

School Community Relations Committee Meeting of May 17, 2024

CALL TO ORDER

ROLL CALL

Chairperson Winnie Chang and Board members Joshua Goodman, Ana Lam, Andrew Nadal, and Cecilia Slesnick were present. Vice Chairperson Sandy Dimitris joined via zoom, Board members Erin Anding and Sharon Watson were absent.

A. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Board member Lam shared a correction under section E1. /General Updates, the name of the board member who shared the update was incorrect, rather than Erin Anding it should read Ana Lam. Board member Ana Lam motioned to approve the minutes and chairperson Chang seconded the motion. All board members were in favor of the motion.

B. PUBLIC COMMENT

April Jones of Coral Gables Preparatory Academy PTSA reminded the board that the PTSA would like to be notified regarding the Philip Park renovations scheduling two weeks before construction starts and wishes to be included in the workshop design.

C. NEW BUSINESS

C-1. Miami-Dade County Public Schools Update (Facilitated by Mari Tere Rojas, School Board Chair)

Marlene Hernandez shared on behalf of the chair and began to address revised board items beginning with B-3 which was the school board's approval of resolution 24031 recognizing the walk space program at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine, KiDZ Neuroscience Center including the 2024 Walk 6 Statewide culture contest winners. Marlene shared the second board item which stated the school board recognized, honored and approved the naming of the annual college fair as a Perla Tabares Hantman Miami National College Fair. Marlene announced item H-3 which is the enforcement of the commemoration of the 122nd anniversary of the independence of Cuba on May 20th, 2024, and extend the celebration to the Cuban American community residing in Miami-Dade County with a sincere hope that liberty and democracy will soon become a reality for the Cuban people and independence will again flourish in a free Cuba. Following H-3 was item H-4 which included the action proposed by Chair Rojas for the school board to recognize the Florida Golden Silver Seal of Biliteracy Programs in MDCPS for honoring graduating high school students who achieve a high level of competency in one or more world languages. Marlene continues to read revised items and actions proposed by Chair Rojas to the school board and approved to the SCRC members. Regarding the item about safety measures such as installing metal detectors in high schools, board member Goodman asked if that was only exclusive to high schools, Marlene will ask and get back to Mr. Goodman for verification. Chairperson Chang asked that when implementing the metal detectors, it is done so with precaution due to the stigma surrounding the image of the idea and the impact on students. Chairperson Chang also asked that updates be shared via email prior to the meeting. Board member Slesnick added to share its related impact to the schools in Coral Gables. Board member Slesnick proposed visiting during her office hours to bring the request to Board Chair Rojas' attention. Fernando volunteers to communicate the ask with Marlene and Ailette. Marlene added that she would share the link to all the B and H items that come up with Fernando, and he will share them with the board.

C-2. Phillips Park Project Update (Facilitated by City Staff)

Deputy Director of Community Recreation Carolina Vester provided an update regarding Phillip's Park. She explained that construction would still be at least a year away because they have yet to complete the plans and permitting for the project or secure the funding for the project. In a presentation regarding Phillips Park, Carolina shared that when the city does large projects that affect the community there is an open input period. The community is noticed 1500 feet of the property and community input is open for thirty days. Considering that Phillips Park is more of a regional park rather than a neighborhood, while completing immediate neighborhood and community input, they are also taking citywide community input since it affects the larger demographic in the city. In a brief history Carolina shared, in 2006 the city authorized an education compact between Miami-Dade Public Schools and the city. In 2010, said compact allowed for the newly established middle school portion of the Coral Gables K-8 Preparatory Academy at the location known as the Merrick Educational Center, the non-exclusive use of Phillips Park for its physical education activities during school days. The use agreement lapsed during the 2022-23 school year; no renewal request has been submitted by MDCPS, upon their response Fernando will coordinate with them to reinstate the agreement. One of the biggest issues mentioned during the community meeting was regarding the growth of usage of the park considering all the amenities, creating the question of

parking availability. Carolina clarified that there is a location between the school and the park, which is an easement with shared property where there is parking. So, there is possibly an opportunity to allow for parking in the evening, which is another factor to consider when renewing the agreement. Carolina provided clarity regarding the different contracts involved in the renewal process, first is the MDCPS agreement, the compact which allows for the use agreements and then the agreement unique to the facility and location. Carolina recommended that the agreement is renewed as soon as possible considering ongoing activity while it was lapsed to ensure proper documentation. This project received a competitive reimbursement grant from the Florida Recreation Development Assistance Program, which provides financial assistance for acquisition or development of land for public outdoor recreation. The \$200,000 state grant was successfully awarded conditional to having a \$200,000 city match with a three-year completion deadline from the award date. The grant project deadline is April 30th, 2026.

Phillips Park would be facing the following proposed enhancements: expansion/replacement of the current building to introduce a staffed building with activity space, office space and indoor restroom facilities, two new pickleball courts(would replace one of the tennis courts), a push activated flow-through splash pad playground, installation of fenced-in artificial turf athletic field, a fitness and exercise area, lightening prediction system, and CCTV surveillance cameras. Carolina also shared a topic of concern during the community meeting regarding Phillips Park was the proximity of the pickleball court to the school. So, Community Recreation is going to take it back to the architect to see if the pickleball courts can go on the opposite side of the park so that the field is closer to the school and the pickleball courts are closer to the building. Considering the budget of the project, they didn't wish to make major changes, but they will explore mitigating some of the concerns regarding pickleball and study the cost impact of the proposed change. Chairperson Chang asked Carolina about plans regarding construction by the street across from the Zamora Campus where there is a private undeveloped empty lot from the upper school and proposed that it could maybe be utilized as a low façade multi-layer parking facility similar to that behind miracle mile, which would introduce ease and functionality for the park as well as for the school and the faculty there. Carolina explained that she will relay the message to Jennifer Garcia in the planning department and ask if there is anything that the city knows about the lot and possibly bring back more information to the board. The Community Recreation Department is proposing little misters near the playground as well, along with other cooling stations due to an increase of heat advisories. Carolina shared that their will be plaques on site to honor the past elected official (Mr. Philips), but they will attempt to implement actual commemorations to the history of the park, following Chairperson Chang's recommendation of an orange tree linking to the city's citrus history. There will be an artificial turf soccer field with a Product-Based System instead of an Infill Based System for safety and performance. Carolina volunteers to share more information with the board about the turf selection and the vendor upon their request considering their concern. Board member Slesnick asked about the estimated completion date, to which Carolina confirms is April 2026 to meet the grant deadline. Carolina reiterated, for additional input through Friday, June 7th please email parksprojects@coralgables.com. Board member Goodman asked if the agreement between MDCPS and the school involves any financial support from MDCPS, to which Carolina answers no because the agreement doesn't have a financial component, it was more of an exchange of usage. Fernando will share the past agreements with the board.

C-3. Presentation on the History Project (Facilitated by History Miami)

Since no representative from History Miami was present, this item was deferred.

C-4. Presentation on the START Program (Facilitated by the State Attorney's Office)

Angie from the Community Outreach Division of the State Attorney's Office shared that the START program was initiated and developed by Todd Bob the Juvenile Prosecutor, and the Juvenile Detention Center due to an increase of eighth graders being arrested. Considering the scheduling and workload for the prosecutors, the project was transferred to the Community Outreach Division, which has been modified with provision from the lawyers and prosecutors. The acronym for START means to Stop, Think, Act, React, and Tell. The presentation is interactive to encourage the students to participate and receive feedback. Closed cases are also presented during the presentation to provide examples of different consequences based on the scenario as a sample outcome. The program collaborates with TRUST counselors at the schools they visit to maintain contact and schedule visits for presentations from the Community Outreach Division. To schedule a visit, the school would email Angie with their dates of availability. Angie also adds regarding extra resources, that she finds helpful information from the FBI, Children's Protective Services, and the Federal Trade Commission's websites.

C-5. Armbrister Park Renovation Update (Facilitated by Chairperson Goodman & City Staff)

Governmental Affairs Manager, Fernando Weiner spoke with Ailette and was informed that an update will be provided upon receiving one and emailed to the board. Since there were no updates at this time, the item was differed for the agenda in September, since the agenda in July will focus on items pertaining to the MDCPS Education Compact.

D. OLD BUSINESS

D-1. Review and Update to MDCPS Education Compact with the City of Coral Gables (Facilitated by City Staff)

Chairperson Chang asked the board if they were aware of how this would unfold strategically. To which board member Goodman suggested a workshop considering that the topic is core to the board's mission. The board then considered the content of the June meeting agenda since they wish to discuss each item thoroughly. Board member Goodman informed the board that he will be absent on the date of the next meeting, and he will not be available for the entirety of June and July. Chairperson Chang confirmed that the board doesn't typically meet in July. Chairperson Chang proposed topics of discussion such as goals regarding teacher retention. Chairperson Chang explained the workshop conducted last year and the unofficial style of attendance; since the board does not meet in July, that was when the workshop was held, and it was on a come if you can basis and available on Zoom. Chairperson Chang floated the date of Friday, July 19th, 2024, workshop and Friday, August 18th, 2024, agenda as options in an informal poll. Board member Slesnick asked about the board's jurisdiction to rotate the months that speakers would address the board or limit the number of speakers on the agenda to allow the board to discuss committee specific items and decision making. She proposed this idea to allow for greater informative presentations and better discussions when deliberating amongst the board. Chairperson Chang will discuss the layout of the agenda and any regulations regarding this format with Fernando, to implement a style similar to board member Slesnick's recommendation that caters to speakers one month and committee initiatives the other to introduce better structure and focus on the committee's pillars. The board selected August 18th, on the condition that the only topic of discussion under new business would be the education compact and all other items would be deferred to the September agenda. In preparation for the August meeting, Chairperson Chang asked that Fernando prepare the current education compact as it exists, and any comments or recommendations made by the board in previous meetings in reference to the education compact. As the date nears if other preparations are necessary, Chairperson Chang will communicate that to Fernando.

D-2. Final Preparations Prior to Literacy Festival (Facilitated by Chairperson Chang)

Chairperson Chang wanted a status update regarding the used book exchange. Board member Slesnick suggested a makeshift bookshelf made of crates for passersby to take a book if interested. Fernando will confirm what the city will provide set-up wise, where the table is stationed, and if the committee will be sharing the table or have their own. Lina clarifies that a tablecloth will not be provided by the city. Chairperson Chang says left over material should be provided either to the library or community recreation for afterschool programs, the only thing the board needs to bring back is the tablecloth. Board member Goodman received an email from the Pinecrest Mayor's Education Advisory Council to attend their upcoming meeting on May 21st, and will share it with Fernando, as an invitation to attend their upcoming meeting and introduce possible collaboration and flow of ideas between the committees. Chairperson Chang wanted to communicate with other committees similar to the SCRC in different municipalities to foster a communicative relationship. Douglas Clark from the School Board Office of Intergovernmental Affairs volunteered to assist with the request since members of their staff attend a variety of meetings such as those in the Village of Miami Shores, the Village of Pinecrest, Cutler Bay, Miami Lakes, and more. Chairperson Chang asked if more than one member of the committee could attend the meeting on May 21st, to which he will confirm and inform the board of permissible action. Chairperson Chang asked Fernando to send an email with the current sign-up list and ask the members that have yet to do so to sign up accordingly. Chairperson Chang also asked Fernando to put together a list of family friendly city sponsored events that the SCRC can participate in to effectively brand the committee. Fernando suggested adding this topic to the June meeting agenda, the board agreed. Lina Santiago informed the committee that every tent has a banner listing the committee.

E. ONGOING BUSINESS

E-1. General Updates

No Updates

F. ANNOUNCEMENTS

No Announcements

F-1. Next SCRC Meeting – Friday, June 21st, 2024 | 8:30 a.m.

Adjourned at 10:45 a.m.

