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To the Senior Citizens' Advisory Board

My name is Jude Alexander, and I am writing on behalf of my fellow seniors at the Coral Gables Adult Activity Center to express our concern about newly imposed parking fees at the AAC building on Andalusia Avenue.

When the AAC first moved from the Youth Center back in 2016, our members' primary concern was the possible loss of free parking. We were assured, at that time, that free parking would also be guaranteed at the new Andalusia location.

For many seniors, living on fixed incomes, these parking fees would make attendance at the AAC almost impossible. Most classes last one-hour or more, but entering and exiting the garage, before and after class, adds additional time.

Take my personal schedule; my classes are from 9:30 AM till 2:30PM, four days each week. Parking will cost me \$12.00 per day or \$48.00 per week and I use the Center far less than most people.

Many of my friends spend most of the day there, not only attending classes but meeting their friends, playing games, and sharing coffee. One of my friends even refers to it as 'her church'. The cost of parking will be prohibitive for many of these people.

The Center provides much more than a place to exercise and develop new skills and interests; it provides a community. Gables Seniors love their AAC; there are a wealth of activities, the facilities are first class, and the staff are friendly, professional, and caring - under the dedicated leadership of Katherine Anderson who has become a good friend to many of us.

Most importantly, the Adult Activity Center brings people together as a community. The City has every reason to be proud of its Senior Center which thus far has proved a great success.

The unique social atmosphere of the Center would be destroyed as people limit their use and dash away after class, instead of socializing with their friends.

Over the past five years, the City of Coral Gables, the Parks and Rec. Department and the dedicated staff have developed the Adult Activity Center into an extraordinarily unique and successful institution - reflecting well on and benefiting the reputation of Coral Gables as a desirable place to live and as an AARP Livable Community. But you risk throwing all that carefully nurtured, civic goodwill out the window in a short-sighted and petty gesture of penny-pinching.

We are all well aware of the financial pressures placed on the city due to the current Covid pandemic. We understand and support the City's need for belt-tightening and fiscal responsibility, but burdening seniors in this way does not make sense. The Federal government has provided funds to alleviate some of the pressure and, with the current plethora of construction projects in the city, there is no shortage of wealthy developers to share the financial burden, before shaking-down old age pensioners.

We respectfully request that complimentary parking for members of the Adult Activity Center on Andalusia Avenue be continued indefinitely.

Sincerely,

Jude Alexander.