



**City of Coral Gables
CITY COMMISSION MEETING
January 12, 2021**

ITEM TITLE: ADVISORY BOARD ON DISABILITY AFFAIRS

MEETING DATE: October 14, 2020

SUMMARY OF MEETING:

Quorum was reached – Virtual Meeting

Introduction of new board members

Ms. Liebl commenced by having everyone introduce themselves and welcomed new Board member Ms. Haley Moss as well as new ex-officio Board member Mr. Humberto Comellas of Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce.

Ms. Moss introduced herself, expressed her gratitude and excitement in being able to be part of this Board. Ms. Elejabarrieta advised Ms. Moss she will be forwarding information for her to review regarding being a Board member, sunshine law, etc. Mr. Comellas introduced himself as well as the newly ex-officio member part of the Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce.

Vision going forward – Ms. Vanessa Liebl

Ms. Liebl expressed her vision going forward with Ms. Moss and Mr. Comellas as ex-officio Board. Ms. Liebl stated it will be wonderful having them available to address business issues within the Chamber regarding special population and how these individuals are exceptional in various areas as well as identifying those areas.

Freebie Services – Kevin Kinney Parking Director

Ms. Liebl advised during her attendance at a Commission meeting, she heard of the need for expanding the current Freebie service area. Mr. Kinney provided information regarding the Freebie services and how it was obtained. Mr. Kinney explained this service was acquired as a 3-year grant-based program and that the area of service is restricted by the grant. Mr. Kinney stated it is a demonstration project to review things liked and disliked regarding the program. Mr. Kinney advised that next summer a new process regarding service and its Freebie's continuity will be discussed. Mr. Kinney explained Freebie provides services that the Board is asking about however it is within the area authorized by the grant. Mr. Kinney feels this is a great service and providing transportation services to the disabled community has always been the focus of the City, however it is not to be a replacement of STS. Mr. Kinney advised further discussion will be taking place regarding Freebie services in months to come. Mr. Kinney advised due to current situations concerning the COVID-19 pandemic, the City is expecting a transportation fund shortage and the funding for these types of services may be a significant issue during next year's budget. Mr. Kinney did state there is support for the Freebie services and if City goes forth with it after the grant period, it may look completely different, however at this time during the next twelve months, due to the grant's limitations it is not possible to make any changes.

Ms. Liebl asked if a voluntarily registry is implemented by City and due to STS not being reliable, could the City consider providing transportation for those on registry. Mr. Kinney stated as staff they could possibly develop something that can be supported however, biggest operational concern is safety. Mr. Kinney stated he would try to avoid placing Freebie vehicles anywhere it is not safe. Mr. Kinney advised if they could get to the person on the registry and to their destination avoiding streets such as LeJeune Road, US1, Bird Road or other busy streets, it would be something that may be supported, if funding is available.

Ms. Dietz expressed her concern regarding the registry, its use and expanding into transportation. Ms. Dietz stated she is concern regarding public records request of such registry. Ms. Dietz expressed that prior to establishing such a registry, all aspects should be reviewed. Ms. Elejabarrieta advised City is taking it slow developing registry and at this time being half-way there, all aspects such as privacy issues as well as possibility of public records request are being reviewed. Ms. Elejabarrieta advised that the City at this time is looking into placing registry into the CAD system so when an emergency call comes in, the information regarding the individual's special needs will be made available to the police and fire personnel by dispatch enabling them to provide better services. Ms. Elejabarrieta stated issue of expanding this into transportation is new and therefore will now definitely be looked into. Ms. Dietz stated she is aware of other departments dealing with the issue of public request. Ms. Elejabarrieta advised she believes if the registry is utilized for emergency situations, it would be exempt to public records law. Ms. Elejabarrieta stated they are working with other City's such as Miami Beach, City of Pembroke Pines and the City's legal department to assure all aspects are reviewed. Ms. Elejabarrieta stated in order to be clear and transparent City would disclose to participants whether information is subject to public records request. Ms. Pippa asked if going forth with registry and expanding of same to into transportation, would participants be able to just register for different aspects of the registry. Ms. Elejabarrieta advised this would also be reviewed and taken into consideration.

Ms. Liebl asked regarding ADA parking spaces added to the Salvatore Park expansion. Mr. Kinney advised that would look into it.

Mr. Kinney advised Trolley system had been scaled back due to pandemic, however service has continued, and safety measures have been put into place. Mr. Kinney advised passengers went from 4000 a day to 300 a day. Mr. Kinney stated at this time passenger usage is once again increasing.

E News Article – Ms. Elejabarrieta

Ms. Elejabarrieta advised of article placed on E-News regarding City of Coral Gables celebrating Disability Awareness Month during October. Ms. Elejabarrieta advised due to pandemic, City will not be hosting Adventure Day for All Event. Ms. Elejabarrieta played a video which was created and placed on City's social media platforms addressing Board as well as City's accomplishments regarding Disability community. Ms. Elejabarrieta stated video will be presented during upcoming October 27, 2020, commission meeting as well as Resolution & Proclamation to be presented. Ms. Elejabarrieta advised in the past, an organization or individual has been asked to receive Proclamation. Ms. Elejabarrieta asked Board if they had someone in mind to receive Proclamation or if someone from the Board would like to be present to receive it. Ms. Moss asked if there may be a representative from the Disability community instead of a Board member to receive Proclamation. Ms. Elejabarrieta advised they have done so in the past where someone from the Disability community has been the recipient of the Proclamation. Ms. Elejabarrieta advised that as day gets closer, she will follow up regarding who will be available to accept Proclamation.

Adventure for All Day – Ms. Kofkin

Ms. Liebl advised due to current pandemic, Adventure Day for All Event cannot be held, City has come up with an alternative option called Magical Park and Ms. Kofkin to provide information regarding same. Ms. Kofkin advised it is an augmented reality program which has been available worldwide, however it required participants to run to play. Therefore, Ms. Kofkin stated when programmer was addressed regarding participants unable to run, they created a brand-new game. Ms. Liebl stated the program is taking place at the baseball field behind the War Memorial building. Ms. Kofkin advised they are looking into expanding the hours available. Ms. Liebl stated it is a great way for all children as well as those with disabilities to participate. Ms. Palacio advised her school participated and that it was easy to maintain social distancing due to being held in the field. Ms. Palacio advised they were contacted by Coral Gables magazine regarding participants reactions and she advised both participating groups really enjoyed themselves and were very engaged. Ms. Palacio advised it was great for everyone.

Voluntary Registry – Police Fire Department – Ms. Elejabarrieta

Ms. Elejabarrieta advised information regarding same and stated prior to registry going live, it would be presented to Board for review and comments. Ms. Elejabarrieta stated if possible, to do so in November.

Updates City Wide Directors – Ms. Elejabarrieta

Ms. Elejabarrieta stated she believes it may be a good idea to invite a City Director to upcoming meetings and provide updates on pending projects throughout City affecting individuals with disabilities. Ms. Elejabarrieta asked if Board had any specific project or department, they would like to hear from and she will check if Director is available.

Tutoring Assistance – Ms. Liebl

Ms. Liebl stated she would like to know if there is anything possible the City can aid with regarding tutoring for children. Ms. Kofkin stated there is currently a program available twice a week. Ms. Liebl asked Ms. Kofkin to provide information to her. Ms. Palacio expressed that tutoring assistance requires funding due to the child requires someone to assist them. Ms. Palacio advised that for example, at Crystal they provided a virtual pod which required the hiring of personnel to assist the children. Mr. Sando advised difficulty regarding virtual learning and families with children with disabilities. Mr. Sando advised they were fortunate to participate within a pod structure where his children were able to receive the necessary assistance from qualified professional personnel.

Mr. Sando stated he feels at this time due to the pandemic, it would be best if Board could identify perhaps top 2 or 3 specific needs within the disability community. Ms. Dietz stated one of the current issues is regarding upcoming elections and ability to vote. Ms. Dietz stated second issue is regarding IEPs for virtual schooling. Mr. Sando stated other concern has been exemption to wearing mask for children at schools. Mr. Sando advised that even though his family has been able to work out this issue, many families have not and continue to have difficulty with their school.

Ms. Milne shared situation regarding her son employment and not being able to wear mask due to health issues. Ms. Milne advised that even though she obtained letter from his physician, presented medical documentation to his employer, they still did not accept it and therefore, her son was no longer able to continue his employment despite 13 years of service.

Ms. Liebl expressed she believes two major issues faced by the disabled community are employment and housing. and is very happy Mr. Comellas who has been part of Chamber of Commerce will now be part of Board. Mr. Comellas asked Ms. Liebl to get together to establish his role and expectations as a Board member.

Ms. Blaire asked if Youth Center and Adult Community Center are opened or still closed. Ms. Kofkin advised that they are in the process of opening slowly and at this time Fitness Center has been opened at minimal capacity. Ms. Elejabarrieta advised there are discussions on going regarding opening of Adult Community Center, however at this time it is still not opened.

Ms. Elejabarrieta advised more than likely, the November meeting will be held in person and requires a minimum of three Board members do so in person and two can be virtual. Ms. Liebl asked if it would be back to 8:00am and Ms. Elejabarrieta advised due to Chamber being meeting location for various Boards it may not be able to be first Wednesday of month. Mr. Sando expressed next date of meeting would be November 4, 2020 and it may be difficult date due to day after election and it would also be difficult for him due to current situation to attend 8:00am meeting. Ms. Elejabarrieta advised as November gets closer, it can be determined. Ms. Elejabarrieta advised she will review availability of dates and advise Board of same.

Next Meeting: November meeting date to be determined

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 11:06am

ATTACHMENT(S): Minutes of October 14, 2020 Meeting