

City of Coral Gables

405 Biltmore Way
Coral Gables, FL 33134
www.coralgables.com



Meeting Minutes

Thursday, May 6, 2021

4:00 PM

The Board meets the first Thursday of each month.
Adult Activity Center, 2 Andalusia Avenue, Coral Gables, FL 33134
Senior Citizens Advisory Board

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting began at 4:00pm

ROLL CALL

Present:

Celia Suarez

Edward English

Jane Mass

Jim Berlin

Julian Sevillano

Joan Valdes-Virtual

Richard Thurer-Virtual

A motion to approve Celia Suarez's April absence is made by Jim Berlin and second by Jane Mass. Motion passed unanimously.

ITEMS FROM THE CITY CLERK'S OFFICE

The City Clerk's office representative Imelys Sansores spoke to the board about submitting their financial disclosure for source of income. If the Board has any questions, they can contact the City Clerk's Office directly.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

A Motion to approve the April's meeting minutes was made Jim Berlin and second by Edward English. All in favor, passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS**a. Parking at the Adult Activity Center**

The agenda item pertaining to parking for the Adult Activity Center was moved up on the agenda. City Manager Peter Iglesias began the discussion stating that when the contract between The Palace and the City of Coral Gables was negotiated, thirty-five complimentary valet parking were included. However, the contract did not allow for complimentary self-parking. The City Manager stated that at this time the City will continue to cover the expenses for parking vouchers for participants for the Adult Activity Center. Nevertheless, staff and city administration are encouraging the use of valet parking in order to fully utilize the services provided in the contract in an attempt to subsidize expenses associated with self-parking. By these spaces not being utilized, its "money left on the table". The Palace is receiving between \$40,000-\$60,000 in voucher fees and the usage of the valet spots because our patrons are not utilizing them. Staff has asked that the Board and those present, to please share this information with AAC participants.

Board member Celia Suarez shared with the City Manager and staff issues she sees or has experienced with using valet parking when AAC participants are trying to park at the same time right before the start of their programs. She wants the AAC staff to witness and document the congestion to share with city administration her concerns. Peter Iglesias would welcome any feedback from participants and staff. Peter also went on to say that he hopes with any increase usage of the valet service, it will encourage The Palace to make amendments to the contract to include additional self-parking accommodations.

Item was Open to Public Commentary:

Resident Jude Alexander shared a letter she wrote that was sent to the Mayor, City Manager, and the City Commissioners on behalf of fellow seniors at the Adult Activity Center to express their concerns of the proposed parking fees at the AAC Building. It is their request to continue the complimentary parking to its participants indefinitely. See attached letter.

Peter Iglesias reiterated that the City would continue to cover the cost of parking to the participants of the Adult Activity Center. He also made mention to a comment that Ms. Alexander made about participants using the center often and for long period of times. He expressed that these users would be the ideal candidates to utilize the valet parking. Their usage would

have the most cost savings and would create the most impact on the traffic flow of the valet system.

Adult Activity Center Supervisor Katherine Anderson shared with the public and with the Board that if there are any issues with valet parking to please email her directly and she will pass their complaints to administration. She will also be able to keep a log of any issues that we will be able to address with The Palace.

A speaker from the public asked if the contract between the City and The Palace can be amended to have less valet spaces so that money can be used for parking vouchers. The City Manager explained that the City cannot renegotiate the contract at this time.

Resident and former Senior Board member Maria Cruz spoke to staff and the Board explaining that the senior citizens of Coral Gables deserve to be given what was promised when the center was constructed, and it is unfair to have our seniors pay for parking when other Coral Gables recreational facilities have free parking for its users. The City Manager reiterated that the City would continue to cover the cost of parking to the participants of the Adult Activity Center and encourages users to valet with The Palace.

Resident Jude Alexander asked if there will be a limit to how many vouchers participants will receive per day. Community Recreation Director Fred Couceyro explained that there will be no limit to how many vouchers a participant will receive per day however vouchers will only be given for the duration of time those participants use the Center and its programming. In the past, staff noticed that participants would take one class and then leave the center for lunch or shopping and try to collect vouchers for the entire time their vehicle was in the garage. This is no longer allowed and was changed nearly two years ago.

Questions from the public left in the Zoom chat box asked if free parking is guaranteed indefinitely. The City Manager responded stating that parking will remain the same with complimentary vouchers being provided.

Resident Aurelio Durana asked to speak to staff and the Board to also express his concerns about using the valet parking and then having to cross the street to access the center. There are no lights or signaling devices for the crosswalk to aid in crossing in front of The Palace to get to the AAC. His recommendation if this is a transportation issue, is to subsidize other transportation programs that do not directly affect our residents within the City to use towards covering the cost of parking.

Board Member Jim Berlin asked if there have been any long-term discussions about creating a second site for an additional Adult Activity Center. The City Manager expressed that they have not looked in to creating a second site. However, with the Youth Center Master Plan expressing the need for a satellite facility for programming, perhaps they can incorporate activities for our senior population as well. Peter then went on to share the construction progress of facilities that have recently been completed or are underway for fiscal year 2021 and the upcoming construction for the following fiscal years. With such a heavy list of projects in the works, this could impede the approval of any additional CIP projects in the future.

After Peter went over all the upcoming projects and construction or repair needs, resident Maria Cruz noted how important these future plans are to the city but asked what the City is planning to do for its seniors now. Director Fred Couceyro explained the growth of our senior's division since its inception and shared that right before the pandemic he was working with the Center's supervisors to add additional classes, extend hours, and plan programming for the weekends. They will continue with these plans as we gradually reopen.

SUPERVISOR'S REPORT

AAC Supervisor Katherine Anderson began her report with updating the board on the reopening of the center. The center has reopened Monday-Friday just for registration and to create their AAC Access Pass from 9am-4pm. The access passes have already begun tracking attendance with the creation of 147 passes; 107 residents and 39 residents. Programming will begin next week, and staff plans on offering 45 different classes for Summer however there will be more programs starting in the Fall when volunteers have returned to the Center. Although COVID restrictions are being lifted, when patrons come to visit the center, entry from the west doors will be for registration and entry from the east doors will be for programming check in. The Center will also continue with masks and social distancing.

Jim Berlin asked if there will be fees associated with the AAC Access Pass. Katherine shared with the board that there will be no fees for the pass but there will be fees still associated with programs. All Zoom classes will remain free.

Assistant Supervisor Manny Guerrero has returned to work after a work-related injury.

Director Fred Couceyro gave the board an update on the rest of the department. Most of the facilities have reopened or are partially reopened but by June 14th, all facilities are expected to be back to normal operations. We will continue to implement certain COVID encouraged guidelines within Parks, but we will follow suite with what decisions are made by City administration.

Fred also shared with the board the upcoming ribbon cutting for Jaycee Park on Saturday at 9am for the brand-new playground that was installed. Other projects in the works include finishing the Master Plan and presenting to the Commission for approval. With these plans, our department hopes to create a satellite location for programming to include programming for the senior community.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Jane Mass asked to have the board elect a new Board Chair prior to her leaving the board. However, staff instructed members that they should wait until all new appointed board members are present before a selection is made. Fred Couceyro also shared that there are openings on the Parks Advisory board if any members are interested in continuing. Celia Suarez will need to be voted in again as Board-Member-at -Large our next advisory board meeting.

Julian Sevillano shared with the board and staff that by mid-June he expects to resume with Brain Training. Katherine and her staff will reach out with him to coordinate.

ITEMS FROM THE SECRETARY

The next board meeting is scheduled for June 3rd 2021 at 4pm

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 5:23pm

NOTE