

# CORAL GABLES

THE CITY BEAUTIFUL

Economic Development Board Meeting Minutes  
 Wednesday | October 3, 2018 | 8:00 a.m.

EDB MEMBERS	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	COMMISSIONERS
	'19	'19	'19	'19	'19	'19	'19	'19	'19	'18	'18	'18	
Carolina Rendeiro										P			Mayor Raúl Valdés-Fauli
Olga Ramudo, Chair										P			Commissioner Michael Mena
Stuart McGregor										E			Commissioner Patricia Keon
June Morris										P			Commissioner Vince Lago
Elizabeth Patino										P			Vice Mayor Frank Quesada

A = Absent    E = Excused Absence    P = Present    X = No Meeting    Ph = Present by Phone    - =Former Board Member

**STAFF AND GUESTS:**

Pamela Fuertes, Director, Economic Development Department  
 Leonard Roberts, Assistant Director, Economic Development Department  
 Belkys Perez, Marketing Coordinator, Economic Development Department  
 Francesca Valdes, Business Development Coordinator, Economic Development Department  
 Leticia Perez, International Business Development Coordinator, Economic Development Dept.

**Meeting Motion Summary:**

**A motion to approve the minutes of the September 5, 2018 meeting passed unanimously.**

Ms. Rendeiro brought the meeting to order at 8:05 a.m.

**1. Review of the September meeting minutes (Action)**

Ms. Rendeiro made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 5, 2018 board meeting. Ms. Morris seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

**2. Economic Development Department Update**

Ms. Fuertes announced to the board that Mr. Peter Iglesias was appointed as the new City Manager at the last City Commission meeting.

**3. Property Asset Report**

Mr. Roberts provided the board with an update on the status of several City properties:

- The Biltmore Hotel will be undergoing a \$30 million renovation project, of which \$5 million will be contributed by the City over the next five years.
- The Granada Snack Shop (d/b/a “Burger Bobs”) will be going up for lease renewal at the next City Commission meeting on October 9<sup>th</sup>. It has been at the same location for

- decades and is well-regarded by the community.
- A deal has almost been reached for the Merrick Park Hotel and will be put before the Commission for approval once finalized.
  - Ms. Ramudo asked for a status update of the LaSalle Property to which Mr. Roberts replied that there are still some pending items missing from DERM for a demolition permit to be issued, and the owners will not begin negotiations until they have received that permit.
  - Ms. Rendeiro asked about the 2000 Ponce building for the new private school. Mr. Roberts explained that it is still going through the planning and zoning process.
  - Ms. Morris asked how much the City has paid towards Biltmore Hotel renovations in the past ten years. Mr. Roberts explained that the City has only contributed towards components of the hotel that are designated historic.

#### **4. Marketing Update**

Ms. Belkys Perez provided an update of the current marketing initiatives in the City. She explained that the City is focusing on a project to follow Umbrella Sky. Furthermore, there will be two sculptures by Sibylle Pasche made of white Carrara marble from Italy that will be placed on Giralda Avenue. The installations will be permanent and the sculptures will be of coral and a sea organism. The artwork was approved by the Arts Advisory Board. The City was approved for a County grant, but has still not received the funding as they are working on the guidelines for the design.

Ms. Ramudo asked who should be contacted regarding the state of the flower sculptures by Alyce Aycock on Segovia Avenue. She observed that the colors have been fading, no vegetation has been planted around them, and the water hasn't been working. Ms. Perez said that Dona Spain, the Director of Historic Resources and Cultural Arts would be the contact for that project.

#### **5. Retail Recruitment & Retention Update**

Ms. Valdes updated the board on retail retention initiatives, which included most recently a Branding Activation workshop, the second workshop in a three-part series. The first workshop focused on consumer demographics and psychographics, and the third workshop will focus on marketing. Following each workshop, the retail consultant Syama Meager of Scaling Retail, hosts a breakout session for the most interested retailers and takes a closer look at their marketing and branding models to provide more customized guidance.

On October 4<sup>th</sup>, Ms. Valdes and Mr. Roberts will be giving a presentation to the Miami Association of Realtors for the Coral Gables Commercial Marketplace for Brokers event at the Coral Gables Art Cinema.

On October 18<sup>th</sup>, the City will host a workshop at the Coral Gables Museum with retail consultant Midge McCauley of Downtown Works which will highlight the importance of tenant selection, good neighbors and lease terms.

Café Curuba has closed its doors and a pop-up of Perla Coffee will operate out of the same location, using the same staff. Giorgio from Eating House will be the chef.

Swine will be leaving and its owner will open a higher-end concept from New York later this calendar year. Rodilla from Spain will also soon be opening its doors in the downtown.

**6. Corporate Recruitment & Retention Update**

Ms. Leticia Perez presented the board with her current interactions with the Consular Corps, Trade Commission, and binational chambers, including the Spanish, Italian, Venezuelan, and French Chambers. There will be an event on October 25<sup>th</sup> that acknowledges the contribution of European companies to the City's economy. An invitation will be sent to the board. On October 30<sup>th</sup>, there will be a BiNational Chamber event at the Coral Gables Art Cinema. Ms. Ramudo asked if there have been any thoughts to brand the City's name for an international audience. She pointed out that when she travels abroad and mentions Coral Gables, she is often met with people who have never heard of this City.

**7. Coral Gables Senior High Update**

Ms. June Morris, a member of the alumni group Friends of Gables High, presented an update of the group's progress in helping the City's namesake school improve its safety, appearance, and overall appeal. She said on September 5<sup>th</sup>, Miami-Dade County Public Schools approved \$15 million, with the State adding another \$11 million general obligation bond in order to improve the state of the high school. It is expected to be a 3-4 year process to complete all three phases for the school's renovation, and phase 1 is set to soon be complete. Phase 2 will see a new building and Phase 3 will see the demolition of Bldgs. 6 and 7. The new band building will cost an approximate \$5.5 million. Next May they expect a new chiller plant to be installed. The school's past frequent power outages meant that students had to withstand hot and humid conditions, band instruments were ruined and organisms housed in aquariums died. Ms. Fuertes asked Ms. Morris if any of the alumni had access to or ownership of a marketing company, suggesting that in-kind donations could be extremely helpful. Ms. Morris agreed and stated that she's been in contact with a web developer in Ohio who has been assisting her. She added that luggage company TUCCI was founded by Tom Parker, a Coral Gables Senior High grad. She also stated that former Commissioner Jeannett Slesnick and Community Newspapers' Amy Donner are part of the alumni group as well.

**8. Business Tax License Report**

Board members reviewed the Business Tax License Report containing 40 new businesses to Coral Gables within the month of September.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:11 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Mariana Price, Administrative Assistant - Economic Development Department