

# CORAL GABLES SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMITTEE

## MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING

April 22, 2008

Coral Gables Police Department

Coral Gables, Florida

	M	A	M	A	S	O	J	F	M	A	APPOINTED BY:
<b>MEMBERS</b>											
Andrew Yagoda	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	Mayor Donald Slesnick, Jr.
Joan Reitsma	P	P	E	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	Commissioner Maria Anderson
Victor Shabanah				P	P	P	E	P	P	P	City Manager David Brown
Pat Kiel	E	P	E	P	P	P	E	P	P	P	Crime Watch
Barbra Harley	P	E	E	P	P	P	E	P	P	E	Commissioner Rafael "Ralph" Cabrera
Vacant											Vice Mayor William Kerdyk, Jr.
Lili Diaz	P	P	P	P	E	E	P	P	E	E	PMS
Harold Cole	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	CGHS
Debbie Korge	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	Commissioner Wayne "Chip" Withers

A =Absent      E = Excused      P = Present      \* = Resigned      \*\*=no meeting

### STAFF:

Sgt. Melissa DeJong

**A=Absent**  
**P= Present**  
**E=Excused**

### GUESTS:

Sharon Watson, CGHS PTSA  
Marlene Ramos, Ponce de Leon Middle School Teacher  
Anna Rodriguez, Principal of Ponce de Leon Middle School  
Sebastian del Marmol, Coral Gables Gazette Newspaper

**RECORDING SECRETARY:** Anna G. Garcia

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The meeting was called to order by Chair Korge at 6:00PM. A quorum requirement was met by 6:00PM. Chairperson Korge thanked Principal Anna Rodriguez, for her hospitality by allowing the committee to have its meeting at Ponce del Leon Middle School.

**Excused Absence:** Barbra Harley and Lili Diaz requested an excused absence. Vice-chairperson Joan Reitsma made a motion and seconded by Member Victor Shabanah. Motion passed unanimously.

**Minutes:** Member Harold Cole made a motion to approve the minutes with one minor change. Motion was seconded by Member Pat Kiel. Motion carried approving the March 18, 2008 meeting minutes

**Condolences:** On behalf of the School and Community Relations Committee Members they expressed there condolences to the family members of Member Charlie Terry and to Member Lili Diaz for the passing of her father. Chairperson Korge expressed that Member Charlie Terry was a

tremendous assets to this committee and to the City of Coral Gables. She mentioned that he was a gem who will be truly missed.

**Education Compact:** Chairperson Korge stated that the compact is running smoothly. There is a possibility of establishing a tutoring program at the Youth Center. She spoke to the Youth Center Supervisor and he was positive about having such program available in the center as long as his staff was not involved. Transportation will be available in transporting students to and from Ponce de Leon Middle School. Students that need additional tutoring in general and/or need tutoring to successfully pass the FCAT will be allowed to participate in the tutoring program at the Youth Center. Additional information will be provided at the August meeting.

**Student Art Work:** The committee continues to discuss the possibility of displaying student artwork on the vacant store windows located on Miracle Mile. Sgt. DeJong expressed that she contacted Mr. Michael S. Sparber, Risk Management Administrator about the liabilities about using the vacant facilities. She expressed that Mr. Sparber did not foresee any problems. Mr. Sparber would discuss the issue with the owner of the building that would be used, and figure out what needed to be done. Vice-Chairperson Reitsma mentioned that usually the retail spaces turn over very rapidly. She would address this at the City of Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce. Member Pat Kiel mentioned that the Business Improvement District could provide us with the owner's name and provide a copy of the occupation license. Specifics are needed in order to make this task a reality. More information will be gathered and discussed at the August meeting.

**Ponce de Leon Middle School:** Principal Anna Rodriguez wanted to thank Ms. Marlene Ramos who is the lead Magnet Teacher responsible for providing the appetizers for this meeting. Also the Assistant Principal Ms. Calzadilla is no longer with Ponce de Leon Middle School. Replacement for her position will be forthcoming.

**Albert Einstein Fellow:** The science teacher at Ponce de Leon Middle School named Kitchka Petrova was selected as an Albert Einstein Fellow for the 2008-09 school year. It is the first time that a science teacher from Miami-Dade County Public Schools has received this fellowship. She will be working in the GK-12 office of the National Science Foundation at Arlington, Virginia. It is an opportunity to work at a national level on science education policy. Congratulations!

**Mock DUI:** On April 23, 2008, the Mock DUI will be conducted at Ponce de Leon Middle School. The Coral Gables Police and Fire Department will be participating in the yearly event which takes place in the area of U.S. 1.

**Coral Gables High School Remodeling:** The building is being painted and members expressed that the building looked beautiful. Member Harold Cole mentioned that if the painters left the paint they would finish painting the rest of the building.

**Coral Gables High School Academics:** Eighty-one percent of the faculty voted to continue an 8 period day for the new school year beginning in August. The school is down one Assistant Principal and the replacement will occur soon. Also Member Harold Cole mentioned that he will be retiring at the end of this school year. Member Cole expressed his gratitude for being part of the committee for over ten years. He has been a member of the Coral Gables High School family for 35 years and he will miss the City of Coral Gables community and Coral Gables High School.

**Coral Gables High School Awards and Assembly:** The Coral Gables High School Awards and Assembly will take place on May 1, 2008, in the school auditorium commencing at 6:30 PM. Many teachers and students have won awards which will be recognized the evening of May 1. It is expected to be a superb evening. There is a Chinese language school that uses the Coral Gables High School Facilities. One of the teachers who teach English to Chinese citizens at Gables High has been selected to teach a program in China. This school takes place every Saturday morning. They are considering offering Chinese language classes to Coral Gables High School students if there is a definite interest in such a class in the future.

**Elsa Glazzer Award:** PTSA Sharon Watson expressed that the Coral Gables High School PTSA will have an Award Assembly as well on April 23, 2008. This award recognizes top seniors who have a 3.5 grade point average or above. There are 232 seniors receiving this national recognized award.

**Coral Gables High School Activities:** The prom took place one week ago at the Colonnade and everybody looked fabulous. The Grad Bash which started a number of years ago took place this past weekend. The students in a three day period visited, Downtown Disney, Disney Quest, Magic Kingdom, Animal Kingdom and Isles of Adventures. The weekend was very successful.

**New Grading System:** Member Harold Cole mentioned that the new grading system has been discussed at the legislature level which is a very positive move forward for the schools and the students. In this morning newspaper stated that the grading system will include a percentage of school attendance, the taking and passing of test scores, also to include advance courses. No longer will it just be based on FCAT scores. Member Cole expressed that the school will probably be an "A" or "B" school if the grading system changes.

**Coral Gables High School Graduation:** Students are excited about the upcoming commencement which will take place on June 4 at 10 AM in the Bank United Center.

**Last Day Of School:** Last day of school is June 5, 2008. School officials requested the assistance of the Coral Gables Police Department.

**Fairchild Tropical Garden Award:** Special Education Students from Ponce de Leon Middle School received a Fairchild Tropical Garden Award, for their current garden. They hope to build a Japanese Garden to be used for meditation. Also Fairchild Tropical Gardens will be sending botanist to help plant and label the plants in the current garden.

**Ponce de Leon Middle School Issue:** Principal Anna Rodriguez brought up a negative issue that she felt was important for the committee members and the community to know about. "If this issue is not dealt with it could have a negative impact on the school", she said. This issue is the development of a possible gang. This gang/cliq calls itself the "Purple City". It has been said that this group has been known to walk through the streets of Coconut Grove waving a purple flag and wearing a purple bandana. Due to conflicts created by these students, with other students who claim to be affiliated with a different gang, this has created some racial tensions in the school. Principal Rodriguez expressed to Sgt. DeJong and the committee that Det. Norma Dieppa was handling this issue and so far had done an excellent job. She stressed that the situation was fully under control. Chairperson Korge asked Sgt. DeJong if she was aware of this issue. Sgt. DeJong expressed to the committee that she was completely aware of the situation. She is presenting the information to MAGTF which is the county's gang task force. She will be making contact with the school board gang investigators in

order to get more assistance and knowledge about the situation. Principal Rodriguez again thanked the Coral Gables Police Department for their assistance in this serious matter. All students involved have been disciplined by the school and parents have been made aware of their child's involvement. Principal Rodriguez stressed that this was dealt with administratively since no crime has been committed but she requested more police presence due to the potential of the issue. (Please see attached memorandum from Chief Michal Hammerschmidt regarding the alleged gang activity.)

**International Baccalaureate Program Up-Date:** Mrs. Ramos stated that Ponce de Leon Middle School is still awaiting the official letter from Geneva. Mrs. Rodriguez interjected that she thought that the community needed to know that Ponce de Leon Middle School had not received official notice that they were recognized as an International Baccalaureate School. She mentioned that the visitation took place in October and to become part of this prestigious the Miami-Dade School Board paid \$5500.00 to become part of the elite I.B. community. The big celebration that was planned will probably become a reality in the new school year beginning in August. Principal Rodriguez mentioned that she had called and the excuse was that "they were downsizing." She mentioned that this was unacceptable excuse. It would have been nice to announce to the new incoming class that the school was already I.B. school. Out of the 700 applications received, 422 applications were accepted for the new school year beginning in August 2008.

**Budget Cuts:** Member Joan Reitsma mentioned that the Chamber of Commerce is asking businesses to donate paper to the schools within the City of Coral Gables. Chairperson Korge requested that all school officials present keep the committee abreast of their individual needs due to the budget cuts.

**City Commission Update:** None

**City Projects Update:** See Educational Compact above.

**Next Meeting Dates:** The SCRC will meet again on May 21, 2008, at the Youth Center starting at 6 PM.

*There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:55 PM.*

Respectfully Submitted,

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Anna G. Garcia  
Recording Secretary