



**City of Coral Gables
CITY COMMISSION MEETING
July 13, 2021**

ITEM TITLE: ADVISORY BOARD ON DISABILITY AFFAIRS

MEETING DATE: May 12, 2021

SUMMARY OF MEETING:

QUORUM: Reached in person

CALL TO ORDER: Meeting was called to order at 10:18 am

Financial Disclosure Reports & Board Appointees - Ms. Imelys Sansores – City Clerk’s Office

Ms. Sansores advised Board Financial Disclosure Reports need to be completed and returned directly to City’s Clerk office prior to July 1, 2021.

Ms. Sansores advised regarding upcoming Board appointments and or reappointments. Ms. Sansores advised current term ends May 31, 2021 and new one commences June 1, 2021. Ms. Sansores advised anyone who is interested to continue as an appointee, should if has not done so already, reach out to their commissioner and advised of their interest to continue to service. Ms. Palacio-Pike asked if the commissioner she was appointed by is no longer available, can she approach either of the new appointed commissioners. Ms. Sansores advised that yes, she can reach out to either of the new commissioners. Ms. Milne advised she has reached out to the commissioner however has not heard back, so does it mean she has been reappointed. Ms. Sansores stated if member has completed necessary paperwork and has reached out to commissioner, she believes all information has been received by Commissioner’s office. Ms. Sansores advised once those appointees become official via resolution, it would coincide with the start of the new term on June 1, 2021. Ms. Sansores advised once appointees have been confirmed, her office, City Clerk will reach out to the members and advise of their appointment and or reappointment.

Noise Pollution – Ms. Vanessa Liebl

Ms. Liebl stated after attending a Police event at Crystal Academy, where there was just a little bit of noise, nothing close to what the leaf blowers do, she observed an autistic child who was present kind of grasp his head and there was nothing that could be done. Ms. Liebl stated at that moment it changed her perspective regarding noise. Ms. Liebl stated she realizes City of Coral Gables has beautiful canopies but with that comes a lot of leaves and the constant leaf blowing, which is something of a big problem, especially for those children with autism. Ms. Liebl stated one of every 54 children are being diagnosed with autism and believes it continues to grow. Ms. Liebl would like to know what the City of Coral Gables is doing to address this issue. Ms. Liebl expressed she feels best option would be for city to go electric. Ms. Liebl stated it would be in the city’s favor and it is also moving toward a greener society. Ms. Liebl stated this was something which she wanted to bring to Board and hear their thoughts on the matter as well as those of the City’s.

Ms. Elejabarrieta provided information regarding the City’s noise pollution ordinance currently in place.

Ms. Elejabarrieta advised ordinance states residents are prohibited to utilize leaf blowers or any other item which causes a lot of noise except Monday through Friday 8:00am to 8:00pm, Saturday and Sundays 9:00am to 8:00pm. Ms. Elejabarrieta advised for commercial landscapers it is Monday through Thursday, 8:00am to 6:00pm, Fridays 8:00am-6:30pm, Saturdays 9:00am to 5:00pm and on Sundays they are prohibited from working. Ms. Elejabarrieta

stated ordinance is how City addresses noise pollution and regarding electrical blowers or equipment, City is not able to force someone else to purchase electric items. Ms. Elejabarrieta stated perhaps conducting a campaign regarding this matter. Ms. Elejabarrieta advised she is not familiar with either electrical or gas blowers and perhaps it would be best to address this with the landscaping department and have them address Board at next meeting. Ms. Elejabarrieta advised it would be best for the City to research and evaluate best way to go forth regarding this prior to implement anything to residents or companies.

Ms. Palacio-Pike advised when they are aware there is the possibility of noises, Crystal Academy and parents will assure to provide headphones for their children. Ms. Palacio-Pike stated it is difficult to predict when the noise of the blowers will be present, and it would mean that the children would have to wear headphones all the time. Ms. Palacio-Pike advised this is an issue regarding quality of life. Ms. Palacio-Pike stated this issue has been addressed in the past and believes going forth with a campaign should include feedback from residents.

Adventure Day for All Event – Ms. Ericka Kofkin, Community Recreation Department

Ms. Elejabarrieta advised Ms. Kofkin sent out a survey approximately 2 months ago to past participants in order to get a feeling going forth due to Covid, if the interest to participate would be there. Ms. Elejabarrieta also advised she has asked Ms. Vester, Community Recreation Director to be present at meeting in order to have her listen in on the Board's needs, request and provide further input.

Ms. Kofkin stated survey went out approximately 3 weeks ago and approximately 25 participants have replied expressing their interest in participating at an in-person event and not at all at a virtual event.

Ms. Liebl stated her thoughts regarding upcoming Adventure Day for All is to perhaps start incorporating employment, since it is an adventure for individuals with disabilities to find employment. Ms. Liebl stated perhaps highlighting a couple of tents for folks such as the de Moya Foundation, as Best Buddies already attends. Ms. Liebl stated if these organizations wish to participate, it would be great if they are given the opportunity to do so.

Ms. Vester suggested Adventure Day for All event should not become a job fair. Ms. Vester stated she has had conversations regarding this matter with Ms. Elejabarrieta very frequently. Ms. Vester expressed this is one pillar that they have in their three pillars and objectives which is the hardest to meet, job placement and that it is the most needed; not only in this community but she believes nationwide. Ms. Vester stated she does not want to speak on behalf of the Chambers, but perhaps they can be provided a tent at the event or even provide the City with contact information of their businesses which would be interested to participate at the event. Ms. Vester stated perhaps there could be a listing where individuals seeking employment can go and obtain information of employment opportunities available. Ms. Vester stated currently there is difficulty seeking individuals who are looking for employment. Ms. Vester advised even City is having a hard time finding individuals to fill seasonal or part time positions. Ms. Vester stated many people are not interested in jobs which are at certain pay levels or part time. Ms. Vester stated this may be a great window of opportunities for others seeking employment. Ms. Vester stated instead of having Adventure Day for All turning into a job fair, perhaps it would be great to have hub tents were there would be a listing of businesses which are more than happy to employ individuals with disabilities and resources which can be utilized to contact them.

Ms. Vester advised City is now getting ready to launch its first literacy festival at end of May and during planning stages, unsure of best way to be done, it will both in person as well as virtual. Ms. Vester stated regarding virtual, they are planning on providing all types of resources and feels that same can be done with Adventure Day for All. Ms. Vester stated a venue on the City's web page can be provided where resources such as the businesses looking to employ individuals with disabilities can be identified.

Ms. Liebl stated unfortunately there has been some push back regarding video making, she feels these types of videos featuring companies which provide employment for persons with disabilities are great. Ms. Liebl stated she

believes short videos reflecting this would give us the most traction. Ms. Libel asked if the Board could create their own videos make them available to the City, would the City then share them on their social platforms. Ms. Elejabarrieta advised the City cannot prevent Board to create their own videos. Ms. Vester advised currently for the upcoming literacy event, they found themselves with the same issue. Ms. Vester advised the City was asked to provide a bunch of content that the City does not have the means to do so, therefore City is relying on others to provide that content. Ms. Vester explained sample of Scholastic, they will provide content, it will be shared and link reflecting information back to Scholastic will be included. Ms. Vester stated content will not have any City branding, can be shared if authorization from the individuals who created it is obtain and have a link directing it back to them as well.

Ms. Liebl asked if Adventure Day for All will be looking the same as previous year. Ms. Elejabarrieta stated she does not believe that it would look too much different as before. Ms. Elejabarrieta stated this was the time for Board to brainstorm ideas.

Ms. Palacio-Pike stated she noticed the attendance obtained by the Farmers' Market and asked if it would be possible to have some of the vendors participate at Adventure for All Event in order to expand the awareness of event. Ms. Palacio-Pike believes that this would help with attendance and it would expand as event for all and not just for families with disabilities.

Ms. Vester stated in the past these types of vendors have not been included due to participating vendors at Adventure Day for All Event were not being charged a fee. Ms. Vester advised vendors at the Farmers' Market are charged for their space because they do make money. Ms. Vester stated they have currently invited some of the Farmers' Market vendors to participate at the upcoming literacy fair, due to it is difficult to recruit food trucks at this time. Ms. Vester stated it has been difficult to recruit food trucks for newer events such as Adventure Day for All due to unable to calculate attendance and they feel it is not beneficial for them to participate. Ms. Vester advised it may be a good idea for vendors selling kettle corn, others selling breads, pastries, and stuff, which are very popular, perhaps to be invited back to participate at Adventure Day for All event.

Ms. Vester advised financial literacy will be incorporated in the upcoming literacy event in order to address money management which is one of the hardest things when transitioning to becoming employed and independent. Ms. Vester explained City will be purchasing books through scholastic and instead of the child stating they want this book and handling same to their parents, the parents will be able to purchase tickets in advance, City will be creating "fake" money which can be given to the child, they will be made aware of amount allotted and they can actually "purchase" their books themselves. Ms. Vester stated Mr. Zuriarrain suggested perhaps this idea could be incorporated at Adventure Day for All Event parents once again can purchase in advance, then "Coral Gables bucks" will be made available that can be then used by the child to purchase items at the event. Ms. Vester stated however, City would have to address this with the vendors, figure out best way to pay the vendors and perhaps they may not be interested in participating. Ms. Vester advised this project has not been conducted before by anyone and it is a new concept. Ms. Vester stated the scholastic program is like a pilot program and its not sure how things will work out. Ms. Vester stated City is always trying to try out new things and this is just a suggestion for Adventure Day for All Event and feels it would be great to incorporate it.

Ms. Liebl advised she noticed the Advisory Board on Disability Affairs had been assigned a table at the literacy event and would like to know who will be attending at table as well as what information will be provided there. Ms. Vester stated she hopes one of the actual Board members will be able to attend the table. Ms. Vester advised City will also have three tents available if the Board would like to supply any information they wish to be distributed, however she highly encourages for Board to participate. Ms. Vester advised perhaps Board can share a table to with another vendor, such as Crystal Academy. Ms. Liebl advised that would be great. Ms. Vester explained a bit regarding idea behind creation of literacy program, providing books for children in order to address "slides" both summer and now COVID. Ms. Vester advised it will be held at Youth Center, Saturday May 29,

2021. Ms. Milne asked if library will be offering their reading program. Ms. Vester advised they will be and are a big partner of the literacy event. Ms. Vester stated one of the main reasons that the Youth Center was chosen as event location is because the library is their close neighbor. Ms. Vester stated this event is a pilot program at this time, however if it is successful and if commission chooses to reinvest in this on an annual basis, then we would like to work across two facilities, extending the Youth Center all the way to the library where there could be readings, have authors, etc.

Ms. Milne asked what the age group for the literacy event was. Ms. Vester stated the Scholastic Book Fair is K through eighth, age groups in the school system. Ms. Vester stated event itself is for all ages, therefore books for adults, coffee table books, cultural books, etc. will also be available. Ms. Vester advised the museum will be participating as well.

Ms. Liebl advised regarding the Disability Advisory Board table, she will be there representing both Board and Choice MD, if it is ok to do double exposure. Ms. Vester stated double exposure will be fine as well as the tent shared with Crystal Academy and an application will be sent out in order to formalize it.

Ms. Vester stated most important thing for the Board to do at this time for Adventure Day for All is to commit first to a date then can move on to other aspects of the event. Ms. Vester stated last year as per feedback received from survey conducted, it had been decided to go forth with the Sunday before Columbus Day. Ms. Vester stated they also wanted to create consistency and have the event at the same time every year so people will be aware of it. Ms. Liebl stated she will be reviewing other ongoing events throughout and will advise, however if everyone is ok according with information received from Ericka's survey, the Sunday before Columbus Day should be ok.

Ms. Vester advised Board of commencement of construction of City's first inclusive playground at Salvatore Park, located on the south side of the park where there was a big open green space not really being utilized before. Ms. Vester advised substantial completion for the park is going to be at end of July with hopefully a re-opening in early August. Ms. Vester advised there will be a ribbon cutting ceremony and how this a project dear to the City's heart and sure to the Board's as well. Ms. Vester advised Board representation via Ms. Palacio-Pike, Crystal Academy will be present, and Board is welcome as well.

GUIDE – Update Ms. Elejabarrieta

Ms. Elejabarrieta advised GUIDE is essentially done in terms of what its' going to look like on the website and questions which will be asked. Ms. Elejabarrieta advised after a couple of meetings with Police Chief Hudak he wants to roll it out, however he wants to train officers again on Autism. Ms. Elejabarrieta advised Chief Hudak wants to have a former City of Coral Gables police lieutenant who specialized in training police officers and first responders to come and provide training for new police officers who have not received prior training as well as a refresher course for those who have had the training before. Ms. Elejabarrieta advised everyone during the training will be advised of GUIDE, what is expected and what they need to do when they receive the information for those participating in GUIDE program. Ms. Elejabarrieta stated it is expected to be rolled out sometime in June or July 2021. Ms. Elejabarrieta stated they will be looking after a year into how often this was utilized, how it was able to assist participants and police officers.

Ms. Elejabarrieta advised current training Fire department is receiving from Teresa Becerra who is now a City of Coral Gables resident and mother of a child with Autism. Ms. Elejabarrieta advised Ms. Becerra provides training regarding Autism and paramedics, fire fighters as well as police officers will be receiving this training. Ms. Elejabarrieta advised Ms. Becerra brings along her son to assist with training. Ms. Liebl stated this is just another example of the City going above and beyond with everything that they do and she is grateful for that. Ms. Liebl stated having the GUIDE program released with the police officers and fire fighters receive proper training is

awesome.

Clear Mask Distribution Update– Ms. Raquel Elejabarrieta

Ms. Liebl stated it was awesome and thankful of Crystal Academy children for their participation in distribution. Ms. Palacio-Pike stated they visited several businesses in the area and were extremely well received. Ms. Palacio-Pike stated one of the students from Crystal Academy loves to talk to people, so she was giving every bystander she saw on the street a mask. Ms. Palacio-Pike stated while visiting Target, not only the workers but customers they understood it, and some were requesting if they could please have another one. Ms. Palacio-Pike stated she found most people were not using the mask, however keeping it so that if it became necessary, they would have it available.

Ms. Elejabarrieta advised on April 17, 2021, Ms. Liebl, her family and Mr. Julian Perez, Director of Economic Development distributed clear face masks for a couple of hours to various establishments. Ms. Elejabarrieta advised they were well received as well.

Ms. Liebl stated last Friday while attending in person the Chambers small business submit, she wore her mask, and everyone started making comments such as “my gosh that is so smart”. Ms. Liebl stated she returned home and got the few she had left, went back and distributed them. Ms. Liebl stated from a business standpoint they got it and there was even an attorney present who advised she has a client who is deaf which due to mask wearing has not been able to meet with in person because she would be unable to read her lips, now with mask she will be able to do so. Ms. Elejabarrieta advised masks were made available to all police officers, fire fighters, City commissioners and parks & recreation personnel. Ms. Elejabarrieta advised Board of article in newspaper as well as television news interview conducted; good publicity which generated conversations. Ms. Elejabarrieta advised there are still approximately four more boxes available, and she will be contacting Director Perez of Economic Development to see if Chamber needs more. Ms. Liebl stated it takes a village to rally around an individual with a disability and the City of Coral Gables is an amazing village which she is thankful for.

Future Board Meeting Dates – Ms. Elejabarrieta

Ms. Elejabarrieta advised Board is currently booked the first Wednesday of every month at 10:00am. Ms. Elejabarrieta advised as of June 14, 2021; all meeting required to be conducted in person and if it is necessary for someone to call in due to illness, traveling, etc. they will be able to do so as well. Ms. Elejabarrieta asked if Board would like to continue with 10:00am frame time or return to 8:00am as before. Ms. Liebl, Ms. Palacio-Pike and Ms. Milne advised they would be ok with either of the times and Ms. Halley requested she be emailed directly regarding this. Ms. Liebl stated she would like to ask Mr. Sando and whichever be best for him that would be the best time. Ms. Elejabarrieta advised she would contact Mr. Sando to establish best time and advise Board of same. Ms. Elejabarrieta asked if Board wanted to proceed with June meeting, due to next meeting will be two weeks from today’s meeting. Ms. Liebl stated meeting should be held to further discuss Adventure Day for All. Ms. Elejabarrieta suggested perhaps June 2, 2021 to be a hybrid/virtual meeting since no motions will be taking place. Ms. Palacio-Pike stated perhaps a discussion regarding aftermath of Literacy Fair can take place.

Autism Vehicle Update – Ms. Elejabarrieta

Ms. Elejabarrieta stated April 1, 2021 it was a huge unveiling success, not only great media but great awareness and acceptance brought forth. Ms. Elejabarrieta stated Officer George along with his family especially his brother were amazing. Ms. Elejabarrieta stated his brother Austin, knew it was about him and he was so proud of his brother the Police Officer. Ms. Elejabarrieta stated it was an overall beautiful event.

Ms. Elejabarrieta advised on April 2, 2021, City Hall was lit up in blue and posted this on social media. Ms. Elejabarrieta stated on April 15, 2021, Crystal Academy did had an event where Police Chief Hudak, Ms. Liebl, Mr. Mark Trowbridge, Chamber of Commerce, Crystal Academy children and others were there, where vehicle was featured. Ms. Palacio-Pike stated it was a very special and learning event for everyone where an open discussion

regarding Autism took place. Ms. Palacio-Pike stated the fact the vehicle has been driven around the City, sharing the message of inclusion, understanding and acceptance is a blessing. Ms. Palacio-Pike stated this vehicle is the first one ever and feels it is an Autism education patrol vehicle. Ms. Elejabarrieta stated the Officer assigned the vehicle is a perfect representation of who should be driving this vehicle and is very proud to do so.

Ms. Elejabarrieta stated on April 17, 2021, the police vehicle participated in a bicycle ride throughout Miami-Dade County to raise acceptance and awareness for Autism escorting the cyclists along with vehicles from Miami-Dade County and City of Miami.

Ms. Elejabarrieta stated on April 18, 2021, there was a motorcycle ride also regarding Autism acceptance and awareness where the City of Coral Gables Autism vehicle participated escorting the motorcycles.

Ms. Elejabarrieta stated on April 22, 2021, Ms. Ana Navarro, who is a media influencer with 1.2 million followers and a City of Coral Gables resident, saw the Autism vehicle and reached out to City expressing how much she loved it and wanted to post same on her social media platform. Ms. Elejabarrieta stated Officer George met with Ms. Navarro and she interviewed him. Ms. Elejabarrieta stated Ms. Navarro advised she posted interview in the morning and by the same afternoon, she had already 30,000 views. bringing a lot of awareness. Ms. Elejabarrieta stated hopefully education, awareness campaign and obviously the vehicle patrolling the streets will continue to bring awareness. Ms. Elejabarrieta stated she can provide Board with a clip of the interview and advised City will continue to participate with the Autism vehicle in as many upcoming events as possible.

Recreation Handicap Parking Update – Ms. Elejabarrieta

Ms. Elejabarrieta advised upon further review of area, the entrance to the gym has been moved temporary. Ms. Elejabarrieta stated there is only street parking of which none are accessible and even if City would restripe and place sign, there is no ramp therefore it would not be accessible. Ms. Elejabarrieta stated she was advised it would be best to park in the area of the basketball court where there are accessible parking spaces and enter gym from there.

City’s position regarding creating and utilizing videos – Ms. Milne

Ms. Milne stated she believes sound bites maybe used instead and wanted to make sure idea is not dismissed completely but revisit possibility of using short versions. Ms. Milne feels people will watch sound bites. Ms. Palacio-Pike stated 15minute clips are great. Ms. Elejabarrieta stated this will be looked into.

Ms. Elejabarrieta stated regarding Ms. Pantin coming in to notify Board City is currently working on Emergency Preparedness Flyer for Hurricane season and would love to hear suggestions or information Board would like to have included in flyer.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

NEXT MEETING: June 2, 2021

ADJOURNMENT: Meeting adjourned at 11:27am

ATTACHMENT(S):

Minutes of the May 12, 2021 meeting