

City of Coral Gables

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



Meeting Minutes

Friday, April 8, 2022

8:30 AM

Draft Minutes

Police and Fire Headquarters, Community Meeting Room

School Community Relations Committee

Chairperson Ariel Fernandez
Vice Chairperson Sam Joseph
Board Member Erin Anding
Board Member Winnie Chang
Board Member Sandy Dimitris
Board Member Carmen Manrara Cartaya
Board Member Cecilia D. Slesnick
Board Member Jennifer Ward Sando
Board Member Sharon Watson

The School Community Relations Committee will be holding its Regular Meeting on Friday, April 8, 2022, commencing at 8:30 a.m. While the Committee is back to live in-person meetings, members of the public may participate in person but are also able to participate via the Zoom platform. Members of the public may join the meeting via Zoom at (<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83893614478>). In addition, a dedicated phone line will be available so that any individual who does not wish (or is unable) to use Zoom may listen to and participate in the meeting by dialing: 305-461-6769 Meeting ID: 838 9361 4478.

To speak on an Agenda Item, please "Raise your Hand" or send a message to one of the meeting hosts using the Zoom Platform. If you joined the meeting via telephone you can "Raise your Hand" by pressing *9.

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CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order at 8:32 a.m.

ROLL/QUORUM CALL

Present: 8 - Slesnick, Watson, Dimitris, Joseph, Chang, Fernandez, Anding and Board Member Ward Sando

Absent: 1 - Manrara Cartaya

A. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

A-1 The School Community Relations Committee Minutes of February 11, 2022.

Attachments: [Cover Memo](#)
[Draft Minutes - SCRC Feb. 11](#)

A motion was made by Board Member Anding, seconded by Board Member Slesnick, that this matter be approved. The motion passed by the following vote.

Yeas: 8 - Slesnick, Watson, Dimitris, Joseph, Chang, Fernandez, Anding and Board Member Ward Sando

Absent: 1 - Manrara Cartaya

A-2 The School Community Relations Committee Minutes of March 11, 2022.

Attachments: [Cover Memo](#)
[Draft Minutes - SCRC March 11](#)

A motion was made by Board Member Anding, seconded by Vice Chair Joseph, that this matter be approved. The motion passed by the following vote.

Yeas: 8 - Watson, Dimitris, Joseph, Chang, Fernandez, Anding, Slesnick and Board Member Ward Sando

Absent: 1 - Manrara Cartaya

B. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Daniel Stankiewicz, Capital Improvement Chair for Carver Elementary PTA: Mr. Stankiewicz expressed his gratitude to School Board Member Mari Tere Rojas and Principal Patricia Fairclough for the repairs made to the portable at Carver Elementary. Mr. Stankiewicz informed the SCRC of the need to replace the roof of the Media Center at Carver Elementary, stating that parents were given a six-week timeline for this project. Dr. Eric Acosta from the county informed the SCRC that the Maintenance Department has completed the major repair required and no active leaks are present. Additional work for buildings two, three and four will take place during the summer.

C. NEW BUSINESS

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

- Fathers in Education Day is an item proffered by the School Board Member, as fathers' involvement benefits the children's education. School Board Member Rojas invited Vice Chairperson Joseph and Mayor Lago to attend the meeting.
- School Board Member Rojas informed the SCRC that the District is getting ready for graduation season and will provide the SCRC with a graduation schedule.
- MDCPS will have a robust summer school program to address the academic regression students are experiencing due to the pandemic.
- The school board is getting ready for a referendum. School Board Member Rojas mentioned some issues that may affect the referendum.
- The School Board Member requested principals and school staff also be recognized in the proclamation that will go to Commission for their hard work and consistent presence during the pandemic.
- School Board Member Rojas will be proffering the following items at the upcoming School Board Meeting:
 - * H-9 School Lunch Hero Day
 - * The month of May as Mental Health Month and May 7, 2022, as national children, mental health awareness day.
 - * The feasibility of designating Miami Dade County Public Schools as a multilingual school district.

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C-2 Discussion on school safety (Facilitated by Ariel Fernandez, Chair)

Chairperson Ariel Fernandez gave a recap on the safety concerns that sparked this discussion.

Coral Gables Police Chief Edward Hudak briefed the SCRC on the incident at Salvador Park stating that the stolen guns found were buried and well-hidden and the length of time the guns were present at the park was unknown. Chief Hudak stated that schools should celebrate the actions of the children who found the guns and implement a "See Something, Say Something Campaign" to encourage similar behavior.

The Police Chief suggested a program akin to park rangers if more enforcement was desired by the community - a hiring and budgeting process would be needed.

Mitchell Zurairrain from the Community Recreation Department stated that the best course of action for park safety is to activate the parks, people frequenting the parks means safer parks. Mr. Zurairrain also informed the SCRC of the Community Recreation Department's efforts to install cameras in parks as they are renovated. Mr. Zurairrain also stated that the department's Park Services Attendants visit the parks to perform various tasks and ensure no obvious dangers are present at the parks, but he would not recommend using them as enforcement.

Vice Chairperson Sam Joseph inquired whether emergency call buttons had been considered, Mr. Zurairrain replied with no.

Chief Hudak commented on the parental disregard towards road laws and safety. The Chief provided a few examples such as stopping in the middle of the road during drop off and pick up times near schools. Chairperson Fernandez suggested a public service announcement be circulated to the PTAs.

C-3 Cavaliers Future Leaders Internship Program

Chairperson Fernandez informed the SCRC that the Cavaliers program has yet to receive any applicants. A discussion was had on methods to advertise the program and getting community involvement to encourage applicants.

Attachments: [CAVALIERS FUTURE LEADERS PROGRAM OVERVIEW](#)

C-4 Discussion on Financial Literacy (Facilitated by Ariel Fernandez, Chair)

Chairperson Ariel Fernandez informed the SCRC of the Florida Legislation requiring financial literacy be added to the high school curriculum.

D. OLD BUSINESS

D-1 Update on traffic study discussion with Transportation Advisory Board Chair (Facilitated by Ariel Fernandez, Chair)

Chairperson Fernandez briefed the SCRC on a conversation had with the chair of the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB), stating that he will be presenting at the TAB and providing the SCRC with an update after the presentation.

E. ONGOING BUSINESS

General Updates:

Board Member Jennifer Ward Sando will be presenting to the Chamber of Commerce during the Chamber Breakfast in April. Board Member Sando will be speaking about Autism Awareness Month.

Staff Liaison Naomi Levi Garcia, announced to the SCRC the implementation of Project Victory in the City of Coral Gables starting in the 2022 – 2023 school year.

Vice Chairperson Sam Joseph, provided a few updates:

- Vice Chairperson Joseph is following up on the Tucker Elementary attendance boundary issue stating that he spoke with the new School Board Member Lucia Baez-Geller about the future of Tucker Elementary.

- The Vice Chairperson thanked South Florida Digital Alliance for their computer donation to Ponce Middle School.

- The Vice Chairperson mentioned a maintenance issue at Coral Gables Preparatory Academy and that the School Board Member and school principal are aware.

Board Member Winnie Chang mentioned certificates of appreciation for Teacher Appreciation Week, which sparked a discussion on how to recognize teachers during that week. Staff Liaison Levi-Garcia suggested a general proclamation for teacher appreciation week to be presented at Commission which initiated further discussion on recognition logistics. A Board Member suggested engaging the business community to offer a teacher discount during teacher appreciation week. A consensus was had to request a proclamation for teacher appreciation week.

School Board Member Mari Tere Rojas joined the conversation to state that item H-19 on the April agenda of the School Board Meeting will address teacher appreciation week. The School Board Member invites members of the SCRC to speak on behalf of the item.

Vice Chairperson Joseph mentioned a conversation he had with Deputy City Clerk Yolande Davis regarding the donation of surplus office supplies to schools.

F. ANNOUNCEMENTS

F-1 Next SCRC Meeting - Friday, May 20, 2022

Questions/Comments: scrc@coralgables.com

F-2 Join a local PTA or subscribe to their newsletters using the following links.

F-3 Recycling Drive-Thru - Saturday, April 23 - 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 10:00 a.m.

NOTE

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