



City of Coral Gables
CITY COMMISSION MEETING
May 21, 2024

ITEM TITLE: ADVISORY BOARD ON DISABILITY AFFAIRS

MEETING DATE: April 3, 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
Police Officer Natalie Flores
Ana Lam, Crime Watch Volunteer

GUEST:

CITIZEN ADVISORS:

Deborah Dietz
Jennifer Durocher, Director of UM-NSU Card

PUBLIC GUEST:

Raquel Linares, Director Jobs, Best Buddies International

CALL TO ORDER:

Meeting was called to order at 10:01am

MEETING ABSENCE: None

MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL:

March 6, 2024
Motion by: Bonnie Blaire / 2nd Vanessa Bedoya / Approved unanimously.

SECRETARY'S REPORT: None

BOARD MEMBERS REPORTS: None

NEW BUSINESS:

Ms. Palacio-Pike stated she wanted to commence by congratulating Board Member Vanessa Bedoya, who just received the Businesswoman Award from the Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce. Ms. Palacio-Pike also advised the Sando family is going to be honored and recognized as Champions at the upcoming UM Card 30-year anniversary gala.

Reel Abilities Film Festival – Catie Hastings, Park & Recreations (Exhibit 1)

Ms. Hastings advised the board regarding this film festival, which focuses mainly on stories of people with disabilities. Ms. Hastings provided information about the organization, how it works and advised bringing this to the City of Coral Gables at a much smaller scale for January 24- 26, 2025. Ms. Hastings advised the three movies being looked at to be included in the showings at various locations throughout the city.

Ms. Hastings advised one of the requirements for hosting this festival is that immediately after each screening there be a panel discussion. Ms. Hastings advised she would like the panels to consist of various speakers.

Ms. Hastings stated there is also a committee which must be set up and she would like a member of the Advisory Board to be a member of this committee. Ms. Hastings advised the duties which the committee will have to provide.

Ms. Elejabarrieta advised Ms. Hastings would like to have one board member to be part of this committee and after further discussion, the board determined to nominate Ms. Chichester to be the board member to be part of the committee.

Motion was made:

To nominate Board member Ms. Justine Chichester, to be part of the Reel Abilities committee

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

Ms. Hastings provided a time frame to the board and requested assistance from the board obtaining information about other interested parties to make up the committee.

The board was advised to contact Ms. Hastings directly regarding recommendations.

Ms. Blaire asked what the board can do to show support for this project. Ms. Elejabarrieta stated the board could make a motion.

Motion was made:

To support bringing Reel Abilities to the City of Coral Gables.

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

Best Buddies Program / Training – Ms. Raquel Linares

Ms. Linares of Best Buddies addressed the board regarding the training/services regarding inclusive hiring provided by Best Buddies. Ms. Linares advised Best Buddies not only aids in obtaining jobs for its program's participants, but also provides employment assistance with a coach, provides training for interested parties, assist with individual concerns serving as a mediator and can provide training for staff.

Ms. Linares provided information to the Board regarding the upcoming Ed Ansin Best Buddies Friendship Walk in Miami on April 6, 2024, at Loan Depot Park (**Exhibit 2**).

Ms. Palacio-Pike asked what the difference between Project Search and Project Victory programs is. Ms. Linares provided a brief description of each of the programs.

Ms. Elejabarrieta shared the wonderful services provided by Best Buddies recently with a current City of Coral Gables employee from Best Buddies program.

OLD BUSINESS:

Update: Autism Awareness Month Events

Ms. Palacio-Pike provided update regarding the Autism Caravan which took place on April 2, 2024, and how wonderful it turned out.

Ms. Palacio-Pike advised City Hall was lit up last night, April 1, 2024, in blue for Autism Acceptance Month.

Ms. Palacio-Pike advised reference upcoming My Squad event, Battle of the Badges Kickball Game, Wednesday, April 24, 2024, 6:00pm (**Exhibit 3**).

Ms. Lam reminded the Board of the QR Code and decal which the county came out with for families with children with Autism. Dr. Durocher provided information regarding UM Card program in collaboration with Miami-Dade County Commissioner Raquel Regalado, whereas it allows for authorities to be made aware immediately that someone in the car or home has autism.

Ms. Lam advised along with Officer Flores; they are working on providing a self-defense class for participants in My Squad.

Ms. Elejabarrieta advised the board for the upcoming April 16, 2024, city commission meeting the following will be taking place, presentation of Proclamation Autism Acceptance Month, received by the Coral Gables Police Department, Resolution Principals of Inclusion and Renewal of Project Victory contract for three years.

Ms. Elejabarrieta shared with the board stock pictures taken at Giralda Plaza with participants who are disabled.

Ms. Chichester provided board information regarding the upcoming DIG Supper Club, next event pizza night on April 29, 2024, 6:30pm to 8:30pm (**Exhibit 4**).

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

NEXT MEETING: May 1, 2024

ADJOURNMENT: Meeting adjourned at 11:15am

Motion by: Jennifer Ward Sando / 2nd Vanessa Bedoya / Approved unanimously

ATTACHMENT(S): Minutes of the April 3, 2024