

**CITY OF CORAL GABLES**  
**Communication Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**Wednesday, November 14, 2018, 8:30 a.m.**  
**Youth Center Conference Room**  
**405 University Drive**  
**Coral Gables, FL**

MEMBERS	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	COMMISSIONERS
	'17	'17	'18	'18	'18	'18	'18	'18	'18	'18	'18	'18	'18	
Sandra Gonzalez-Levy					P	P	P							Mayor Raul Valdes-Fauli
Tina Sayago	R	*	*	R				+	*	*	P	P	P	
Derrek Space	P	*	*	P	P	P	P	+	*	*	P	P	A	Vice Mayor Pat Keon
Alexandra Pantin	P	*	*	P	P	E	A	+	*	*	P	P	E	Commissioner Vince Lago
Connie Crowther	P	*	*	P	P	P	P	+	*	*	P	P	P	Vice Mayor Frank Quesada
TJ Villamil	E	*	*	P	E	E	P	+	*	*	P	P	P	Commissioner Michael Mena

A = Absent  
E = Excused Absence  
P = Present  
R = Resigned  
\* = No Meeting  
+ = No Quorum

**STAFF AND GUESTS:**

Maria Rosa Higgins Fallon, Public Affairs  
Michael Rocha, CGTV  
Shakira Molet, CGTV  
Jorge Rivera, Arborist  
Deena Bell-Llewellyn, Landscape Division

---

After achieving a quorum, the meeting began at 8:44 a.m.

**Approval of Minutes**

**Motion:** Chairperson Sandra Gonzalez-Levy made a motion to approve the minutes of the October 2018 meeting. Mr. TJ Villamil seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

## **Tree Care Program**

City Arborist Jorge Rivera and Landscape Architect Deena Bell-Llewellyn from Public Works attended the meeting to discuss the city's tree care and maintenance program. After brief introductions, Mr. Rivera explained the importance of understanding the various types of greenery and how they affect the City of Coral Gables. He described the issues with certain trees, such as the Ficus trees, and their vulnerability to hurricane winds. Mr. Rivera stated that the City has been proactive in altering their methods of pruning to adapt to the changes of the environment. As part of a study conducted by the University of Florida to treat Black Olive trees, the city has introduced a new insecticide to create a balance between organisms and plant life. This insecticide is meant to control the population of these organisms feeding on the plants, not eradicate them.

Chairperson Sandra Gonzalez-Levy asked Mr. Rivera what the City has planted recently. Mr. Rivera listed a few different species of trees, including oak and mahogany.

Mr. Rivera continued the discussion on trees by declaring that the City's trees are in fair to poor condition due to mechanical damage. He suggested that the City must try to better understand the greenery surrounding Coral Gables and create a comprehensive plan for the future. He urged that the City must be proactive instead of reactive.

Chairperson Gonzalez-Levy asked Mr. Rivera what the committee and residents could do to communicate the issues related to trees. Mr. Rivera suggested that residents gather the leaves that fall from trees and create natural composts, as an example.

Ms. Bell-Llewellyn discussed the various types of complaints received regarding swales and described how residents could prevent these issues by not parking over tree roots. She also discussed information on how to better inform residents to protect their trees.

Ms. Higgins Fallon requested tree-related information to better inform the public on this program.

Mr. Rivera commented that individuals who are brought in to prune the trees in the Coral Gables area should be certified with proper training, especially contractors. Ms. Bell-Llewellyn pinpointed the problem of residents not hiring gardeners that are licensed professionals.

Committee members discussed creating a public information campaign to educate residents on this important issue.

Ms. Connie Crowther recommended that Mr. Rivera, Ms. Llewellyn, and their department gather crucial information and put together a brochure with tips on how to care for the City's trees. Ms. Higgins Fallon requested all relevant information that could also be shared on social media.

With no further business to discuss on this topic, Mr. Rivera and Ms. Bell-Llewellyn left the meeting at 9:45 a.m.

### **Current Events and Programs**

Ms. Higgins Fallon provided a brief update on the upcoming events such Sanitation Plan workshops, the upcoming recycling event at City Hall and Town Hall meeting with Commissioners Lago and Mena, the Junior Orange Bowl Parade, and the Holiday Spectacular tree lighting ceremony at City Hall. She also discussed the new public art installations, the rejection of the proposed firehouse on Cocoplum Circle, the recent appointment of Vice Lago as Vice Mayor, and the final plan on the scooters.

Mr. Michael Rocha informed the committee that Coral Gables Television was once again nominated for an Emmy for the production of “Surviving Irma: A Coral Gables Story.”

Ms. Higgins Fallon distributed the latest copy of e-News.

With no further issues to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 9:50 a.m.