



**City of Coral Gables
CITY COMMISSION MEETING
May 10, 2022**

ITEM TITLE: ADVISORY BOARD ON DISABILITY AFFAIRS

MEETING DATE: April 6, 2022

SUMMARY OF MEETING:

QUORUM: In Person Quorum was reached.

CALL TO ORDER: Meeting commenced at 10:05am

City of Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce April 21, 2022 - Breakfast Invitation –

Ms. Raquel Elejabarrieta

Ms. Elejabarrieta advised board members of invitation extended by Mr. Mark Trowbridge, President & CEO of City of Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce regarding upcoming “Good Morning, Coral Gables Breakfast” on April 21, 2022. Ms. Palacio stated Ms. Sando will be speaking at this upcoming event addressing Autism Awareness and focusing mostly regarding employment for people with disabilities.

Ms. Sando stated she has shared this information with a variety of people. Ms. Sando addressed board regarding topics to be discussed during her presentation. Board members commenced to participate in a discussion regarding best way to proceed with presentation, providing guidance and ideas how to best proceed.

Ms. Elejabarrieta advised board members who would be interested and available to attend, please contact her by end of this week so that she can then provide information to Mr. Trowbridge.

Autism Awareness Caravan (Ex 1)

Sergeant Alejandro Escobar – City of Coral Gables Police Department

Sergeant Escobar addressed board regarding upcoming caravan in honor of Autism Awareness & Acceptance taking place on Wednesday, April 20, 2022, commencing at North Miami approximately 10:00am. Sergeant Escobar explained the caravan will consist of vehicles such as the city’s dedicated to Autism Awareness from various Miami-Dade County police departments and will be visiting City Halls throughout county. Sergeant Escobar stated there will also be a participating county fire truck. Sergeant Escobar stated upon arriving at Coral Gables which will be the end due to being the farthest south, they will be going thru Ponce, to police station, ending at Crystal Academy where there will be about five to ten vehicles including the fire truck staying there. Sergeant Escobar advised at that time they will conduct a small speaking engagement with the children. Ms. Elejabarrieta asked approximately what time they expect to arrive at Crystal Academy. Sergeant Escobar stated they are trying to complete route at and arrive at Crystal Academy approximately 12:00pm to 1:00pm, he will advise Ms. Elejabarrieta and Ms. Palacio. Sergeant Escobar advised board of other various events regarding Autism Awareness Month events taking place throughout county. Sergeant Escobar advised he will be providing flyer regarding caravan. Sergeant Escobar stated the Coral Gables Autism Vehicle is currently on afternoon shift and engagement with citizens is encouraged. Sergeant Escobar advised for folks to take a picture with Officer George by vehicle, post it on their social media and tag the City of Coral Gables.

Counselor In Training Program / VIP – Volunteer In Parks Program

Mr. Mitchell Zuriarrain, Administrative Operations Supervisor Parks & Recreation

Mr. Zuriarrain addressed board regarding two programs available for young adults who are no longer eligible to participate at city summer programs. Mr. Zuriarrain explained the requirements and expectations for each of the programs and how to best proceed with qualifying for them. Mr. Santo stated it would be great if there could possibly also be an opportunity to review other programs perhaps for children who are non-verbal. Mr. Zuriarrain stated Ms. Kofkin advised for the next meeting, she will have an update regarding non-verbal solution she has been working on.

Mr. Zuriarrain provided information regarding upcoming Literacy Festival and Adventure Day for All. Mr. Zuriarrain stated Miami-Dade Commissioner Raquel Regalado has expressed interest in participation at this year's event and of adding an employment component to the event as well.

OLD BUSINESS:

April Autism Month – Ms. Elejabarrieta

Ms. Elejabarrieta advised regarding Proclamation declaring April 2022 as “World Autism Acceptance Month” in Coral Gables being presented at upcoming Commission meeting on April 12, 2022, and who will be present to accept it. Ms. Palacio advised Mr. Jairo Eloy Arana, employee for UM Card, will be present to accept Proclamation. Ms. Palacio stated Mr. Arana is very excited to have his opportunity and will be accompanied by two of his employers. Ms. Palacio stated children from Crystal Academy would also be present and participating in various ways, including their “Ventanita” program.

My Squad – Ms. Elejabarrieta

Ms. Elejabarrieta advised board regarding upcoming My Squad event scheduled for Wednesday, April 27, 2022, at 6:00pm celebrating Earth Month (Exhibit 1). Ms. Elejabarrieta provided via email flyer to board members. Ms. Elejabarrieta expressed struggle program is having regarding participants and if these numbers do not increase it would be difficult to continue with program. Ms. Elejabarrieta explained cost of program. Ms. Milne asked if there is a maximum number of participants and Mr. Zuriarrain stated there is no limit. Mr. Zuriarrain advised this is a pilot program, however Parks & Recreation has included it as a New Need for upcoming budget.

Ms. Blaire expressed her concerns. Ms. Blaire stated she believes this program has been running for a year yet and feels that the biggest issue is not receiving proper notification of upcoming events, making it difficult for families to plan. Dr. Durocher explained how UM Card goes about disseminating information of upcoming events and stated they would be able to assist with this as well. Mr. Zuriarrain stated they will also be going into a similar model indicated by UM Card and board would be in receipt soon of a flyer where several upcoming events will be included, therefore assisting facilitating planning for families.

Ms. Blaire stated current location site regarding My Squad is amazing during the day, however, feels it would be best for city to review it regarding nighttime events. Ms. Blaire stated at night there is poor lighting and makes it difficult for some of the participants to navigate safely. Mr. Zuriarrain stated there is a capital plan in place to address this and it is pretty much high in their list.

Ms. Blaire stated she feels My Squad has an incredible future and hopes it is given time to grow. Ms. Elejabarrieta stated at this time is difficult due to cost compared to participants, it is not justifiable. Ms. Milne expressed that this type of program needs time to grow.

Mr. Zuriarrain advised all registered members are sent an email regarding upcoming events and if someone is not receiving it, to please get with him to correct this. Ms. Milne asked if event would be posted on city's website and Mr. Zuriarrain stated it would be looked into. Ms. Elejabarrieta stated city is working with many sources regarding advertising upcoming events including working with Miami-Dade County Commissioner Raquel Regalado office, Best Buddies and The de Moya Foundation. Ms. Elejabarrieta stated city is aware of need for such programing, however, increase in participation is needed. Ms. Elejabarrieta expressed it is going to get to the point to justify cost per participant. Ms. Blaire asked who is doing the pushing regarding notification. Ms. Elejabarrieta stated the various ways this is being conducted and stated everyone needs to help with the dissemination of information.

Project Victory – Ms. Elejabarrieta

Ms. Elejabarrieta provided update regarding on going work with Miami-Dade County Public Schools and Project Victory. Ms. Elejabarrieta stated city is very happen and determined to go forth with this program, however due to necessary paperwork, it will not be announced during the next April 12, 2022, commission meeting, but should be on next one. Ms. Elejabarrieta provided information of how Project Victory works, and services provided.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

NEXT MEETING: May 4, 2022

ADJOURNMENT: Meeting adjourned 11:15am

Motion by Adjourn: Blake Sando / 2nd Motion: Philippa Milne / All approved unanimously.

ATTACHMENT(S):

Minutes of the April 6, 2022