

CITY OF CORAL GABLES

LANDSCAPE BEAUTIFICATION ADVISORY BOARD

<https://zoom.us/j/83110285038>

Thursday, October 13, 2022 – 10:30 A.M.

- MEETING MINUTES -

MEMBERS	N 21	D 21	J 22	F 22	M 22	A 22	M 22	J 22	S 22	O 21	APPOINTED BY:
Carolina Estefan-Chahine	*	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	Mayor Lago
Elizabeth Parnes	*	P	P	P	P	E	P	E	E	P	Vice Mayor Mena
Anne Boynton-Trigg	P	P	P	Commissioner Anderson
Carmen Lizama-Gaspa	*	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	Commissioner Fors, Jr
Nancy Leslie	*	P	P*	P	P	P	P	P	E	E	Commissioner Menendez
Amy Dash	*	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	A	P	City Manager
Maria Counts	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	P	P	E	Board-As-A-Whole

P – Present
E – Excused Absence
A – Absent
(-) – No Appointment
(*) – No Meeting

STAFF:

Deena Bell-Llewellyn, Assistant PW Director, Greenspace
Sayleen Arocha, Landscape Designer, Greenspace
Pilar Wiese, Recording Secretary
Jennifer Garcia, City Planner

CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order at 10:30 a.m. The roll was taken, and a quorum was present.

MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL:

The board reviewed the September 8th, 2022, minutes. **A motion was made to “Approve the minutes of September 8th, 2022” The motion was seconded, voted upon, and adopted unanimously.**

PRESENTATIONS / DISCUSSIONS:

- **UPDATE ON STREET TREE CODE:** City Planner Jennifer Garcia attended the meeting to talk about a proposed amendment to the tree code and take the board’s comments to the Planning and Zoning board. She said that the Planning and Zoning board has not approved text amendment and deferred it to hear the comments from the Landscape Advisory board. It will be reviewed again by the Planning & Zoning Board on November 1st with their comments and then provide a recommendation to the City Commission for 2nd Reading. The proposed amendment will give Greenspace Management division discretion to allow trees of a lower height to meet life safety requirements and contribute to diversity. It also clarifies other provisions regarding planting in the right-of-way, including the percentage of palms to be planted in the right-of-way. It will incentivize diversity in the urban canopy and tree species throughout the city. Ms. Garcia would like to have a recommendation from the board about having singular street trees more often or complete diversity of trees. Ms. Bell intervened saying that the neighborhood tree succession plan from 2014 recommended diversity as well as respecting some historic trees. She explained that the advantages of environmental diversification of species are good for resiliency; tree monocultural, same type of trees species, are more at risk to be wiped out if pest or infestation. Ms. Bell also said that the city will continue to maintain the standard 8 feet canopy clearance over pedestrian sidewalks and roads. Greenspace division will professionally review tree species and size appropriate to each area. This will create diversity while allowing smaller size trees and trees of different species that are not easy to find.

Ms. Garcia read the proposed change: *“Exceptions to planting height for tree varieties whose average mature height is 25 feet or less may be approved by the Greenspace Management Division Director prior to installation provided that the requested trees meet all relevant height clearance requirements, comply with all other life safety regulations, and add to the diversity of the urban canopy.”*

Members of the board have different opinions on the issue. They will not want dense canopy; all streets should not be dark. Variety is needed; pockets of sun to have the ability to plant and grow your own garden. Include the neighbors in the streetscape. Lined trees should have symmetry and be consistent. Trees should not be a hazard, should be resistant to hurricanes. Diversity could be wonderful if it is well thought out and not a hazard.

- **KEEP CORAL GABLES BEAUTIFUL AWARD:** Discussion took place to remove commercial aspects out of the landscape beautification award to not have a conflict with Keep Coral Gables Beautiful award. ***A motion was made to “remove commercial aspects out of the landscape beautification awards.” The motion was seconded, voted upon, and adopted unanimously.***
- **UPDATE PLANS FOR THE HISTORIC ENTRANCES:** Ms. Bell told the board that the office of Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) had a project to restore the seven (7) historic entrances a few years ago. It involved renovation of the fountains, painting of walls, installation of irrigation but landscaping was not done because of budgetary issues. She will write a new needs package next fiscal year for all 7 entrances to include beautification and irrigation. The work will be done in phases as it is a significant project. Board can help with input to redesign all historic entrances. As a quick fix, landscape staff and volunteers will keep enhancing them as much as they can with the budget they have.
- **DISCUSSION ABOUT BEAUTIFICATION OF FIELD AT GRANADA BLVD AND PONCE DE LEON:** Ms. Boynton-Trigg inquired about the site that sits on the corner of Granada Blvd and Ponce de Leon. Ms. Bell said that University of Miami owns it and that she has not heard of any future development. She will get UM contact for next meeting.
- **UPDATE MISCELLANEOUS PROJECTS:**
Coral Gables Country Club: Ms. Bell announced that Coral Gables Country Club is open. Restaurant, café and facilities are up and running. Landscape staff is maintaining the landscape. Landscaping will be redesigned and enhanced. It will be done a little at a time, as budget allows. She invited the board to visit the Country Club and give her input for new landscape.
Ponce de Leon Medians: Contractor is about to start removing the plants in the median and the right-of-way from Miracle Mile up to Menores Ave. It will be replaced with a variety of low groundcovers for visibility and safety.
Entrance at Coral Way and Red Road: FIU students volunteered to plant flowers on the corner of that entrance. Plants were donated by the local nursery that have pledged to make an annual donation of plants for \$50,000.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE HELD ON
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 10th, 2022, 10:30 AM
2151 SALZEDO ST, CORAL GABLES, FL 33134