other departments. There was opposition from the City Commission previously.

Matt Bokor shared some of the same concerns made by Joseph and Stiefel. He has lived all over Florida and when he hears the term “City Beautiful” he thinks about quaint, beauty and peace.

Stiefel inquired about ways to adjust the titles that follow the tagline such as “Coral Gables, a beautiful place to do business.”

Bokor commented that there is a very large segment of this community that does not want anything different. Further discussion was held about resistance from the community to different things.

Stiefel indicated that he has a small agency and that he would be glad to do a pro-bono introductory proposal to get things started. He suggested preparing a powerpoint and invite the Chamber and the Bid to test the concept.

Instead of a branding initiative, City Manager Salerno suggested taking small incremental steps by developing a tagline after “The City Beautiful” that could be used only in economic development initiatives. He suggested this being the first step. Stiefel agreed. Salerno said that this tagline would be used as an additional marketing tool only when competing with other cities.

Bokor agreed that his effort would be an enhancement for economic development.

City Manager stated that he would make himself available to assist.

Committee members agreed to discuss the tagline enhancement in next month’s agenda.

Bokor asked the City Manager if someone shops in Coral Gables do the taxes come back to the city. Salerno replied not directly. He explained that in Florida, sales tax goes to the county which then distributes to municipalities according to population. It would be great if this committee could assist in reminding residents to buy locally as they have a stake in the community. When a restaurant closes for lack of business, the City losses money in property taxes, garbage franchise

fees, occupational license fees and so forth. He said that Restaurant Row is putting a special event starting in December to help out those businesses in the area.

Committee members thanked the City Manager for his time.

Upcoming Events

Higgins Fallon talked briefly about upcoming events such as the Holiday Spectacular scheduled for December 4 in front of City Hall, and the Dine Under The Stars previously discussed.

Coral Gables Television

Higgins Fallon announced that Coral Gables Television has been nominated for an Emmy. Awards will be presented December 5<sup>th</sup> in Orlando.

Joseph suggested using the idea of buying locally in an upcoming Coral Gables TV show. Higgins Fallon agreed. She also announced that CGTV has received three additional Silver Davey Awards. She is also working with a reporter from *Miami Herald* regarding a cover story on CGTV.

Higgins Fallon distributed the latest copy of e-News. With no other business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned.