

# City of Coral Gables

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



## Meeting Minutes

Thursday, November 18, 2021

8:30 AM

The Board meets the second Thursday of every month.

### Parks and Recreation Advisory Board

## CALL TO ORDER

## ROLL CALL

A MOTION TO EXCUSE THE ABSENCES OF RUBEN RODRIGUEZ AND JENNIFER MARQUES WAS MADE BY JOAN VALDEZ. MOTION WAS SECONDED BY LAURA HERNANDEZ. NO DISCUSSION WAS HAD. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

**Present:** 6 - Chairperson Segura, Vice Chairperson Rua, Board Member Chasens, Board Member Hernandez, Board Member Rodriguez and Board Member Valdes

**Excused:** 1 - Board Member Marques

## APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

A MOTION TO APPROVE THE OCTOBER MINUTES WAS MADE BY BRUCE LECURE AND SECONDED BY ELLEN CHASENS. NO DISCUSSION WAS HAD. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

## DIRECTORS REPORT

Prior to reporting on events, Community Recreation Director Fred Couceyro shared with the Board that due to the lack of staff to fill part time vacancies, we have begun working with the HR department to put together a compensation plan for wage increases for part time staff to make the department more competitive. This increase of pay rates would add between \$400,000-\$500,000 to our budget for part-time salaries.

The Director also shared that we are currently working on a Dog Park Feasibility plan to try to increase dog parks within the city. This plan could potentially increase dog parks to a total of five parks to service each zone of the Gables. Current dog parks include Chapman Field and Hammocks West (south Coral Gables), the Underline dog park (central Coral Gables) and two lots that could satisfy the need in north Gables. The city owned lot off Flagger and Douglas Road and a potential land acquisition that is currently used as a parking lot.

Board member Ellen Chasens mentioned the use of Country Club Prado for a potential dog park site. Fred explained that the current surrounding neighborhood to that location is very resistant to change or the city utilizing that lot for any kind of community activation. It also has a historical component that limits the ability to use the space.

Fred also shared that the Community Recreation Department has presented an operation plan to take over the Coral Gables Country Club. We are waiting to see how the City would like to proceed. The bid will include tennis, the pool, the fitness center, and facility rentals.

## COMMUNITY RECREATION UPCOMING SPECIAL EVENTS

Harvest Market will continue into the middle of December and will break for the Thanksgiving and Christmas Holiday. The annual Farmers Market will begin in January.

Holiday Tree Lighting will be December 3rd and will be a ticketed event limiting attendance to 4000 guests. There will be VIP resident only tickets for sale for \$30.00 and will grant access to the Holiday Park playground from 5-7 p.m., a souvenir photo, a custom hot beverage and a family bucket with snacks, crafts, and souvenirs. The general admission tickets are free and open to all guest interested in the event. These are individual tickets that will allow ticket holders entry into the carnival area however it will not grant the ticket holder access to the VIP area. There will be no pictures with Santa opening night.

Hot Chocolate with Santa will be December 11th and December 18th and are resident only events. There will be no Express Visits from Santa this year.

Jr. Orange Bowl Parade will be Sunday December 12th and the City will have a float in the parade.

Back to Sports Night was a success and will continue in this outdoor carnival style of event in the future.

The Keep Coral Gables Beautiful Mini-Series Featuring Attracting Birds to South Florida Gardens was discussed. Board member Ellen Chasens wanted clarification if the Coral Gables Garden Club was sponsoring these events and spoke to staff about the exclusivity of the Club.

Other events were briefly discussed which included the Annual Art Show, the ribbon cutting at Venetia Park, Movies Under the Gables Moonlight featuring Brave and Movies at the Gables Cinema sponsored by Commissioner Menendez. Calendar invites will be sent to the Board for upcoming Parks events.

## **CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS**

**a. General Overview on All Ongoing Projects**

Administrative Supervisor Mitch Zuriarrain quickly went over capital improvement projects that are currently underway.

Youth Center roofing project is still in progress, Granada Golf Course Pro-Shop Renovation for the Interior Renovation & ADA Compliance in in the design phase and expected to start construction in March.

Lamar Louise Curry Park is in the bidding phase for the new park design in the vacant lot in front of Venetian Pool.

Pierce Park Renovation of the park, including fence replacement, new playground equipment, water fountain, bicycle racks, walkways, and gazebo is in the permitting phase. Assistant Director Carolina Vester shared the history of Pierce Park and how we are looking for grant funding acknowledging the African American culture of that park and neighboring community. We will travel to the private community center in that community to do community outreach for the park design.

Salvadore Tennis Pro Shop reconfiguration is being assessed and is pending a redesign with shade structures. The project is slated to be combined with a larger project of the center. Director Fred Couceyro gave the Board a brief history of the Salvadore Center's past renovation projects and how the master project was brought to a halt with previous administration.

Board member Ellen Chasens brought up the lights at Salvadore Tennis center that illuminates the Salvadore Park and how park goers are there after dusk. Due to lack of staffing, we are not able to lock the park every night when it gets dark however we are currently looking into the lighting issue.

Venetian Pool concessions and the pool pumps, Blue Road Park, Maggoire Park, and the Bark Park of the Underline were briefly spoke about.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Board Chair Monica Segura recently inquired about renting the Salvadore pavilion for an upcoming event and noticed that the fees for residents and non-residents are the same. She brought this up to Commissioner Menendez and Commissioner Anderson and they were in agreeance that non-residents should be required to pay more for this service. However, Director Couceyro explained to the Board that during the purchasing and building of these parks, the City borrowed Dade County bond money so because of this, residents and non-residents are allowed to pay the same rental fees. The same ruling is in place for tennis court fees.

Board Chair Monica Segura also brought up that there should be a city notary on site for any kind of permitting or application process the City requires. This will help streamline the process for applicants.

Board Chair Monica Segura brought up the option of alternating meeting times starting in January to accommodate everyone's schedule better. One month would be at the scheduled 8:00am time and the following month would be at a set time in the afternoon. This item will be added to the January Agenda for further discussion.

A MOTION TO HAVE THE DECEMBER MEETING AT THE NORMALY SCHEDULED DATE AND TIME WAS MADE BY JOAN VALDEZ AND SECONDED BY CHARLIE RUA. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

**a. Master Plan Referendum**

Director Fred Couceyro began by stating that after the Master Plan was adopted by the Commission, meetings began with City Manager's office, Finance, and with many of the commissioners in Sunshine meetings on how to now fund the Master Plan. The option that is currently being discussed is a referendum and they would like to add this item to the November 2022 voting ballot. Starting in December, our department will work with the contractor who put together the Master Plan to create a campaign on how go out for referendum for a master plan. Deadline to be added for voting is June 2022. Staff will have community meetings leading into June to inform residents and answer questions about the bond.

A PowerPoint on funding options was shared with the Board and via Zoom for any public present. The estimated amount for the referendum total would be \$160 million. During the presentation a breakdown of the timetable of tranches of funds that would be borrow in terms of years was presented along with an estimated amount that would be added to taxes based on the house values.

The Board suggested that staff change the language in the PowerPoint to read the assessed value of the home instead of the taxed value of the home. They also suggested to add a footnote to include that by going out for a referendum that this would not limit the City to go out for additional or alternative funding opportunities. And to include language about the auditing process of the funds if the referendum is approved.

Staff requested to share the Parks@coralgables.com email to anyone who has questions about ongoing projects or questions about the Master Plan.

A MOTION SUPPORTING THE COMMUNITY RECREATION DEPARTMENT TO CONTINUE TO MOVE FORWARD TO PURSUE A FUNDING MECHANISM IN THE FORM OF A REFERENDUM PENDING THE SUGGESTED LANGUAGE CONDITIONS WAS MADE BY CHARLIE RUA AND SECONDED BY ELLEN CHASENS. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**DISCUSSION ITEMS**

Board member Ellen Chasens inquired about if the Venetian Pool will be closed in the winter months. Director Couceyro explained that the pool in the past has closed due to lack of attendance, so we have planned renovations during that closure time. Year-round pool staff is then used at other facilities to fill vacancies or used to staff the Holiday Park throughout the month of December.

**ITEMS FROM THE SECRETARY**

**a. Board Member Perks and Rectrac Features**

Administrative Assistant Sarah Espino reviewed the perks that Board members receive and asked that each board member bring in their Board member card so it can be uploaded into our Rectrac software to verify any discounts board members receive.

**b. Upcoming Meeting - December 9th, 2021**

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 9:28 a.m.

**NOTE**