

# CORAL GABLES

THE CITY BEAUTIFUL

## Economic Development Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday | April 3, 2019 | 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	P	P	P						P	P	X	Mayor Raúl Valdés-Fauli
Olga Ramudo, Chair	P	P	P	P						P	P	X	Commissioner Michael Mena
Stuart McGregor	P	P	P	P						E	P	X	Commissioner Patricia Keon
June Morris	P	P	P	E						P	E	X	Commissioner Vince Lago
Elizabeth Patino	E	E	A	E						P	P	X	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

Belkys Perez, Marketing Coordinator, Economic Development Department

Francesca Valdes, Business Development Coordinator, Economic Development Department

Leticia Perez, International Business Development Coordinator, Economic Development Department

Mariana Price, Administrative Assistant, Economic Development Department

Patricia Arias, Managing Director, Camacol

Jose Luis Martinez, Creative Director, Camacol

### Meeting Motion Summary:

**A motion to approve the minutes of the March 7, 2019 meeting passed unanimously.**

Ms. Ramudo brought the meeting to order at 8:06 a.m.

#### 1. Miami Media Film Conference

Ms. Ramudo introduced Ms. Patricia Arias and Mr. Jose Luis Martinez of Camacol to the board. Ms. Arias passed around conference packets of the program to board and staff members. She gave a presentation on why Coral Gables hosting the Miami Media Film Conference is important for economic development and how it brings the global entertainment industry to Miami. Since its inception nine years ago, the conference has been held at the Biltmore Hotel. Mr. Martinez says this conference “brings L.A. to Miami.” Their efforts are in order to expose local talent to opportunities they would never have without having to go to Los Angeles, and to be able to develop material here and get it into the hands of key decision makers. Ms. Arias added that she was in China with Mayor Gimenez, and as a result, had 100 Chinese filmmakers, actors, etc. in the Biltmore Hotel for last year’s event.

Ms. Ramudo told the board she could attest to the struggles that Ms. Arias has had to keep the Miami

Media Film Conference in Coral Gables, specifically at the Biltmore Hotel. She said it is amazing what Ms. Arias has done for the MMFM. She commended Ms. Arias for doing what it takes to get the job done. Ms. Arias said that the conference brings value for employment and growth in the industry. She said Mayor Gimenez is a big supporter, as well as Bill Talbert, the President & CEO of the Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau. She said they're working on an initiative with the GMCVB to become an independent festival from the hemispheric conference.

Ms. Arias asked for the board's support. She said the City of Coral Gables sponsored the Congress a few years ago in the amount of \$3,000.

**2. Review & Approval of March 7, 2019 meeting minutes (Action)**

Ms. Rendeiro made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 7, 2019 board meeting. Mr. McGregor seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

**3. Director's Report: Economic Development Dept. Update**

Ms. Fuertes presented to the board a departmental update, saying that the City is halfway through the fiscal year and is taking the opportunity to fine-tune the programs and budget for the next year. To be included are core economic development activities as well as some of the recommendations that this board has shared. She told the board that the team has been busy with various activities such as ribbon cuttings to welcome new businesses, initiatives with international business delegations, retail workshops, marketing, event activations, and the upcoming eMerge Conference. Ms. Fuertes also mentioned that there has been a lot in the news about Morocco. Ms. Ramudo added that the reason being was that a new direct flight was starting between Miami and Casablanca. Dr. Padrón is the honorary Consul for Morocco in Miami. Ms. Fuertes added that Miami-Dade County Board Commission Chair Audrey Edmundson led a mission to Kenya and South Africa, and while they were there, they had some contacts with Morocco. Ms. Ramudo emphasized the importance of the City of Coral Gables having international connections.

**4. Business Tax License Report**

Board members reviewed the Business Tax License Report, which contained 31 new businesses to Coral Gables from March 5 to April 1, 2019. Ms. Valdes updated the board that there are only 15 vacancies on the Mile, and of the fifteen, many of them already have Letters of Intent in place. In discussing the downtown area post-streetscape project, Ms. Fuertes suggested that a brief report be created to set the record straight about the facts and figures of businesses thriving, since they speak such a favorable story, and to get the statistics out there. Mr. McGregor seconded the idea of a report one-year post-streetscape and said the report should be made as soon as possible describing where the City is and where it's going.

Ms. Fuertes added that recently the Cultural Affairs department acquired different pieces of artwork on Miracle Mile and that Ms. Perez has been hard at work with the Parking department revamping the central valet service. New tenants have come in, including new eateries. Additionally, the BID has relaunched their efforts to have music events on Miracle Mile.

Ms. Ramudo suggested that the paseos be cleaned to be more attractive around the downtown area, and other board members agreed. Board members then discussed how difficult it is for people who are not familiar with Coral Gables to find the parking garages. They emphasized the need for better

wayfinding throughout the downtown, perhaps using a distinct paint color that would draw attention for people looking for parking.

Ms. Valdes continued that chef-driven concepts such as Bachour Bakery, have been coming in which has been exciting as they are part of the retail strategy. Another chef-driven restaurant, Ad Lib, just recently changed out their chef to local Norman Van Aken. The addition is very exciting as Mr. Van Aken is currently James Beard nominated for his restaurant “Norman’s” at the Ritz-Carlton Orlando. He brought attention to South Florida with his original Norman’s restaurant in Coral Gables for over ten years. Other additions include Fiola in South Gables, Perla on Almeria, and Caja Caliente opening this month on Ponce near 8<sup>th</sup> Street, close to Eating House. Furthermore, Violetas has expanded on Miracle Mile and now includes a living room and small gift area. Ms. Valdes told the board that Merrick Manor, a mixed-use residential building near Merrick Park, will be having their official opening on April 18.

Ms. Ramudo shared that a new business that opened near her own business, an international office of the University of Salamanca, an 800-year-old university that is the largest in Spain. The office, located in 299 Alhambra, was opened to expand their programs to the United States. There will be an opening reception in May.

Ms. Leticia Perez told the board that on March 20<sup>th</sup>, the City of Coral Gables, in partnership with the office of Economic Development and International Trade, and the University of Miami, hosted a Romanian delegation that came to explore commercial and investment opportunities in South Florida. The event took place at the Newman Alumni Center at UM. The group consisted of 50 business leaders that covered industries in I.T., software production, high technology equipment, textiles, real estate and investment, and food. Two presentations were given, one by special guest, the Dean of the School of Business, Mr. John Quelch, and the other by Pamela Fuertes, who gave a great presentation of Coral Gables.

## **5. Marketing Update**

Ms. Valdes and Ms. Perez provided updates on art installations. Economic Development has been working with Cultural Development on getting the program in place, and the finalist is local artist Jessy Night with “Sun Stories.” Sun Stories is a colorful display of words that render shadows in the shapes of words and phrases. The words and phrases will be unique to Coral Gables, and the artist will pick them. In essence, it is like having poetry in the air. As the day progresses, the shadows will move. Jessy Night recently had a big installation at the Robert is Here fruit stand in Homestead, FL.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:09 a.m.

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