

City of Coral Gables

*405 Biltmore Way
Coral Gables, FL 33134
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Meeting Minutes

Thursday, June 1, 2023

4:00 PM

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86149844627>

Adult Activity Center

Senior Citizens Advisory Board

CALL TO ORDER

ROLL CALL

a. Roll Call and Excusal of Absences

A MOTION TO APPROVE THE ABSENCE OF JEAN CONNELLY WAS MADE BY CELIA SUAREZ AND WAS SECONDED BY JULIAN SEVILLANO. ALL IN FAVOR; PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Board Vice Chairperson Celia Suarez expressed two clerical errors in the minutes from the previous month and noted an issue with a motion proposed towards the end of the last meeting regarding recognizing Israel on their 75th anniversary. Administrative Operations Supervisor Sarah Espino assured the board that we would make the changes.

Present: 6 - Chairperson Berlin, Vice Chairperson Suarez, Board Member Thurer, Board Member Schild, Board Member Sevillano and Board Member Woods

Excused: 1 - Board Member Connelly

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

a. Approval of May Minutes

A MOTION TO APPROVE LAST MEETINGS MINUTES SUBJECT TO CHANGES BEING MADE AND AN UPDATED COPY OF THE MINUTES SENT TO THE MEMBERS OF THE BOARD WAS MADE BY CELIA SUAREZ AND WAS SECONDED BY JAMES "JIM" BERLIN. ALL IN FAVOR; PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

SUPERVISOR'S REPORT

a. General Updates

Beginning the supervisor's report, AAC Assistant Supervisor Gregory Walters listed a few new classes that are scheduled to begin in the upcoming weeks, including the Joy Share Club on the second and fourth Thursdays of each month starting in June and Beginners Line Dancing on Tuesdays at 2 p.m. Gregory continued by saying that the Beginner's Line Dancing class will start each session's first month, allowing participants time to lay a foundation before joining the Line Dancing class.

b. Special Events

The AAC Assistant Supervisor mentioned the Hurricane Preparedness Presentation, which preceded the advisory meeting. He noted that 12 to 15 individuals were there. Gregory briefly highlighted the upcoming special events, which include An Afternoon at the Coral Gables Art Cinema, "Roman Holiday," sponsored by Commissioner Menéndez on Saturday, June 24, at 12 p.m., rather than the initially scheduled "Monty Python and the Holy Grail." Gregory then went over National Senior Citizens Day. AAC Supervisor Katherine and AAC Assistant Supervisor have been working on preparations for Senior Week, noting that it will take place from August 21st to August 25th. He proceeded to go over some of the schedule items, such as a performance by the South Florida Chamber Ensemble, a presentation on the Coral Gables Trolley, sustainability, Keep Coral Gables Beautiful, and an End of Summer Ice Cream Social.

AAC Assistant Supervisor Gregory then offered the dates of June 14 at 10 a.m. or June 15 at 10 a.m. for the board members who were unable to attend the first PSB tour. The board agreed following discussion that, given their availability, they would prefer to inquire about booking the tour for the month of July.

Next, Board Member Richard Thurer said that while he had appreciated the previous tour, he would prefer one that focused more on the fire rescue sector. Next, Director Couceyro, said that because the PSB's fire department makes up such a small section of the organization, this is challenging.

A MOTION TO FORMALLY COMMEND AAC SUPERVISOR KATHERINE ANDERSON AND ALL AAC STAFF FOR THE MAY FIFTH EVENT WAS MADE BY CELIA SUAREZ AND WAS SECONDED BY JAMES "JIM" BERLIN. ALL IN

FAVOR; PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

c. Administrative Updates

Beginning with impending registration adjustments, Director Couceyro explained that resident registration would remain the same, but that non-resident registration would now take place on the third Monday of the month prior to the program start date. Then, Director Couceyro clarified that this is being done to assist in granting locals greater priority when registering for classes.

The Community Recreation Department will see an increase in fees in the forthcoming fiscal year beginning in October 2023, Director Couceyro stated. For residents, this is due to the fee schedule, which results in a 5% increase every two years; however, non-residents will now pay 30% more than residents, as opposed to the previous 25%.

Board Vice-Chairperson Celia Suarez asked when these rules would take effect. According to Director Couceyro, registration for the fall session will open in September, and the new registration rules will take effect on October 1st. Then, Board Chair James "Jim" Berlin inquired as to how these adjustments would be publicized and where the present AAC prices were published. Director Couceyro retorted that because these are such minor adjustments, there is typically little need for a significant public education effort, and that program fliers clearly state the costs of each program.

Board Vice-Chairperson Celia Suarez continued by saying that she thinks the upcoming changes to the registration procedure should be clearly advertised so that non-residents are aware of them. Then, Administrative Operations Supervisor Sarah explained that these modifications will also be announced, as we normally do with approaching registration dates. Celia continued by saying she thinks non-residents should be grandfathered in if the AAC were to become a facility for residents exclusively. The director went on to say that this is a tricky situation to handle, that the commission would have to decide, and that it would be challenging to create these kinds of exceptions.

Board Member Richard Thurer then questioned whether it could be worthwhile to investigate eliminating all resident fees. Director Couceyro continued by pointing out that programs that were once free are known for being well-liked but have low attendance rates since there isn't a perceived loss if one does not attend. Richard then proposed that perhaps, going ahead, we might consider raising the non-resident rate instead of raising the

resident rate. Director Couceyro said, "We are trying to maintain residents' priority by updating the registration policy and will explore other options if needed."

Board Chairperson James "Jim" Berlin, next inquired as to the proportion of locals and non-residents attending classes at the AAC. Gregory then went over some of the registration variations for some of the most well-attended classes here at the AAC, indicating the predominance of residents in most of these programs. Katherine continued by saying that after looking through our members' registration dates, she noticed that many of the locals frequently register after the deadline and fail to take advantage of their registration priority.

Director Couceyro then went through two park plans that had been considered at previous neighborhood meetings: one for Blue Road Park and the other for the park at Toledo and Alava. The major disadvantages of Blue Road Park in the neighborhood were traffic-related, even though everyone claimed to enjoy the park's planned design. Then, board member Hendrik Woods asked if Frank Button might be commemorated with a park name. The park on Toledo and Alava may be a better choice; it was picked after some debate, given its proximity to the scene of Button's murder. Director Couceyro continued by addressing the design issues raised by the neighborhood, noting that they would need to start again before returning to the neighborhood with a new park design. Due to the grant money being utilized to finish the building of both parks, both must be completed by 2025. To analyze the many options, Director Couceyro indicated he would present the details of the park naming procedure at the upcoming meeting.

Board Chairperson James "Jim" Berlin then asked whether there had been any additional discussion about the AAC's parking problem. Director Couceyro then claimed that there have been no modifications at this point and that he has made a point of emphasizing why he feels this is a mistake. Director Couceyro then stated that the panel has chosen not to alter the parking issue for the time being.

NEW BUSINESS

OLD BUSINESS

a. Police and Fire Headquarters - Fire Department Walk-Through

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Review of Senior Purpose

Board Member Kelley Schild asked if the board's purpose was to serve the needs of just the seniors at the AAC or the seniors in the entire community, mentioning that Pinecrest hosts a special event for all residents over the age of 90 and wondering if we had any information on those that are not involved at the AAC. Director Couceyro then remarked that he is unaware of how Pinecrest obtains this information but that he will investigate it. Board Chairperson James "Jim" Berlin then asked what the board's purpose is, to which AAC Assistant Supervisor Gregory responded, "to review issues related to the elderly in Coral Gables and to recommend actions and programs to the City Commission, which may be utilized in planning for and developing policies to meet the needs of senior citizens." In answer, the board recognized that their role is broad.

Board Member Kelley Schild then expressed her belief that some of these activities, such as the storm preparedness talk, would benefit all seniors and asked how we could reach these seniors who are not AAC members. Director Couceyro noted that while the RecTrac program and social media are being used, the cost of distributing information to every household in the City of Coral Gables has grown too expensive.

Board Chairperson James "Jim" Berlin then announced that he would prefer someone else to be the Chairperson and that he would not seek re-election when the vote is held.

Then, Board Chairperson James "Jim" Berlin inquired about the Underline project's condition. Director Couceyro then mentioned that a meeting would be held this evening to discuss the project, stating that there is still a lot of doubt about where all the money is coming from, despite the fact that the design is good and looks to be popular.

ITEMS FROM THE SECRETARY

Next Meeting is set for July 6th at 4:00pm

ADJOURNMENT

A MOTION TO END THE BOARD MEETING WAS MADE BY RICHARD THURER AND WAS SECONDED BY CELIA SUAREZ. ALL IN FAVOR; PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Meeting adjourned at 5:30pm

NOTE