

# **City of Coral Gables**

*405 Biltmore Way  
Coral Gables, FL 33134  
[www.coralgables.com](http://www.coralgables.com)*



## **Meeting Minutes**

**Thursday, September 9, 2021**

**8:30 AM**

**The Board meets the second Thursday of every month.**

### **Parks and Recreation Advisory Board**

## **CALL TO ORDER**

## **ROLL CALL**

**A MOTION TO EXCUSE THE ABSENCES OF JOAN VALDES AND ELLEN CHASENS WAS MADE BY RUBEN RODRIGUEZ AND SECONDED BY JENNIFER MARQUES. NO DISCUSSION WAS HAD. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**Present:** 5 - Chairperson Segura, Vice Chairperson Rua, Board Member Hernandez, Board Member Marques and Board Member Rodriguez

**Excused:** 2 - Board Member Chasens and Board Member Valdes

## **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

**A MOTION TO APPROVE THE AUGUST MEETING MINUTES WAS MADE BY LAURA HERNANDEZ AND SECONDED BY CHARLIE RUA. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

## **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Director Fred Couceyro begin his report by giving a brief recap of summer activities and the camps that were offered. He also shared that we began a new soccer clinic just for the summer to introduce the program that will begin in the Fall with the new Director of Coaching. Recreational soccer for our younger participants will be the focus as we continue with the soccer programming until it can grow. The program will be open to both residents and non-residents but residents will always have a spot on the team.

Board member Laura Hernandez mentioned that there should be a focus on seasonal play for recreational athletics at the high school level for children that do not get the opportunity to play for their schools or that do not want to be competitive year-round. Fred responded this is something the Youth Center is considering for basketball and is using out girls' volleyball team as a model program. Or to try something less instructional like 5-on-5 basketball leagues or Hoop-It-Up.

Children being bused to after school care has continued.

The Youth Center is building up new programs to offer now in the Fall in increase activity at the Center. Staff is looking to increase the performing arts and dance programs, Parent's Night Out, Tumblebee's open gym and the Center will be bringing back the Smart Start sports development for children ages 3-4.

Board member Ruben Rodriguez suggested that there be dialog or informational Dos and Don'ts that be shared with parents with children in our athletics or other programs to get them ready for what is expected of them as parents and of the children as teammates.

Assistant Director Carolina Vester went over our accessible programming opportunities and highlighted that our department has renewed the MOU with the Special Olympics and we will work with them to offer basketball at Phillips Park and gymnastics during the time programming is not normally scheduled. Bocce will be introduced later.

Board member Ruben Rodriguez asked bout volunteer opportunities. Staff said that we are always eager to have volunteers help with our programs and events. Carolina shared volunteer opportunities and perks of volunteering with certain programs. If the Board has anyone interested to please share our contact information with them.

Board member Joan Valdes offered to help promote the bocce program at the Youth Center and at the Adult Activity Center.

Our Fall events are starting up now as well. Events include the Haunted House at the YC, a new event at the Venetian Pool called the Pumpkin Float, Cycle Day, a nature series called Pollinator Palooza, Paws in the Pool and a new Harvest Market that will kick off in October. Assistant Director Carolina Vester gave a brief description of each event. A full listing of events and programs can be found on our Park's newsletter that is sent at the beginning of the month. Carolina offered to add our Board members emails to the mailing list.

Board Member Laura Hernandez brought up the issue of parking around the Venetian Pool. Assistant Director Vester responded to the Board that because the green triangle space in front of the pool will become a developed park and with the increase of visitors at the pool, staff will meet with the Parking Director to find viable parking solutions to relieve the overflow of visitors that end up in resident's swells.

Director Couceyro continued with his report by going over pending capital improvement projects. Projects that are in process include the Salvadore Park playground replacements which is slotted to be completed at the end of October, Marjorie Park is expected to break ground in the next 30 days, Blue Road is now in the design phase, and we will have input on the new Mobility Hub and its rooftop park. Fred shared with the Board design elements that our department would like to be incorporated into the design of the Mobility Hub.

Administrative Supervisor Mitch Zuriarrain went over the Pierce Park renovation and shared with the Board that the new pavilion in the park will be painted to pay homage to the Bohemian culture of that neighborhood and its history.

The Youth Center roof project is underway and should be completed by the end of October.

Director Fred Couceyro received his pin of 25 years of service to the City.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**a. Park's Master Plan**

The Master Plan will be presented to Commission at the end of September for approval. The Board will be updated at the next board meeting.

**b. Board Member at Large Applicants**

Resident - Alberto M. "Papo" Manrara.

Resident - Bruce Lecure

A MOTION TO HOLD A VOTE FOR SELECTING A NEW BOARD MEMBER AT LARGE WAS MADE BY LAURA HERNANDEZ AND SECOND BY RUBEN RODRIGUEZ. THE BOARD DISCUSSED THE BOARD MEMBER AT LARGE APPLICANTS BRUCE LECURE AND ALBERTO MANRARA. THERE WAS A MAJORITY VOTE IN FAVOR OF SELECTING BRUCE LECURE AS THE NEW BOARD MEMBER AT LARGE.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**a. Fire House Park on San Ignacio Avenue**

After the selection of the new board member, Laura Hernandez asked to be excused from the remainder of the meeting. Quorum was lost and meeting continued as an informal meeting.

Director Fred Couceyro shared with the Board the conceptual design plans of Fire House Park on San Ignacio Avenue. The City received a \$1.5 million grant to use towards the development of the fire station that is dependent on this lot having a park element included in the design. In the presentation the lot was identified, a conceptual design was shown, and possible children play elements were shared. If a children's element were to be included then certain playground safety regulations will need to be met and due to the size of the lot and the requirements that will be needed, it could limit the size of the play structure and the age of the children to utilize it.

The Community Meeting on this presentation will be September 9th at the Public Safety Building at 6:30pm.

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

Board member Jennifer Marques brought up the item of having dance classes be added to children's programming and it to somehow activate our outdoor parks and open spaces. Jennifer mentioned the program rotating through different parks and compared it to a program she had seen in Schenley Park.

Carolina shared that staff is already looking at bringing on pilot dance programs and using an outside contractor that will offer dance, musical performance, theater performance. Ideally this contractor would run out of the Youth Center however, staff is looking how to activate our Parks with small neighborhood events, and this might be something to consider.

Board member Ellen Chasens asked for an update on the Coral Gables Country Club and Burger Bobs restaurant. At this time, staff has been informed that there was a scope that was solicited for new contractors to bid, and the current contractor has signed a separation waiver with the City. Unfortunately, the Country Club is not under the management of the Community Recreation department, so we have not been privy to any additional information. If the City decides to have the Community Recreation department run the Country Club under its umbrella, then we would look into running it with more focus on the club aspect of the operation however we would still retain the ability to host rentals.

The Burger Bobs contract was extended until January 2022 when construction is slotted to take place on the Pro-shop. There have been bids that have come in and are in the cone of silence.

Chairperson Monica Segura brought up the tree removal process in Salvador Park. In May, the Commission was brought into the decision to remove the sea grape tree, and this will be the standard practice moving forward for tree removal on City property. These items were brought forward by Green Space Management not Community Recreation.

Monica Segura also brought up the trees in front of Majorca Park in the swale where the next-door neighbor has been doing construction and mud has begun to form. Mitch Zuriarrain responded that we will look into planting the swale.

Fred Couceyro shared an update on a motioned item that requests the City to look into increasing park maintenance and the cleaning schedule. Fred

has explained this inquiry to the Parks Superintendent and staff will be looking into what kind of resources and funding would be needed to meet an exceptional level of maintenance. Once these items have been identified, we will present it to City Management and Budget for approval for a phased in process each fiscal year.

#### **ITEMS FROM THE SECRETARY**

Our next Board meeting is scheduled for October 14th 2021 at 8am at the Youth Center Conference Room.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 9:41am

#### **NOTE**