

**CITY OF CORAL GABLES**  
**Property Advisory Board Meeting Minutes**  
**Wednesday, April 13, 2016, 9:00 a.m.**  
**Economic Development Department**  
**2121 Ponce de Leon Blvd., Suite 720, Coral Gables, Florida 33134**

**EXCERPTS**

| MEMBERS                       | A   | J   | J   | A   | S   | O   | N   | D   | J   | F   | M   | APPOINTING ENTITY              |
|-------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|--------------------------------|
|                               | '16 | '16 | '16 | '16 | '16 | '15 | '15 | '15 | '16 | '16 | '16 |                                |
| Luis Espino<br>Chair          | P   |     |     |     |     | P   | X   | X   | P   | X   | P   | Mayor Jim Cason                |
| Ariel Fernandez               | P   |     |     |     |     | P   | X   | X   | A   | X   | E*  | Commissioner Jeannett Slesnick |
| Luba DeWitt                   | E   |     |     |     |     | E   | X   | X   | P   | X   | P   | Commissioner Patricia Keon     |
| Valerie Quemada<br>Vice Chair | P   |     |     |     |     | P   | X   | X   | P   | X   | E   | Commissioner Vince Lago        |
| Tony Gonzalez                 | P   |     |     |     |     | P   | X   | X   | P   | X   | E   | Commissioner Frank Quesada     |
| Andrew Nadal                  | P   |     |     |     |     | P   | X   | X   | P   | X   | P   | City Manager                   |
| Andrea Molina                 | A   |     |     |     |     | V   | V   | V   | P   | X   | P   | City Commission                |

A = Absent                      E = Excused Absence                      P = Present                      X = No Meeting                      V = Vacant  
 \*Mr. Fernandez was scheduled to attend the meeting; however, due to miscommunication that led to a wrongful impression that the meeting had been canceled, he was not in attendance.

**STAFF AND GUESTS:**

Javier Betancourt, Director, Economic Development  
 Leonard Roberts, Assistant Director, Economic Development Department  
 Mariana Price, Administrative Assistant, Economic Development Department  
 Ken Lowy, Regional Sales Director, CoStar Group, Inc.  
 Mark Anes, Sales Associate, CoStar Group, Inc.

**Meeting Motion Summary:**

**A motion to approve the minutes of the March 9, 2016 meeting passed unanimously.**

**A motion to approve the proposed new protocol for reaching quorum passed unanimously.**

**Motions to approve the acquisition of the six proposed properties to be used as passive parks under the NRP vision were voted for approval 3-2.**

**1. Approval of the March meeting minutes (Action)**

*Mr. Nadal made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 9, 2016 meeting.  
 Mr. Espino seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.*

## **2. New protocol for reaching quorum (Action)**

Javier Betancourt apologized to the Board for some confusion regarding the scheduling of last month's PAB meeting, and in an effort to avoid similar issues in the future, proposed a new protocol for determining quorum and whether or not a meeting will be held or canceled. Quorum must now be achieved by midday the day before the meeting. In either event, an email will be sent out before the board meeting to confirm or cancel the meeting. Mr. Fernandez also suggested that phone calls be made to board members if they have not responded in a timely manner.

**Mr. Fernandez made a motion to approve the new protocol for reaching quorum, seconded by Mr. Espino, which passed unanimously.**

## **3. Neighborhood Renaissance Program - Land Acquisition for Parks (Action)**

Leonard Roberts presented before the board six vacant lots which are being considered for purchase as part of the Neighborhood Renaissance Program. The departments for Public Service, Parks & Recreation, and Economic Development came together and determined three criteria for considering land for purchase to become passive parks: (1) Safe & Accessible: one must not need to cross a major thoroughfare to reach the park; (2) Spacious: the park is of sufficient size to accommodate the surrounding area as a passive park; and, (3) Need: there are demands for open space in the area. The three departments have narrowed the selection down to six different spaces that meet the time period, dollar amount, safety and accessibility, spaciousness, and proximity to other parks. Four other parks have already been acquired previously; these six spaces represent the second wave. Mr. Roberts presented each of the six spaces individually, showing their locations, appraisal values, the prices the City is willing to offer for each, and why they were ideal locations for passive parks. The proposal for acquisition of these six spaces will also be evaluated by the Economic Development Board, Budget Advisory Board, and Parks & Recreation Advisory Board, and then go on to be presented at neighborhood meetings and the City Commission.

Meetings will be held in the neighborhoods of each of the six locations to give residents the opportunity to voice their approval or disapproval of the purchase. If a majority of residents disapprove, then those opinions will be respected and another property will be considered. It would be up to the neighbors to decide what features they would want added to their local passive park (e.g., benches, gazebos, butterfly gardens, etc.). A covenant of the NRP states that the money must be used by a certain date which is soon approaching. The Commission requested that some of the NRP funds be specifically allocated for the acquisition of parks. These acquisitions would be an investment, increase the quality of life for the City, and also increase the property values of the surrounding homes. The most recent space purchased for passive park use is the Lisbon Neighborhood Park on 1015 Lisbon Avenue.

Mr. Espino raised the issue that if the City purchases these lots, it will no longer be able to collect property taxes. Mr. Espino asked why he was not given a letter, being only a few blocks away from a lot of potential purchase. Letters were distributed to residents only within 1500 feet

of a given property up for purchase. Mr. Fernandez responded that from his experience canvassing last year, he does know firsthand from the residents that many are in support of more easily accessible park space. Mr. Betancourt also offered that the added park space should increase the value of the nearby houses, thereby offsetting some or all of the lost revenue from property taxes. Mr. Roberts added that the neighborhood meetings will give the neighborhood the opportunity to voice their opinions or concerns—it will ultimately be up to them whether a given lot becomes a park, if benches or a butterfly garden or other features are installed, etc. Ms. Quemada said she would personally not care for a park near her home. Mr. Betancourt reminded them that green spaces are what makes Coral Gables unique, and is what George Merrick and Frank Button had in mind as they planned the city.

Ms. Quemada read aloud the three questions for the Property Advisory Board:

**Questions for the Property Advisory Board:**

1. Does the proposed use conform to the City's comprehensive plan, and is it compatible with the surrounding area?

**Yes, the use of these sites for passive parks is consistent with the City's comprehensive plan, and are a compatible and complementary use to the surrounding areas.**

2. Are there positive or negative impacts on adjacent property?

**These parks will positively impact the quality of life and property values for surrounding properties, neighborhoods, and the City as a whole. All purchases are contingent on neighborhood approval of the purchase, to be determined at required community meetings for each affected neighborhood.**

3. Are the terms and conditions based on market terms and value?

**The proposed purchase prices for these parks are contingent on appraisal, and we believe the purchase prices are a reflection of a market deal. All the deals being brought forward are within an acceptable range of the respective appraisal.**

**Mr. Fernandez made a motion to accept the three questions and answers and also to vote in favor of the acquisition for five of the six spaces for passive parks, which was seconded by Mr. Gonzalez.**

**The motion was *originally* voted 2-3, with Ms. Quemada, Mr. Espino, and Mr. Nadal providing the dissenting votes. Ms. Quemada said she would have liked more time to review the properties in question. Mr. Nadal originally contested the motion, but upon understanding that the funds had already been allocated, he moved for a motion to reconsider, seconded by Mr. Fernandez, which passed unanimously. Mr. Fernandez then made the motion to vote on the individual properties *once again*, seconded by Mr. Nadal, which passed 3-2, with Ms. Quemada and Mr. Espino providing the dissenting votes.**

**The sixth property, 241 Sarto Avenue, was voted for approval on the condition that the answer to the third question be amended to state the following:**

**“241 Sarto Ave was 12.5% above appraisal value while the others were all less than 3.7% of their appraisal values.”**

### **3. CoStar Presentation – Mark Anes, Sales Associate**

Mr. Ken Lowy provided a presentation to the board which informed them of the current access Economic Development has to real estate data. He also went into detail of the added value and benefits of subscribing to the premium subscription. CoStar provides consistently up-to-date information on real estate figures, tenant information, rates per square foot, and to observe market trends. The advantage of having access to this information includes knowing immediately when valuable office space goes on the market (before being picked up by a broker and being able to accurately measure the occupancy rates , among tracking other valuable metrics.

When asked what other public entities have a subscription to CoStar, Mr. Lowy answered that a few government agencies he could think of included Miami-Dade County, Broward County, Palm Beach County, Office of the Comptroller of the Currency (OCC), Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC), Internal Revenue Service (IRS), City of North Miami, Miami Downtown Development Authority (DDA), Beacon Council, Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance, Jacksonville DDA, City of Sunrise, Lee County, and Collier County. Mr. Lowy said workshops for training employees are onsite and free of charge.

Mr. Betancourt added that the department currently has a vacancy for a Business Development Analyst for whom this tool would be especially useful to provide data, marketing copy, and presentations.

### **4. Other City Business**

Mr. Betancourt announced that the City of Coral Gables won the REAL (Real Estate Achievers & Leaders) Award for a Community/Municipality by the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce. He also informed the board that the Department’s Marketing & Events Specialist, Belkys Perez, was named Employee of the Month for April 2016. Additionally, he informed the Board that the Miracle Mile & Giralda Avenue Streetscape Project Groundbreaking event will take place on April 28<sup>th</sup> at the plaza between Burger-Fi and Barnes & Noble. Mr. Betancourt updated the Board on the status of the Parking Garage RFP, which is now due May 11<sup>th</sup> to address new issues the City has imposed. Two proposers have backed out: American Land Ventures and GCP, which leaves Terranova, Allen Morris/Related, and Florida East Coast Realty (FECR) as the remaining potential proposers.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:05 a.m.

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