



**City of Coral Gables**  
**CITY COMMISSION MEETING**  
**July 9, 2024**

**ITEM TITLE: ADVISORY BOARD ON DISABILITY AFFAIRS**

**MEETING DATE: May 1, 2024**

**SUMMARY OF MEETING:**

**QUORUM:** Quorum was reached.

**STAFF:**

Raquel Elejabarrieta – Human Resources Director  
Eglys Hernandez – P/T Administrative Assistant Labor Relations & Risk Management  
Catie Hastings – Park & Recreation – D.E.I. Coordinator  
Ana Lam, Crime Watch Volunteer

**GUEST:**

**CITIZEN ADVISORS:**

Deborah Dietz – Via Zoom

**PUBLIC GUEST:**

Steve Calle, City of South Miami Commissioner  
Luis Lopez Molina, Legislative & Policy Aide,  
Miami-Dade Commissioner Regalado Office  
Dr. Laura S. Olivios (Via Zoom)

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Meeting was called to order at 10:01am

**MEETING ABSENCE:** None

**MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL:**

April 3, 2024

Motion to approve with the following corrections to be made:

Remove the word “All” from approved unanimously.

Correct Motion referred supporting brining Reel Abilities to the City of Coral Gables

Corrections made.

Motion by: Bonnie Blaire / 2nd Vanessa Bedoya / Approved unanimously.

**SECRETARY'S REPORT:** None

**BOARD MEMBERS REPORTS:** None

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**ACEs Program – Ms. Vanessa Bedoya**

Ms. Bedoya provided board information regarding ACEs Program (Adverse Childhood Experiences) and shared ideas which came about of how to involve stakeholders, all the decision makers, commissioners, everybody within the county regarding identifying and providing educational awareness. Ms. Bedoya advised she had presented this idea to the mayor, and it is now turning into a summit to be held in November 2024, at Miami Children's Museum. Ms. Bedoya stated they are currently working on the invitee list which will consist of over 100 people. Ms. Bedoya wanted to advise the city and board of this upcoming summit. Ms. Bedoya asked if the city or board have any ideas how they can be part of it, to please let her know.

Ms. Tapia shared with the board a zoom message from Dr. Olivos, who expressed as a child drama specialist, it makes her extremely happy to hear regarding this project.

**Commissioner Steve Calle, City of South Miami – Ms. Palacio-Pike**

Ms. Palacio-Pike introduced Commissioner Steve Calle, City of South Miami who was present to obtain information regarding creating an Advisory Board on Disability Affairs board for South Miami. Commissioner Calle asked to learn a bit more about how the board started, its function and about its board members/staff. Everyone introduced themselves and provided brief background information.

**Adventure Day – Catie Hastings**

Ms. Hastings advised the magnets will be sent out by the end of May and programing reference Adventure Day commences right after the summer program. Ms. Hastings provided a bit of information regarding this event for Commissioner Calle.

**October Disability Awareness Month – Ms. Palacio-Pike**

The board discussed the upcoming October Disability Awareness Month and who would be a great recipient of the proclamation. Ms. Blaire stated proclamations are wonderful; however, why not use that month to perhaps not only bring awareness about disability from the community or the commission standpoint or the government standpoint but also for the board to think about how it can expand it. Ms. Blaire stated it has been beautifully expanded into the schools, and perhaps expanding this year directly into our business community utilizing the existing connection with the City of Coral Gables Chamber.

Ms. Blaire spoke regarding the former Business Award program, which was in place, acknowledging businesses that were physically accessible. Ms. Blaire stated there used to be a program, someone who was involved with the chamber. Ms. Bedoya stated she was the City of Coral Gables Chamber board ex-officio for approximately one year. Ms. Blaire stated perhaps the board, which is only five strong, and it is a lot, ought to figure out how to expand their shoulder power to an entity and start expanding on this so that by October there will be more members.

Ms. Palacio-Pike advised she has reached out to Mr. Mark A. Trowbridge, City of Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce, regarding having someone from Chamber who would volunteer at this board. Ms. Palacio-Pike stated she attended one of the Chamber's Business and Education recent committee meetings. Ms. Palacio-Pike stated she asked at their next meeting if she could have ten minutes to let them know what the disability board is doing and what it is that is needed from the business community, obviously talking about employment.

Ms. Bedoya mentioned asking Mr. Trowbridge about the upcoming Business October breakfast. During her ex-officio period, she recalls working with Mr. Rick Beasley of Career Source. Ms. Bedoya asked if Mr. Beasley could speak and provide information about the different programs available regarding the hiring of individuals with disabilities and feels it would be a great way to inform businesses.

Ms. Chichester stated that what she is hearing is more to educate the business on hiring people with disabilities in other forms than those already in place. Ms. Blaire stated it is not just regarding employment, even though it is important, but because they also are customers. Ms. Blaire stated they are an advisory board and keep city advised. Ms. Blaire stated the board comes up with ideas and finds partners, then brings them to the city.

Ms. Bedoya stated perhaps the city can provide training for the businesses or have a program that companies who are more accessible can be given a “sticker” showing this.

Dr. Olivos addressed the board and shared ideas regarding October. Dr. Olivos stated one idea could be to ask businesses at the October breakfast to identify an actionable step or pledge or to make a small change even within their own company or business that would provide inclusion or make something accessible or something that is the measurable goal for each business or business owner. Dr. Olivos stated that businesses should make a commitment versus just saying that they are inclusive or accepting. Dr. Olivos stated the other idea, perhaps, is doing something with art.

Ms. Dietz stated if the board will be attending the Chamber breakfast, one of the things she finds very successful in training is talking to the businesses about the buying power of the disability community.

**Summer Board Schedule – Ms. Palacio-Pike**

Ms. Palacio-Pike advised the next board meeting will be held on June 5, 2024. It was determined no meeting would take place in July and the next meeting would be August 7, 2024.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

Autism Acceptance Month Recap – Board did not have a chance to discuss.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** None

**NEXT MEETING:** June 5, 2024

**ADJOURNMENT:** Meeting adjourned at 11:04 am

Motion by: Bonnie Blaire / 2nd Vanessa Bedoya / Approved unanimously.

**ATTACHMENT(S):** Minutes of the May 1, 2024