

CITY OF CORAL GABLES ADVISORY BOARD ON DISABILITY AFFAIRS
 CITY OF CORAL PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING
 2151 Salzedo Street 1st Floor CMR A Room
 VIRTUAL – VIA ZOOM
 WEDNESDAY, June 1, 2022
 MEETING MINUTES -

MEMBERS	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	APPOINTED BY:
	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	
Blake Sando	P	P	E	P	*	P							Mayor Vince Lago
Samantha Duran	E	PZ	PZ	PZ	*	PZ							Rhonda Anderson
Mary Palacio-Pike	P	P	P	P	*	P							Kirk Menendez
Philippa Milne	P	P	P	P	*	P							Jorge L. Fors, Jr.
Haley Moss	A	P	E	A	*	PZ							Michael Mena
Vanessa Liebl	P	P	P	P	*	A							Ex-Officio Member Chamber of Commerce

PZ = Via Zoom

A – Absent
 E – Excused Absence
 (-) – No Appointment
 (*) – No Meeting
 (**)-No Meeting – COVID19

BOARD MEMBERS:

QUORUM: In Person was reached

STAFF:

Raquel Elejabarrieta – Labor Relations & Risk Management Director
 Mitchell Zuriarrain – Parks & Recreation Administrative Operations Supervisor
 Catie Hastings – Parks & Recreation D.E.I (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) Coordinator
 Vivian Pires – Parks & Recreation P/T D.E.I. Counselor

GUEST:

Commissioner Rhonda Anderson

CITIZEN ADVISORS:

Bonnie Blaire
 Debbie Dietz (via Zoom)
 Dr. Jennifer Durocher, Director of UM-NSU Card

PUBLIC GUEST:

CALL TO ORDER:

Meeting was called to order 10:00am

MEETING ABSENCE:

Vanessa Liebl

MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL:

April 6, 2022

Ms. Blaire pointed out two items which need to be addressed and corrected:

Page 3 – Under Section – My Squad – 2nd to last Paragraph – the word “not” has to be added to “this program has been running for a year”; and

Page 3 – Under Section – My Squad – 2nd to last Paragraph – change “receiving” to “sending out proper notification.”

Board agreed to approve minutes pending above changes be completed.

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

SECRETARY’S REPORT: None

BOARD MEMBERS REPORTS: None

NEW BUSINESS:

Update Granada Golf Course Pathway – Ms. Elejabarrieta

Ms. Elejabarrieta advised two to three months ago; City paved a path on the Granada Golf Course parallel to Coral Way from approximately Anderson to Segovia. Ms. Elejabarrieta stated the path was phase 1 of the project and that Miami-Dade County in phase 2 of the project was installing a traffic circle on Anderson and Coral Way in 2023. Ms. Elejabarrieta advised that once Phase 2 is completed by the County, the City will create an accessible crosswalk from the path on Granada to the intersection on Anderson.

Ms. Dietz stated that the path on the Anderson side currently ends into a driveway and there are no detectable warning signals and the path on the other side ends in grass. Ms. Dietz also stated there is no way to access the bus stop from the pathway. Ms. Dietz expressed concern about creating a crosswalk in the traffic circle on Anderson. Ms. Dietz expressed her disappointment with the City on the installation of this inaccessible path on Granada.

Commission Anderson stated this was not a City commission voted item, had it been, she would have brought up these issues.

Ms. Blaire stated that department directors must understand the elements they should be looking at when it comes to accessibility. Ms. Blaire stated maybe there some discussion which needed to happen with Public Works department to address this.

Ms. Dietz stated that in the past there was training conducted by the board to each department and perhaps it needs to be done once again. Ms. Elejabarrieta stated that when she commenced with board, there was a period of four months where the board in place of holding a meeting, would conduct training for city employees, mostly department directors and management. Ms. Elejabarrieta advised each board member was assigned a specific disability, physical, hearing, intellectual and visual. Ms. Elejabarrieta stated training would be approximately an hour session.

Ms. Blaire stated other things they did as board was training with the commission using wheelchairs, splint on their fingers, glasses, etc., to emulate the different disabilities and provide sensitivity awareness. Ms. Blaire stated these are opportunities perhaps this board could think about.

Ms. Palacio advised there is a proposal to bring those training back. Ms. Palacio stated proposal is having commissioners and department heads be part of an exercise where they feel what it’s like to use a wheelchair. Ms. Dietz stated that this type of training is outdated so she would caution on how to proceed.

Ms. Blaire stated she believes the other issue is the board is of five people and cannot run these activities. Ms. Blaire state the city may need to pay attention to bringing in additional support for this board and for itself, to start allowing activities to both percolate and promulgate throughout city environment. Ms. Blaire stated she thinks must happen more internally then by action of this advisory board. Ms. Blaire stated this is another concept to think about.

Ms. Dietz stated that this board needs to be aware of the path on Granada and make the commissioners aware of this path and that waiting 2 years for it to be accessible is too long.

Ms. Elejabarrieta stated city is limited on the Anderson side, because it is a county road. Ms. Elejabarrieta stated the city is looking into the feasibility of creating a crosswalk on Segovia. Ms. Elejabarrieta stated there are a lot of components and they should know by end of next week if there is going to be enough space.

Mr. Sando asked how new projects built in the city are processed and how accessibility issues are addressed. Ms. Elejabarrieta stated projects goes through code and the permitting process. .

Mr. Sando stated just talking out loud, maybe there is a way for new projects have a comment period like federal regulations has a comment period where people from the public have a twenty-day period to comment or make recommendations how this may impact disability access. Mr. Sando stated he understands this maybe a big proposal, more transparency. Mr. Sando stated it seems city keeps repeating same issue with projects. Mr. Sando stated example for Miracle Mile. Ms. Dietz stated this was done reference Miracle Mile (audible crosswalk) and were promised it would happen. Ms. Blaire stated it still has not happened.

stated ideally, they would want to make a recommendation to commission to try to fix it, however not sure how that recommendation would look like. Ms. Dietz stated they have listed specifics. Mr. Sando stated it then seems it should be an ongoing discussion.

Ms. Blaire stated that there needs to be someone with clout within the city who is the entity to whom all this is addressed to. Ms. Elejabarrieta stated she is that person, she is the city's ADA coordinator on the city's accessibility and reports directly to the City manager and these issues have been brought to the city and it is how they are being addressed.

Ms. Blaire stated she understands the history of the position, however, she thinks the practicality of how the position; the operation of that is far larger than perhaps what was originally considered when someone added that ADA component to a position that existed in the city. Ms. Blaire stated that is not fair to the person, which is now Ms. Elejabarrieta, person in that position, because they had many other responsibilities, and the types of things Ms. Blaire and Ms. Dietz are speaking out require full time responsibility. Ms. Blaire stated that is not fair to put on, not Ms. Elejabarrieta as a person, but to the position, it is the wrong answer. Ms. Blaire stated it is a component which should still be there, and she does not want Ms. Elejabarrieta to leave the table, because she has brought so many important things to the table and has done so much since the day she arrived, which she remembers the day. Ms. Dietz stated it is hard to say you are a city of inclusiveness and accessibility when you put in a path like that.

Ms. Elejabarrieta stated that this path it is part of a bigger project and city decided to do it in phases which will be taking a significant amount of time. Ms. Elejabarrieta stated that what happened with the path is an outlier. Ms. Elejabarrieta stated that the City has mechanism is in place for that not to happen.

Ms. Blaire stated this errors seem to be repeated like what happened in past on Granada Boulevard, bridge and sidewalk to no where on the boulevard.

Ms. Dietz stated a great job was conducted with Salvadore Park. Mr. Zuriarrain stated there is a process in place and he apologized for it not having worked this time, he is not sure what happened.

Mr. Zuriarrain spoke regards to Merrick Park ongoing project. Mr. Zuriarrain stated this has been worked on for a while now. Mr. Zuriarrain stated he has final drawings, sidewalks, which he can bring to board for review, and he will be putting it up for thirty days for public review and comments. Mr. Zuriarrain stated there is a process in place which is followed for their project. Mr. Zuriarrain stated as a department they have gendered that trust with the public and wish to continue with that trust. Mr. Zuriarrain stated they want to hear from the board as well as the community.

Mr. Zuriarrain stated he is not sure if this happens all the time, he can only speak of regarding park projects, which rely on community input. Ms. Blaire stated parks does it well. Mr. Zuriarrain stated he is very excited regarding Merrick Park. Ms. Elejabarrieta stated there will be able to activate the park in many different ways since there will now be an accessibly pathway.

Ms. Palacio stated she understands the importance expressed of having one person which is solely focused on ADA, however, feels this is something beyond the board's scope. Ms. Palacio stated perhaps having Commissioner Anderson present and hearing concerns expressed, may support and perhaps it can be something supported by the commission as well. Ms. Palacio stated to see what happens by next week. Ms. Elejabarrieta stated they will review the feasibility of doing something on the Segovia side in the meantime while awaiting county to conduct Anderson project. Ms. Elejabarrieta stated city will report back.

OLD BUSINESS:

Recap – City of Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce - Good Morning, Coral Gables Breakfast

Ms. Mary Palacio

Ms. Palacio stated how wonderful it was to participate at this event. Ms. Palacio expressed Ms. Sando did an amazing job and spoke directly from the heart. Ms. Elejabarrieta stated after the breakfast she was approached by various entities regarding how to obtain further information regarding contacts to organizations such as the DeMoya Foundation, Best Buddies, etc. Mr. Sando stated looking forward towards 2023 breakfast, it would be great to have this opportunity become an annual tradition, keeping the effort ongoing.

Project Victory – Ms. Elejabarrieta

Ms. Elejabarrieta advised contract was received approximately three weeks ago and is currently in legal department. Ms. Elejabarrieta stated once this has been finalized, it would be presented to commission by end of June and board will be advised. Ms. Elejabarrieta advised it would be wonderful for board members to be present at the commission meeting and she believes members of the school board will be in attendance.

Ms. Palacio advised Coral Gables High School is conducting a summer program regarding this and perhaps it would be a good idea to contact them to see if any participating students can attend the commission meeting. Ms. Elejabarrieta proceeded to explain details of contract such as number of participants (six in the am, six in the afternoon, total maximum twelve), program commencing at City Hall and how staff as well as everyone else are looking forward to interacting with the participants.

Mr. Sando stated he believes it would be a great idea to have some of the participants of the program be present assisting at commission meetings in some type of capacity. Mr. Sando stated these meetings are viewed by many and it would be a great opportunity to promote program.

Ms. Palacio suggested perhaps the city's communications department can chronicle the progress of the program and its participants to then be shared with the commission and business community.

My Squad – Ms. Catie Hastings, Parks & Recreation

Ms. Hastings advised participants have slowly increased. Ms. Hastings stated they have had a consistent group attending, and she can see how they are interacting more with each other. Ms. Hastings stated they are settling in, seeing them joking around more and it is starting to feel more like a group instead of a place.

Ms. Hastings stated there is a set of three sessions planned and there will be a \$5.00 fee implemented. Ms. Hastings indicated a survey was conducted regarding adding a small fee and those who participated in the survey indicated they had no issues with implementing a \$5.00 fee to make it more sustainable for the department.

Ms. Palacio asked if this would continue during the summer. Ms. Hastings indicated that it would continue through the summer.

Ms. Palacio spoke about flyer promoting My Squad. Mr. Zuriarrain stated speaking with Catie, they decided to create a little bio with a photo and list at least three upcoming events, description of each and send information out. Mr. Zuriarrain stated board can then share this with their resources as well. Mr. Zuriarrain stated creating anything else at this time is very hard due to all the flyers and events during the summer.

Ms. Milne stated she is not saying for flyers not to be done; however, she believes word of mouth will help get new participants.

Ms. Elejabarrieta asked if it would be possible to obtain the summer schedule so it can be distributed. Mr. Zuriarrain said it would be made available as soon as possible. Ms. Hastings advised it is always the last Wednesday of the month. Ms. Hastings stated one of the things she received back from various people was regarding the importance to having consistency and they have worked hard to obtain that. Ms. Hastings stated one of the biggest benefits of having moved their location is that this is their space, providing them the ability to maintain consistency and being inside, weather has not been an issue. Ms. Hastings stated next thing needed is lights.

Mr. Zuriarrain that the lights for the My Squad Lodge have been put in as capital improvement plan to be voted on by commission as part of their matrix as improvements to lighting and pathways inside this space. Mr. Zuriarrain stated everything does take time and monies.

Ms. Hastings stated they have also created a new My Squad logo. Ms. Hastings stated it has been placed by road and a light will also be placed to indicate better where it is at. Ms. Milne stated they would like

to be able to use Uber, however, are concern location may not be found. Mr. Zuriarrain stated there is a way to address that with Uber and Lift, assigning a pinpoint and he would discuss with Director Kenny.

Adventure Day For All – Mr. Zuriarrain

Mr. Zuriarrain advised date chosen October 22, 2022, same location. Mr. Zuriarrain stated he will be working with Catie to conduct a survey, unfortunately it did not work out last year, however they do have a new software which he used at Literacy Fest, and it was successful. Mr. Zuriarrain stated if the board had any suggestions of questions to be included to please advise.

Mr. Zuriarrain stated they want to conduct same style of event, perhaps adding some vendors, change locations of some.

Ms. Palacio asked regarding attendance at the weekend's Literacy Fest. Mr. Zuriarrain stated he was not sure, however, was advised there may have been between 1,500 to 1,700. Mr. Zuriarrain advised the number of vendors were doubled to forty. Mr. Sando stated his wife attended and it was a great event

Mr. Sando asked if date would be the same for next year. Mr. Zuriarrain stated it is not up to them, it is up to the School Community Relations Committee.

July 4 Event – Mr. Zuriarrain

Mr. Zuriarrain advised they are working with Biltmore Hotel regarding parking, due to it will no longer be available. Mr. Zuriarrain, advise he wanted to address this at this time, due to assure a more organized system in advance and board can assist with this. Mr. Zuriarrain stated they are also negotiating with St. Teresa with accessible parking available, however maybe a bit more distance. Mr. Zuriarrain stated they will be offering shuttle services to assure they get to the event on time. Mr. Zuriarrain advised they are expecting to have 30,000 to 34,000 people to attend.

Mr. Zuriarrain stated they are currently redesigning the shuttle system. Mr. Zuriarrain stated they used to provide accommodations at the front of the stage which was always successful and asked the board for the next meeting to provide feedback. Ms. Elejabarrieta pointed out the next meeting may be too late due to it is scheduled for July 6, 2022, therefore if board would like to provide any feedback can contact Mr. Zuriarrain or herself directly.

Ms. Elejabarrieta advised Mr. Zuriarrain once the map which they provide, is ready, to forward same to her so that it can be sent to board for their review and input.

Ms. Palacio asked if there were going to be more accessible parking available. Mr. Zuriarrain stated this is part of this ongoing discussion with Biltmore.

Ms. Palacio asked reference restroom. Mr. Zuriarrain stated they are already looking into this and rental of same. Ms. Hastings stated it is also noted to have these on an accessible pathway.

Leaf Blowers Update – Ms. Elejabarrieta

Ms. Elejabarrieta advised of a resolution sponsored by Commissioner Anderson along with others, whereas the city's goal is to get away from gas and fossil fuel leaf blowers, moving to electrical blowers, which tend to be quieter and better for environment. Ms. Elejabarrieta advised the goal is to go 100% to electric leaf blowers by 2024. Ms. Elejabarrieta stated reason why staff advised they could not do it now, is due to the extended tree canopy. Ms. Elejabarrieta stated the technology is catching up however is not 100% there yet.

Mr. Zuriarrain explained what Parks & Recreation department is currently doing and trying to utilize electrical blowers. Mr. Zuriarrain stated issue is technology has not caught up. Mr. Zuriarrain stated some staff is already using electrical blowers.

Self-Contained Classrooms – Ms. Elejabarrieta

Ms. Elejabarrieta advised she has been in contact with school board and is waiting to receive confirmation from them. Ms. Elejabarrieta advised as soon as she receives information from them, she will distribute to the board. Ms. Elejabarrieta advised they made it seemed that the middle school self-contained classroom was happening this August.

Ms. Palacio stated she had opportunity to speak at the May Chamber of Commerce breakfast with the new school superintendent who advised he was not aware Coral Gables did not have self-contained classroom available. Ms. Palacio stated he is available if we would like to reach out to him. Mr. Sando stated it is great for the school to give commitment for this school year.

Ms. Elejabarrieta stated for next meeting in July, board should focus on Disability Awareness Month. Ms. Elejabarrieta stated it would be nice to be able to have an event, training or other active each week during the month.

Ms. Elejabarrieta asked if board will be having a meeting in July since usually it does not, it would be on July 6, 2022. Ms. Palacio stated a meeting would be going forth in July and for board to bring ideas reference Disability Awareness Month.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

NEXT MEETING: July 6, 2022

ADJOURNMENT: Meeting adjourned at 11:00am

Motion to Adjourn: Mr. Sando/ 2nd Motion: Ms. Milne / All approved unanimously.