



CG Police Department Continues to Deal With Vacancies

Juan Carlos Diaz-Padron, GGG Board Member

Coral Gables police officers are working overtime to keep residents safe while the administration faces the same challenges of police officer shortages that exist nationwide. Relevant to the Coral Gables Police Department, the City Commission has made it clear to the administration and residents that they support whatever is needed to maintain an elite, first class department. The city now enjoys historically low crime rates and has more police officers on street patrol since before 2013. At the same time, there are significant shortages in the department with 18 vacancies for sworn officer positions and 8 open support personnel positions.

From Baltimore to Honolulu, cities are struggling to hire officers. *The Economist* recently published an article entitled “*Police Departments Struggle to Recruit Enough Officers*” which included reasons such as public perception of police officers, availability of less dangerous jobs and the dangers of being a police officer.

CG City Manager Cathy Swanson-Rivenbark has public safety as a top priority. Her team includes Assistant City Manager/Director of Public Safety, Frank Fernandez and a Human Resources analyst specifically focused on Public Safety personnel, Jose Rodriguez. These and other essential team members are working closely with Chief of Police, Ed Hudak, to ensure quality individuals are hired to be part of the force.

The Police Department Budgeted Positions

(192) Sworn Police Officers
(74) Support Personnel

(266) :Total Budget for all police employees – Sworn and Support

Sworn Police Officer Vacant Positions

(15) Uniformed Police Officer Vacancies
(1) Assistant Chief of Police (Vacant Since 2009)
(2) Majors

(18) : Total Vacant Sworn Police Officer Positions available

Support Personnel Vacant Positions

(5) Communication Operators/Dispatchers
(2) Crime Analysts (new positions created in October 2015)
(1) Police Support Services Assistant

(8): Total Police Department Support Personnel Positions available

In addition to national police recruitment sites and job fairs, Coral Gables is using social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram), advertising (radio and print) and university/career service referrals that specifically target criminal justice programs. “The momentum is building.” says Swanson-Rivenbark.

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Gables Good Government Committee supports issues and causes that preserve and improve the quality of life in Coral Gables and promotes the effective and efficient management of its government.

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GALIANO GREEN COMING SOON!

Debbie Swain, President, GGG

Currently dubbed “Galiano Green,” a new mini park will soon be in place thanks to an award from the Miami Foundation's Public Space Challenge. Bike Walk Coral Gables (BWCG), our local pedestrian and bicycle advocacy organization submitted “Downtown Coral Gables Community Park.” This was one of over 400 ideas, county-wide, submitted to the Foundation. Together with the \$15,000 from this grant, in-kind matching from the City of Coral Gables, and design efforts by volunteer and BWCG Board Chair, Jennifer Garcia; this mini-park will be the first of its kind in the downtown area.

On January 12th, BWCG presented the pocket park idea to the City's Landscape & Beautification Advisory Board, to get feedback on plant species, trees, and other technical details. The Board unanimously approved the "Galiano Green" concept as presented and congratulated the team on the beautiful site plan. Bike Walk Coral Gables, working with Coral Gables' Public Works, Parks & Recreation, and Parking departments, is planning to open the downtown park in spring 2017.

Jennifer Garcia is a Coral Gables resident, and a Town Planner at Dover, Kohl & Partners, specializing in the revitalization of traditional towns, growing neighborhoods, and fixing sprawl around the country. Jennifer and her husband Kenneth live near the downtown area, and live car-free, relying largely on transportation by bicycle, public transit and car share. Her daily bicycle commutes through the streets of Coral Gables reinforce her belief in nurturing living urbanism with livable streets.

BWCG a non-profit organization that promotes a safe and friendly environment for cyclists and pedestrians by sponsoring programs and events to educate the community. BWCG promotes the accessibility of streets and trails for cyclists and pedestrians so they may enjoy our City's beauty and lush canopy. Together with the Coral Gables Museum, BWCG provides tours of Coral Gables on the third Sunday of every month at 10am departing from the Coral Gables Museum. Each tour is a different theme, with a knowledgeable tour guide and ride safety leaders.

BWCG also holds Gables Bike Day each year. This year Bike Day will take place on March 12, 2017 at City Hall.

For more information see: <http://bikewalkcoralgables.com/GalianoGreen>



GGG Urges Every Coral Gables Citizen to VOTE



There are now local campaign and election related activities in progress. **The election will be held on April 11, 2017. There will be no early voting. Deadline to register to vote is March 13, 2017. You may request a mail-in ballot at: WWW.Votemail@MiamiDade.Gov.**

Election **will** be held for the office of Mayor. At this time, however, the three Commission seats are uncontested. Check www.coralgables.com/cityclerk/electionhome to stay updated.

The people who hold office directly impact your daily life and its quality. Know for whom you are voting and for what they stand. Attend public programs and ask questions on topics which concern you. Read the news.

Every vote counts. If you don't vote, don't complain!





DANGEROUS BY DESIGN

Debbie Swain, President, GGG

As reported in the Miami Herald, (“Walk of Death, January 10, 2017”) Florida is the most dangerous place for pedestrians. This is according to Smart Growth America, a group that advocates for pedestrian safety. Its report, *Dangerous by Design*, finds the seven most dangerous large metropolitan areas in the county are in Florida with South Florida ranking #11. This is no surprise to our local leaders, including the City Beautiful, who are striving to change these statistics in South Florida. It is widely known that crashes between automobiles and bicycle riders are equally significant in South Florida.

These frightening statistics are a result of many factors, but among the top are the increase in vehicular traffic and the failure to incorporate safety features in roadway design. We are fortunate in Coral Gables to have city staff and elected officials who are sensitive to the need to improve safe passage for all users of public rights-of-way, including pedestrians and bicycle riders.

Some of the recent initiatives implemented in Coral Gables include:

- A budget of \$5,000,000 was approved to expand the sidewalks, filling in gaps, and providing new walkways on some of our busier corridors.
- A budget of \$300,000 has been programmed to restripe existing crosswalks and install pedestrian paddles throughout the city over the next two years.



Other suggestions have been brought by local advocates for consideration by the City, including requiring developers to safeguard sidewalks adjacent to construction within the downtown area.

All are encouraged to provide input to the Citywide Transportation Advisory Committee, who meets the third Tuesday of every month in the Police Dept. Community Meeting Room (Basement), 2801 Salzedo St., 5:30 PM.

From Page 1: Police Department Hiring Up-Date.

The City has three recent graduates who have gone through the academy and will enter field training which takes approximately four months to complete. Another officer is scheduled to graduate in February. In addition, the city has hired two non-certified officers who have completed orientation and will enter the police academy next week. Quality over quantity.

Despite the vacancies there is a no-compromise attitude. In addition to shifts being fully staffed with overtime -- new technology and initiatives such as CCTV , license plate readers, speed trackers and Neighborhood Safety Aids have combined to dramatically reduce the crime rate. Neighborhoods are split into “zones” in effort to bring community policing back to Coral Gables. This allows residents to know their officers and officers know the neighborhoods. “It will take time to fill the vacancies, but we want to make sure we do it right” says Swanson-Rivenbark who is optimistic about upcoming crime statistics and the future of the City.



HOW TO JOIN GGG
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ANNUAL DUES LEVELS
 \$50 Individual / \$75 Household
 \$250 Sponsor or Advertiser / \$500 Premium Donor
 \$1000 Corporate Donor

Could It Be That Our Voices Are Being Heard?



Gay Bondurant, Editor, Gables Good Government Newsletter

The architectural firm of Borges + Associates Architects has obtained approval from the Coral Gables Board of Architects to continue with a four-unit town house project slated to be constructed on Almeria Avenue. The working title is “New Town.”

Initially, problems arose when opposition by a neighbor threatened appeals to the City Commission. In order to avoid such action, the plans were evaluated by a “Special Master,” Don Sackman, to determine compliance with the Coral Gables MSDS. (Mediterranean Style Design Standards.)

Each three story unit will measure 6,500 square feet, which will include a roof-top garden, plunge pool, elevator and four-car garage. Also, featured are European kitchens, state-of-the-art lighting and “smart home” technology.

Sited among the existing Live Oaks, and according to Reinaldo Borges, Principal of Borges + Associates Architects, “the trees are what really make this particular Coral Gables residential neighborhood extra special.”



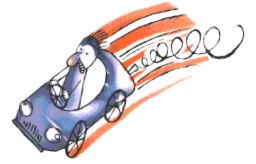
At left is an aerial view of another proposed project, identified as 33 Alhambra Circle. This project has been more than 2 years in process. It was approved, on first reading, by the City Commission after a 4 to 1 vote with Commissioner Slesnick dissenting. However, Commissioner Lago stated he would vote against it on second reading if modifications to density were not made.

On Tuesday, January 10, 2017 at a Commission meeting scheduled for 5:01 pm and before a packed room, the 33 Alhambra project was presented for Second Reading. After a brief presentation by Ramon Trias, Director of Planning and Zoning, and subsequent comments by many of the residents in attendance, the attorney for the project, Zeke Guilford, requested a continuance. He indicated that the developer and architect were, at that

moment, conferring with a goal of possibly reducing the height and/or density of the building. At this time the date for the continuance is not set. What do you think? Are they listening? Let’s see what happens next.

SPEED KILLS!

Isn't everyone tired of automobiles speeding through the streets of Coral Gables? Can't something be done to slow them down? Well, one answer may be visible in the very near future. The Coral Gables Police Department is in the process of hiring four retired police officers. The job of these officers will be to focus on speed limit enforcement on all streets, both residential and commercial.

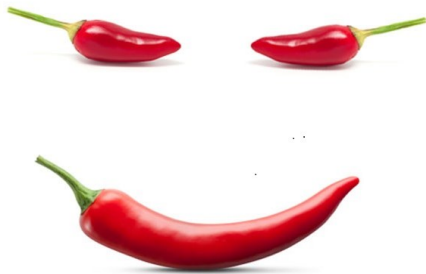


The officers will be in full uniform and in police cruisers, ticketing offenders. The officers will, hopefully, be officers from the Coral Gables Police Department and will be familiar with the streets of our city and with the standard of excellence that our citizens have come to expect and enjoy.

Mayor Dorothy Thomson, GGG Board Member



ROTARY CLUB OF CORAL GABLES ANNOUNCES SECOND ANNUAL CHILI COOK-OFF



The Rotary Club of Coral Gables, is planning its Second Annual Chili Cook-Off, Chili Chillin' on Sunday, February 26, 2017, from 1 to 5 PM at Fred B. Hartnett Ponce Circle Park. The park is located in downtown Coral Gables, four blocks south of Miracle Mile at 2810 Ponce de Leon Blvd. Contestants from around South Florida, including local high schools, restaurants and even fire departments will be joining in.

In just its first year the cook-off attracted an estimated 1,000 people and raised nearly \$10,000 for its foundation. The foundation provides approximately \$35,000 per year in charitable giving, including \$20,000 in scholarships to local high school students.

Approximately 30 teams from the South Florida community will compete to see who makes the best chill. Winning teams in various categories will receive cash prizes, and one trophy will be awarded to the winner of each division to display for the entire year! Prizes will also be given for the Best Decorated Booth, as well as the The Peoples's Choice Award where attendees weigh in on their favorites. Contestants will be judged by a panel of local leaders, including Joe Fantigrassi, the BBQ Master Smoker at Swine Restaurant!

The Chili Cook-Off is free to attend and tickets will be available for purchase for those who want to taste the chili. There will be entertainment for the whole family, with live music, bounce houses and other kid's activities. All are invited to come out and enjoy the fun and food and support the local "chefs." There will also be other food and beverages and a beer garden sponsored by Concrete Beach Brewery.

To compete in the chili contest go to: <http://chilichillin.com/#rules>.

To become a sponsor visit: <http://chilichillin.com/#sponsors>

For more information see: Rotarycoralgables@gmail.com, or call 305 441-8063

Compete for cash prizes, trophies and bragging rights or just come to enjoy the fun & food.

