

# City of Coral Gables

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



## Meeting Minutes

Thursday, August 11, 2022

8:00 AM

Youth Center, Conference Room

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

*Chairperson Monica Segura*  
*Vice Chairperson Carlos Rua*  
*Board Member Nicolas Cabrera*  
*Board Member Ellen C. Chasens*  
*Board Member Laura Hernandez*  
*Board Member Bruce Lecure*  
*Board Member Jennifer A. Marques*  
*Board Member Ruben Rodriguez*

## CALL TO ORDER

Meeting began at 8:05am

## ROLL CALL

**Present:** 6 - Chairperson Segura, Board Member Chasens, Board Member Marques, Board Member Rodriguez, Board Member Lecure and Board Member Cabrera

**Excused:** 2 - Vice Chairperson Rua and Board Member Hernandez

### a. Roll Call and Excusal of Absences

A MOTION TO EXCUSE THE ABSENCES OF LAURA HERNANDEZ AND CHARLIE RUA WAS MADE BY BRUCE LECURE. MOTION WAS SECONDED BY RUBEN RODRIGUEZ. ALL IN FAVOR, MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

## APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

[22-4517](#) Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Meeting of July 14, 2022.

**Attachments:** [Parks Meeting Minutes 7.14.22](#)

A MOTION APPROVING THE JULY MEETING MINUTES WAS MADE BY BRUCE LECURE AND SECONDED BY ELLEN CHASENS. ALL IN FAVOR, MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

## DIRECTOR'S REPORT

**a. General Updates**

At our last meeting in July, Board member Nick Cabrera wanted more information about the Ponce De Leon Park space. Fred began his updates with letting the Board know that this park is not maintained by our department but by the Greenspace Management division of Public Works. If there are any concerns with this park, the Board can let us know and we will share with the necessary staff.

The Coral Gables Country Club is open to members. The pool is currently empty and under construction. Controllers and pumps have been replaced. New diamond brite finishing is being applied to the vessel. Pool is expected to open for Labor Day weekend.

Café is schedule to reopen August 22nd. The landscaping in front of the café has been replaced and the Poinsettia tree is being looked at to see if it can remain since improper cutting over the years has caused it to be top heavy to one side.

The new Country Club Divisional Director Candy Kakouris has begun working. And the first rental will take place in September for the City's Employee of the Year Breakfast. Voting will take place August 23rd in the Atrium room.

The Board was reminded to check out the monthly Country Club eNews Letter for updates on all upcoming events and announcements at the club. The latest edition was shown to the board.

**b. CIP Updates**

Lamar Louis Park has been completed and the ribbon cutting will be held October 15th in partnership with the Coral Gables Garden Club.

Pierce Park renovation will now include a new playground structure and the park is schedule to open right before the Christmas holiday.

Venetian Pool concession stand can now proceed with the bidding process.

Venetian Pool bottom and towers must undergo a major renovation but during the next closure period, the bottom will be temporarily painted as we continue with the assessment of the vessel and towers. Major construction is expected to begin Labor Day 2023.

Venetian Pool pumps and wells are also in need of repair. The City has already begun looking for other locations to bore a new well for water usage, but they have not found a suitable location. The existing well will need to be treated to continue usage.

The Granada Golf course pro-shop is now under construction and the temporary trailer has been installed. Parking at the pro-shop will need to be closed off. Windows have started to be delivered. Proshop build out and the demolition of the restaurant side should be completed in approximately 220 days. The two spaces will now have sperate utilities.

Board Chair Monica Segura wanted to bring to the attention of the construction workers using the Granada swale as parking. Staff is aware of the issue and citations have been given out. The City will continue with enforcement.

**c. Special Events**

The Maggiore Park Ribbon cutting will be held Saturday August 13th at 6:30pm and the Board is invited to attend. Punchlist items are complete, and the park is already open to the community, but we will need to add shade structures over the picnic area.

We will share the ribbon cutting of Lamar Louise Curry with the Board when the date has been secured.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**a. Neighborhood Information Meeting on FRDAP Grant - Phillips Park**

Community Recreation Director Fred Couceyro announced to the Board that the City was intending to apply for a third Florida Recreation Development Assistance Program (FRDAP) grant in order to receive funding towards the renovation of Phillips Park. Staff presented the conceptual design of the park to the Board sharing key elements staff hopes to build. Those elements include:

- Expansion of the current building to introduce a staffed building with activity space, office space and indoor restroom facilities.
- Two new pickleball courts.
- A splash pad playground component.
- Removal of dugout structures.
- Installation of artificial turf athletic field.
- A new secondary playground area with swings.
- Expansion and relocation of the playground to provide for a larger more active playground area.
- Removal of one tennis court and relocation of basketball court to that location.
- Resurfacing and new furnishings for both tennis and basketball courts.
- Improved walkways with new surfacing.
- New landscaping, perimeter fencing, and park furnishings.

We currently have budgeted almost \$3 million but there will need to be other financing options to allow for us to do the whole project at an estimated \$8 million. The FRDAP grant could potentially award the City up to \$200,000 requiring the city to then match the grant.

Board member Jennifer Marques suggested that the placement of the swings be located closer to the large playground area so parents bringing more than one child to play, will be able to safely watch over each child if they were to want to use the swings and the large playground at the same time. Director Couceyro will look into moving the swings closer but based on the clearance needed for swing use, there might not be enough space available if they were to keep a larger playground design. More options will be looked at once these conceptual designs are presented to the community.

Board member Ruben Rodriguez brought up the concern of parking for Phillips Park. Staff did express that there will continue to be some street parking but they plan on looking at a share agreement with the neighboring school to use the lot during after school hours.

Board member Ellen Chasens asked about lighting for the park. Director Couceyro shared that there was a capital improvement project completed a few years back that added stadium lighting to the park. The renovation will include additional safety light when the park is closed.

Board member Jennifer Marques asked how soon this project will begin. Staff explained the project will not begin until it can be fully funded. However, if funding

cannot be provided in full, they will look at creating phases of construction. They also stated that if the City goes out for this additional FRDAP grant and is awarded the funding, it will cause the project to be expedited due to the 3-year timeline issued by the state.

Vice Chair Charlie Rua commented that he loves the idea of designing the park with intentions of having it staffed. He did ask if by taking the grant, does it limit usage of the park by the City in the future. Director Couceyro explained to the Board that this is not like the county bond that the City received funds from many years prior, but it will require the land to be used as a park in perpetuity. The grant will also require there be signage at the park stating we received state funding through the FRDAP grant.

A MOTION SUPPORTING THE PHILLIPS PARK PROJECT AS PRESENTED WAS MADE BY BRUCE LECURE AND SECONDED BY NICOLAS CABRERA. ALL IN FAVOR; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

**b. Garden of the Lord property on E Ponce de Leon**

Board member Bruce Lecure brought forward the agenda item on the Garden of the Lord which is a garden space area attached to an old church located off Galiano and Phoenetia Ave. Many residents in that area are upset that the church has been sold and will be developed into a high rise potentially eliminating the connecting garden. The surrounding residents are asking support from the city to protect the garden location and with this, Bruce said he would bring the item forward to the Parks Board for any additional support.

Board member Nicolas Cabrera did confirm that the location has been sold to a developer and that the existing oak trees on the premises have already caught the attention of Commissioner Anderson who was able to have those trees protected in some capacity. There is some speculation that there are seedlings within the garden that were brought over from Jerusalem but that has not been confirmed. However, since this property is now owned by a private developer, Nicolas suggested to the board that the board should not be involved.

Board Chair Monica Segura also stated that this is now private property and believes the board should not request the city to intervene. However, in order to provide these residents with more information or resources, the Board will like to see if they can find out more information on how the property is going to be used and their plan to either pay impact fees or maintain the green space. City staff has offered to look more into the property to provide some feedback.

**OLD BUSINESS**

Vice Chair Monica Segura asked that the Salvadore Park staffing request item be added to the agenda again for a follow-up review.

**DISCUSSION ITEMS**

**a. Bike Walk Coral Gables and Community Input on Bike Lanes**

Board member Nicolas Cabrera brought up Bike Walk Coral Gables and a letter written to the commission in regard to bike lanes being constructed along Alhambra Circle and the organization's stance on community input.

Board Chair Monica Segura asked what purview the Parks Advisory Board has over bike lanes within the City. Director Couceyro gave a brief example on how listening to the community is important because they are who the City serves, however the Board can vote in favor of or not in favor of items that are present to the board.

Nicolas Cabrera was not seeking Board support on this item but did want to inform the Board of the issue. No action was made.

**ITEMS FROM THE SECRETARY**

The next meeting is scheduled for September 8th, 2022 at 8am.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 9:14am

**NOTE**