

CITY OF CORAL GABLES
Economic Development Board Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, February 3, 2016, 8:00 a.m.
2121 Ponce de Leon Blvd., Suite 720, Coral Gables, Florida 33134

EDB MEMBERS	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	COMMISSIONERS
	'16	'16	'16	'16	'16	'16	'16	'16	'16	'15	'15	'15	
Scott Sime	P	P								P	P	P	Mayor Jim Cason
Olga Ramudo	P	E								P	P	P	Commissioner Jeannett Slesnick
Stuart McGregor	P	P								E	P	E	Commissioner Pat Keon
June Morris Chair	P	P								P	P	P	Commissioner Vince Lago
Alexander Binelo Vice Chair	P	P								P	P	P	Commissioner Frank Quesada

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

STAFF AND GUESTS:

Javier Betancourt, Director, Economic Development Department
Leonard Roberts, Assistant Director, Economic Development Department
Mariana Price, Administrative Assistant, Economic Development Department
Ramon Trias, Planning & Zoning Director, Development Services
Manuel Torres, Torres & Torres International

Meeting Motion Summary:

A motion to approve the minutes of the January 6, 2016 meeting passed unanimously.

Mrs. Morris brought the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

1. Review of the December meeting minutes (Action)

Mr. McGregor made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 6, 2016 Board meeting. Mr. Sime seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

2. Miracle Mile Retail Strategy (Discussion)

Mr. Betancourt explained to the Board about another initiative the City is taking to improve the Miracle Mile business and merchandising plan. It is difficult to maintain a balance with so many

different business owners, (whereas a mall can control the amount of retail, dining, etc.). The City has reached out to the consulting firm Downtown Works, out of Seattle and Philadelphia. Downtown Works are retail strategists, who follow through with an action plan carried out by a retail advocate after the study. A typical assessment would be made of the market (trade area and market analysis), to come up with a merchandise mix recommended for the Mile. Once the plan is made, the City would hire a Retail Advocate, whose full-time job would be to implement that plan, working with the brokerage community and property owners in prospecting retailers that complement the plan. In their experience, over 60% of property owners ultimately adhere to the plan.

This strategy would be done hand-in-hand with the private sector and the BID; the Chamber of Commerce may be interested to support this initiative as well. The cost has been negotiated down to \$100,000, with half the cost to be covered by the City and the other half potentially shared by the BID and the Chamber. Now that the Streetscape and Overlay District are being worked on, two remaining components of revitalizing Miracle Mile & Giralda Avenue in addition to the retail plan, are a maintenance plan and a marketing plan.

3. Downtown Overlay District (Discussion/Potential Action)

Ramon Trias, Planning & Zoning Director, gave an overview of the proposed Downtown Overlay District. The City's zoning code is very complex (includes land use and overlay maps), but can be effective because it helps to preserve the integrity of the City's intended landscape. One overlay deals with Miracle Mile; the BID covers a larger area. The City is considering what kinds of incentives can be offered there. Potential development standards for Miracle Mile & Giralda Avenue could include a maximum three stories (or 45 feet of height) within the first 30 [horizontal] feet of building, after which an owner may build up to six stories. The ideal scenario for a small project would be a restaurant downstairs and eight residential units above. The Overlay encourages using public parking for restaurants and retail.

The proposal also includes content specifying more flexible hours of operation and signage. He explained to the board that only one sign is permitted at the top of a building per street frontage. While regulations may seem strict, it is all in the interest of maintaining the unique Mediterranean feel that Coral Gables provides.

Ultimately the City is trying to achieve the right balance; we want to encourage investment, some redevelopment, and business activity while retaining the pedestrian scale and hometown feel the citizens desire and deserve. This plan still needs to go to Planning & Zoning and Board of Architects, and the EDB is welcomed and invited to participate in the planning effort.

Mrs. Morris asked if the Mediterranean requirements would be stricter. Mr. Trias said they were not "more strict" but "more clear." The requirements will likely stay the same for the Miracle Mile corridor, which provides bonuses or incentives to business owners who apply the recommendations for the style of architecture exhibited around the city.

The City is looking for a better approach to activate some key areas (i.e., Miracle Mile & Giralda), by increasing residential and hotel space. A preliminary workshop for the Planning & Zoning Board will be held on February 17th, which will be open to the public.

4. Other City Business

Mr. Betancourt informed the Board that the streetscape project contract and *To Not Exceed* amount was approved. Construction will begin late spring/early summer. The BID has been working together with the City to create a set of regulations (i.e., the Overlay District) that would govern this central business district (which would allow for more flexibility of the business environment). BID was very aggressive in what they asked for, and since then ED Dept. and Planning & Zoning have had positive dialogue.

Mr. Betancourt updated the board on the status of purchasing the property at 2506 Ponce de Leon Boulevard (discussed in previous board meeting), and the status of the entrepreneurship program grant requests.

Business Tax License Report was reviewed. A few ribbon-cutting ceremonies took place in the past month including Spring Chicken (formerly space of Miami's Best Pizza), Trust & Co (formerly space of Azucar, across from Fritz & Franz), and ED Board Member Olga Ramudo's company, Express Travel, returned to the Gables. Crystal Lagoons, maker of large, luxurious pools, is also opening their US Corporate headquarters in the Gables.

Jazz in the Gables on Wednesday, February 10th will take place on Miracle Mile at the vacant McBride parcel, between Barnes & Nobles and Burger-Fi.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:07 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mariana Price, Administrative Assistant - Economic Development Department