

CITY OF CORAL GABLES
Communication Committee Meeting Minutes
Thursday, February 19, 2015, 9:30 a.m.
Economic & Cultural Development Department
1 Alhambra Plaza, Suite 617, Coral Gables, Florida 33134

MEMBERS	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	COMMISSIONERS
	'14	'14	'15	'15	'14	'14	'14	'14	'14	'14	'14	'14	
Herb Levin Chair	P	*	*	P	P	P	P	P	*	*	P	P	Mayor Jim Cason
Luba De Witt	E	*	*	P	E	P	A	A	*	*	P	E	Commissioner Pat Keon
Les Pantin III	P	*	*	P	P	E	P	P	*	*	P	P	Commissioner Vince Lago
Vacant													Commissioner Frank C. Quesada
Connie Crowther	P	*	*	P	P	P	P	P	*	*	P	P	Vice Mayor William H. Kerdyk, Jr.

A = Absent
E = Excused Absence
P = Present
* = No Meeting

STAFF AND GUESTS:

Michelle Cash, Marketing Manager, Economic and Cultural Development
Belkys Perez, Marketing and Events Specialist, Economic and Cultural Development
Jorge Casuso, Business Development Analyst, Economic and Cultural Development
Rodolfo Roman, Public Affairs Specialist

Meeting Motion Summary:

A motion to approve the minutes of the November 20, 2014 meeting passed unanimously.

A motion to approve the amended 2013-2014 Annual Report passed unanimously.

Mr. Levin brought the meeting to order at 9:42 a.m.

1. Review of the minutes of the September 18, 2014 meeting

Mr. Pantin made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 20, 2014 meeting. Ms. Crowther seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

2. Review of the 2013-2014 Communications Committee Annual Report

Ms. Crowther suggested that the Public Awareness section of the report be changed to read “the Communications Committee is proud to have brought many of the following ideas to the table and advised staff on their implementation.”

Ms. Crowther made a motion to approve the amended 2013-2014 Annual Report, which passed unanimously.

Marketing & Communications

3. e-News: Technology Transition Update (Discussion)

Ms. Cash told the Board that e-News has slightly more than 8,000 subscribers. She said the new template is in place and a new look would be incorporated when the branding process is completed. Ms. Cash said she has been talking to the current designer about the transition phase and that the new template would likely be used by late March and sent to subscribers using Constant Contact. The automated email marketing platform will allow the City to track what stories are being opened and/or read. This will help to determine the kind of content readers are interested in. She said the new format would be more search friendly. Mr. Levin said he favors a layout that displays a lead paragraph and links to the story or more information on the City’s website.

4. Destination Coral Gables: Visitor Data (Discussion)

Ms. Cash updated the Board on the City’s Visitor Center that opened in October and said it was featured on the Greater Miami Convention and Visitors Bureau (GMCVB) website, which also posted a video featuring Mitch Kaplan, the owner of Books & Books. Board members asked how many visitors came to Coral Gables and how that is measured. Ms. Cash said that the GMCVB had reported a total of approximately 600,000 visitors came to the City last year. She said she consulted with Dr. Brad Price, the Director of the University of Miami’s Masters of Science in Business Analytics Program, who suggested using a coupon program to measure visitors and conduct a data analysis. Ms. Cash also consulted with Dr. Maria D. Ilcheva, Senior Research Associate at the FIU Metropolitan Center, who suggested conducting an intercept survey, which would cost between \$20,000 and \$30,000. Mr. Levin suggested distributing postcards to visitors, whom he said would welcome the chance to provide their input. Ms. Crowther suggested surveying hotels, talking to realtors and asking popular venues such as Actors Playhouse where their subscribers and audiences come from. She said Business Improvement District members also would be a good source of information, since they know who is visiting their establishments. Ms. Cash said that the Visitor Center has also been keeping tabs. Ms. De Witt said surveying hotels was a good idea, and that Children’s Hospital and students could also be a good source of information. Ms. Cash said the data gathered

would be used to help market the City and build marketing programs to target that audience.

5. Brand Identity (Discussion)

Ms. Cash provided an update on the City's branding efforts. She said the City's consultant, We Are Charette, a St. Augustine-based marketing firm that has done work for cities and major companies, had spent 10 hours conducting focus group meetings. The branding process will help determine "the way we talk about the City" and its visual identity. Mr. Levin noted that the challenge would be to get other City institutions, such as the Chamber of Commerce, to adopt the branding guidelines and suggested providing them with a tool kit. He said Coral Gables "tells its story well" but the "visualization is too disjointed." Ms. Cash agreed that materials disseminated by the City currently had different looks. She said that by the end of April the City would have new messaging and a style guide. The cost of coming up with a brand was between \$15,000 and \$16,000. She said the most important task would be to implement and communicate the new brand. Ms. Crowther asked that she keep the board informed on the process.

City Projects

6. Streetscape Communications Planning (Discussion)

Ms. Cash updated the Board on the Miracle Mile and Giralda Avenue Streetscape project, which she said was in the critical design phase. The decisions will include everything from the kinds of trees that will be planted to the type of paving stones used. Ms. Cash told the Board that the *Miami Herald* had been preparing to write a negative story and that the City had sent a "momentum release" that highlighted progress and community support for the project and generated positive coverage. Ms. Cash said the City would be issuing an RFP for a communications firm to help with communication and public outreach at each phase. It also would soon launch a web page to provide information about the project that includes a map of the project area, a list of public meetings and FAQs. Mr. Pantin suggested including traffic information. Mr. Levin said it was important to do daily outreach to affected merchants in order to avoid negative publicity. Ms. Crowther added that merchants know they will be disrupted and that it is important for them to understand that "this is a short-term investment for a long-term benefit." Ms. Cash informed the Board that the communications strategy would include regularly visiting the merchants and noted that the construction work would be phased so that no business would need to close. She added that the completion of each phase should be celebrated as a milestone, an event, and something to come see." Mr. Roman suggested using CityTV, and Ms. Cash agreed that it would be a good way to "celebrate milestones and document history." Mr. Levin suggested gauging the progress by using something similar to the United Way thermometer, and Ms. Crowther suggested holding related lectures at the Coral Gables Museum and Books & Books.

Events

7. Jazz in the Gables Update (Discussion)

Ms. Perez told the Board that Jazz in the Gables continues to draw large crowds and generate publicity. She said 286 people had attended Troy Anderson's concert on Sunday, which had been featured on the cover of the *Miami Herald's* Neighbors Section. She provided information on upcoming concerts and said the series' main corporate sponsor, Coral Gables Hospital, was giving free water and was very pleased with the community's response. Ms. Cash reported that Coral Gables Hospital had signed an annual sponsorship agreement and said the City had built a very positive relationship with its corporate citizen. Ms. Perez noted that the Miami Jazz Co-op, which organizes the concert series, also is sponsoring jazz concerts Monday night at Open Stage. Ms. De Witt said there were few cultural events during the summer and suggested holding summer concerts. Ms. Perez also gave an update on the July 4 Fireworks Celebration. She reported that she and Economic and Cultural Development Director Cindy Birdsill had met with Biltmore Hotel officials the previous week to draft an agreement and that an item should be placed on the Commission agenda in March. She said she was working with the Biltmore to market the festivities, which would be tied to the City's 90th anniversary celebrations.

8. Other Topics (Discussion)

Ms. Crowther reminded the Board that her term would end in April, when Vice Mayor Bill Kerdyk, who appointed her, would step down from his seat after terming out. Mr. Pantin said that he would suggest to Commissioner Frank Quesada, who had not made an appointment to fill a vacancy on the Board, to consider appointing Ms. Crowther.

The Board agreed to hold meetings on April 23, October 29 and November 12.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:30 a.m.

The next Communications Committee meeting will be held on March 19, 2015.

Respectfully submitted,

Jorge Casuso, Business Development Analyst, Economic and Cultural Development