

# City of Coral Gables

405 Biltmore Way  
Coral Gables, FL 33134  
[www.coralgables.com](http://www.coralgables.com)



## Meeting Minutes

Thursday, May 13, 2021

8:00 AM

The Board meets the second Thursday of every month.  
Coral Gables Youth Center, 405 University Drive, Coral Gables, FL  
**Parks and Recreation Advisory Board**

**CALL TO ORDER**

**Meeting began at 8:12am**

**ROLL CALL**

**Present:**

**Felix Pardo**

**Carlos Hernandez**

**Nancy Leslie**

**Monica Segura**

**Charlie Rua**

## DISCUSSION ITEMS

The Board's Vice-Chair, Carlos Hernandez began the meeting with bringing forward a discussion item to the start of the meeting in the sake of time and maintaining quorum. The Board needs to nominate a new vice-chair since this May meeting might be Carlos's final meeting. A motion to nominate Felix Pardo was made by Nancy Leslie and second by Monica Segura. All were in favor of the nomination and passed unanimously.

Carlos Hernandez continued with the agenda by allowing Charlie Rua to bring up a discussion item about the vacant lot located in front of the Coral Gables Youth Center between Sarto Avenue and Camilo Avenue. Charlie Rua explained to the board and staff that the surrounding neighbors to the vacant lot have been approached by someone asking residents to sign a petition to put in a dog park on the lot. Charlie has spoken to his neighbor's located on the 400 block of Camilo, and they are all opposed to the creation of a dog park on that parcel of land. Currently the lot is only used for overflow parking for the church and the Youth Center.

Felix Pardo shared with the Board that this lot through resolution by the City Commission is only allowed usage for temporary overflow parking. Director Fred Couceyro explained that there is language in the resolution allowing for the City the ability to resin the resolution if they deem the City can no longer allow for said usage. However, Fred also stated that the City is very dependent on public input and if the surrounding neighborhood is not in favor for proposed changes, the City will try to honor those requests.

In regard to Charlie's concern for the future usage of the vacant lot, both Director and Asst. Director explained to the Board that there is a strong sentiment for constructing a designated dog park within the City. And in the new master plan documents, the lot has been identified as a potential site for future construction for community needs but does not designate that lot with a specific function. Fred also clarified it was not a hired contractor by the City nor a City employee that has been canvassing the surrounding neighborhood looking to push a petition for a dog park. The Community Recreation department and the City has been in partnership with Miami Dade County to break ground on a dog park with the Underline Project. We are also looking to fulfill the need for a dog park in the southern Gables region by working with Miami Dade County and Chapman Field. The Catalonia neighborhood park is not a designated dog park and the department is working with Police and Code Enforcement to patrol the park to enforce usage.

Felix Pardo made mention that his residence was not included in the canvassing when the contracted company for the Master Plan was collecting data. Other residents he has spoken with were also skipped in the data collection process. Carolina and Fred explained to the board that AECOM did not do door to door canvassing for community input for the master plan. Data was collected via mail surveys, focus group meetings, community meetings, and workshops. AECOM created designated user groups to gain feedback for specific areas of interest. The Youth Center had a separate focus group meeting to collect information on all different uses of the Center. Carolina also included that this proposed 20- year Master Plan will have updates every five years to keep the plan as current to the needs of the community as possible.

Staff wanted to reinforce with the Board that the Community Recreation department for the last few years has not moved forward on any CIP projects without the input from the community being affected by the renovation and/or construction. And they shared that the latest Jaycee Park Playground renovation project was managed entirely using Community Recreation staff and saved our residents any costs associated with hiring a General Contractor to oversee the project. We are doing the same with part of the Salvadore Park project that has recently broke ground.

#### **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

A motion to approve April's board minutes was made by Monica Segura and second by Nancy Leslie. All were in favor, motion passed unanimously.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **a. Update on the Master Plan**

The Master Plan was shared via email with the Board. Assistant Director Carolina Vester quickly went over the updates to the both the Community Recreation Master Plan and the Youth Center Master Plan that the Board has not seen yet which included cost estimates and the implementation plan. The City asked that a cost analysis be provided with three different scenarios starting with basic options for development and then higher tiered more expensive proposals. The three priority tiers were: years 1-5, years 5-10, and years 10-15 which include main projects, maintenance, and funding opportunities. The document and graphs were discussed. Staff noted that if members have any additional questions or commentary after the meeting, to please email the directors.

Carlos Hernandez asked that the Youth Center Master Plan be shared with the War Memorial Youth Center Association Board.

Carlos Hernandez asked what the plan proposed for the vacant lot discussed earlier is. Carolina explained to the Board that the vacant lot was identified in the document as a potential location for amenities and that there are no deeds restricting the land use. Carolina did explain to the Board that in the workshops, the proposed plans were too 'brick and mortar', so the department asked that these idea plans be more conceptual and not so concrete. However, in the document it suggests this parcel of land be the location for a desired lap pool.

Felix Pardo spoke to staff stating that before he endorses any of the Master Plan documents that he and the Board need to have a clear understanding of the documents in their entirety. If there is a specific item in either Master Plan that he or the board would disagree with, he would not feel comfortable endorsing the entire document. Felix has had previous experience where he had voted on other items dealing with City planning where items were voted on in bulk and years later, grouped items were not able to be amended.

Charlie Rua began to make a motion, to then rescind the motion after Carlos Hernandez acting Chair, requested that Felix Pardo formulate a motion to reference a cross-section of everyone's opinions.

Felix Pardo made a motion that the Master Plan be approved by this board with the specific conditions that any conceptual usages including graphics or plans for any particular parcel of land in the City of Coral Gables, be only

conceptual. Any of those conceptual usages on any parcels of land should be properly vetted through neighborhood meetings, neighborhood agreement, Parks and Advisory Board approval, Commission approval and have full public disclosure. This language should be included in the Community Recreation Master Plan and the Youth Center Master Plan. This motion was second by Monica Segura. All were in favor, motion passed unanimously.

## **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Fred Couceyro continued the meeting with going over upcoming events which included the annual Memorial Day Ceremony at the War Memorial Youth Center in front of the Blue Star Memorial. Carnations will be provided to lay on the War Memorial.

The first annual Coral Gables Family Literacy Festival is schedule for May 29th from 11am-4pm at the Youth Center. The event will showcase an outdoor Scholastic Book Fair for ages K-8, food trucks, resource vendors, activities, and giveaways. The book fair is also geared towards teaching the youth financial literacy by developing a currency system to allow children to manage their monies to purchase books within the allotted funds given to them by their parents. After the event, Fred would like to retain any remaining books and promote in-house book fairs for our camps during the summer and continue our Summer literacy efforts.

Carlos Hernandez suggested the idea to have a Free Little Library placed at the Youth Center which could help promote Park's literacy efforts.

The Salvadore Park playground construction has begun. We are still pending on a start date for the Kerdyk Fitness trail, but equipment should be delivered soon. New Citrus Blue sod has been added to Coral Bay Park and Sunrise Park.

Jaycee Park Ribbon cutting took place and they had a nice turnout. Fred would like to continue these community outreach opportunities to try and engage the neighborhoods.

Facility reopening have continued. The Youth Center office and gymnastics are open. The AAC has reopened with limited programming. There is an expected date of June 14th for the department to be fully reopened with certain COVID guidelines still in place. We are planning on the City to also draft a uniform policy for staff to maintain masks.

The Accreditation application has been completed and is pending review from the CAPRA visitation team. Because of COVID, the team's visitation will be virtual and is scheduled for July 10th.

The Granada Golf Course Pro Shop and restaurant along with the replacement of the rain shelters are going back out for review for community input with the City Manager June 24th at 5:30pm. The meeting can be attended in person at the Police and Fire headquarters or via Zoom.

Invitations to the input meeting are being extended to the neighbors living within 1500 feet of the course on the Greenway. Fred has extended the invitation to the Parks advisory board for their input.

Carlos Hernandez asked staff what the department and the community's input is on specialty or niche amenities such as skate parks. Fred shared with the Board that the once proposed skate park has been designated as an amenity to add to the Underline Project. These niche style projects are usually not ranked very high when communities are surveyed, and our residents ranked walking trails and fitness trails as much higher needs. Carolina shared that the number one item that our residents that were surveyed was sidewalks and connectivity.

Felix Pardo asked if plans for the public library have been shared with our department. Carolina shared that if any of the Board is interested in the proposed renovation design plans that there is a satellite location for the library on Miracle Mile where they have the plans on display. There are also plans available online.

Felix Pardo also asked if staff has heard when the new board members will be appointed. Fred shared that these appointment selections can be added to the Commission agenda last minute and we have not heard anything as of now. Applications for Board Member at Large still need to be submitted for voting.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENTARY**

Samantha Garcia, District 114 Secretary to Rep. Busatta Cabrera, spoke to the Board quickly on behalf of Representative Busatta Cabrera expressing a dedication and interest in the success of Coral Gables Parks. Ms. Garcia handed out business cards and let the board know that if they have any concerns that they wish to express to please reach out to her.

#### **ITEMS FROM THE SECRETARY**

The City Clerk's office representative Imelys Sansores spoke to the board about submitting their financial disclosure for source of income. If the Board has any questions, they can contact the City Clerk's Office directly.

The Board requested a change of date due to the school year coming to an end. The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, June 11, 2021 at 8am. Location is to be determined.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Meeting adjourned at 9:44am**

**NOTE**