

CORAL GABLES ADVISORY BOARD ON DISABILITY AFFAIRS

Minutes of September 2, 2009

Youth Center, Second Floor Conference Room

MEMBERS	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	APPOINTED BY
Linda Scarcell-Degrave	*	*	*	*	*	P	*	P	*	*	*	P	Donald D. Slesnick II
Sandra Mannis	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	P	Maria Anderson
Dr. Andy Gomez	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	E	“Ralph” Cabrera, Jr.
Bonnie Blaire	*	*	*	*	*	P	*	P	*	*	*	P	William Kerdyk, Jr.
Richard Whittington	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	P	Wayne “Chip” Withers

(*) There were no meetings.

STAFF:

Alberto Delgado, Secretary

Beatrix Falstreau, CPS

Mercy Mendoza

A - Absent

P - Present

E - Excused

GUESTS:

None

Meeting commenced at 8:40 a.m. followed by introduction of board members.

SECRETARY’S REPORT:

DOJ Audit

Mr. Delgado stated that this Board played a very important function in the last 3-4 years, especially when the Department of Justice (the state department which actually regulates all the requirements for the ADA that are imposed on all public facilities) randomly selected the City of Coral Gables, with the second one being Fernandina Beach, to conduct an audit of all the Coral Gables facilities resulting in a compliance report of all the facilities listing type of compliance which needs to be developed. Since then the City has been under a consent decree forcing it to bring all the facilities into compliance and the City has done a good job in addressing all its public buildings which are more than fifty facilities, including parks, parking lots, parking garages, buildings, which have to comply with all of these requirements. Ms. Mendoza from the Public Works Architectural Division is in attendance in order to update the Board on all the things which have been done based on improvements, what is pending for future years, how the situation is being handled. The fact that the City had a Board helped a great deal in that process especially since the Board had been created several years ago and already had a history. We presented the Board minutes along with a list of things that had been done by the Board for many years which helped considerably in the way this situation was handled. Usually, if not in compliance they issue a fine but we were not fined and instead some deadlines were established for things to be done in the first, second, third year and even things that can be done in ten years which particular program we are in right now.

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This helped a lot in the way they handled the situation since usually when they come they expect everything to be in compliance but the fact that the Board was in existence helped a lot and that is why this Board has a very important role in that particular issue. Ms. Blaire can testify that this Board has been very active during the past 20 years in addressing all of these issues. Ms. Mendoza will give a report on completed items showing that the volume of work done has been substantial and what projects are scheduled to be done in the next years.

ADA Projects Status

Ms. Mendoza stated that the DOJ had originally given the City three years to finish all the work but since then the City has been working hard at it and reporting to them the City has been granted an extension til October of this year. A lot of work has been done but there are a few projects which are halfway done. 19 projects have been finished with nine to complete. All the parks are finished, the fire station #2, #3, the Maintenance & Storage Facility, signage, training for the Police Department and employees in general. The Trolley Station has been working up to ADA standards from the beginning and all the new projects have been done up to ADA standards since then. Every facility had to be updated that was done or refurbished since 1992.

Ms. Mendoza discussed items she is working on now for this year's report. It is a book with each facility outlined and what needs to be done in each. Ms. Mendoza had the work done and now is having photos taken with dimensions and all the details they requested. Some projects have already been submitted and now she is working on the latest. Mr. Delgado reiterated that the DOJ surveyed all the facilities going through all the bathrooms, corridors checking for accessibility and made a list like a survey of each facility with items ranging from minor to major items. Major structural changes like the parking garage behind the Miracle Theater which does not comply and some van accessible parking on the outside had to be provided since this facility cannot be retrofitted, sidewalk extensions, which is a major project, etc. Having the Board helped the City a lot in being able to sit down with the DOJ and establish some type of program as to what will be done in the first year, second year, third year. Now we are getting extensions. Ms. Mendoza advised that the City had a lot of accessible facilities, i.e. bathrooms, ramps, rails that were not up to the latest so they were impressed with the fact that the City made an effort and it was done but had to be redone.

Discussion regarding statistics of any individuals claiming facilities were not up to the latest. Mr. Delgado stated there was only one case involving the library where an individual sued the City actually for lack of accessibility but the City won the case due to the fact that one door was accessible. They reviewed a lot of things, not only the physical aspects but cases. Discussion on projects being funded by Capital Improvement Funds.

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Mr. Delgado discussed City Hall Handicapped Bathroom on first floor, design of a new ramp at side courtyard entrance at City Hall which will be the official access from the handicapped parking spaces in the parking lot. This is a costly item since it is a historic building. The structure is in place awaiting approval of the railing. Also the counters at Building & Zoning on the third floor had to be modified. Also, signs, door pressures are being worked on. There are a lot of minor items at City Hall that have been done as well as at all facilities. Mr. Delgado stated that the DOJ. in order to avoid coming down here, took photos and requested photos be sent of items brought into compliance, for their comparison and approval. Ms Mendoza has been very involved taking photos and documenting everything and sending the documentation to them. Most likely at the end they will come and do a final inspection. In the meantime they are working in cooperation with us. According to Ms. Mendoza every building since then has to comply completely.

At Mr. Delgado's request for status of projects, Ms. Mendoza advised that Parking Garage #1 and #5 are no longer on the list as they are scheduled for demolition. Parking Garage #1 and #4, plans are ready and have been approved but right now its on hold due to lack of funding. These are the pending ones.

The Salvadore Tennis Center, the Salvadore Playground area plans exist and it is being bid on Sept. 22.

Central Police & Fire Stations. Have been working on plans but due to lack of funding is on hold right now and may be combined with other work to be done.

The Youth Center. A few small things to be completed but mostly maintenance will be taking care of that.

Sidewalks and Streets – This is an ongoing project. The City is working on it and it is a 10 year program.

Off Street Parking and Parking Garages Halfway done. All of the concrete work has been done, still need to do the striping and putting up the signs.

Van Accessible spaces in the Garages Need to be looked since in some places it does not fit.

City Hall Annex This is the museum which is under construction and it's a matter of them looking at the plans and approving them. The plans have been sent but no response has been received. However, we are going ahead with the building and everything is up to ADA standards so it should be o.k.

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Mr. Delgado feels the City is in pretty good shape with the exception of the parking garages which is a major concern and they are looking at outside adjacent to the parking garages either by the alley or street that people can actually park over there. Will make presentation.

Mr. Delgado requested the members to advise the Board of any accessibility problems.

Board Related Commission Items

None.

PROFESSIONAL MEMBER REPORT

Meeting attendance

All members are in attendance except for Dr. Gomez who had a prior meeting scheduled.

Ms. Blaire discussed rescheduling meetings at shorter intervals which will be discussed at next meeting.

Election of Chairperson and Vice Chairperson

Ms. Blaire made motion to appoint Ms. Degrave as chairman, seconded by Dr. Whittington with all members being in favor. Ms. Degrave made motion to appoint Ms. Blaire as Vice Chairman, seconded by Mr. Whittington with all members being in favor.

Annual Report

Ms. Blaire reminded the Board to keep in mind that the Annual Report is due in October. (also this is National Disability Month and the Commission issues a Proclamation declaring October Disability Month). Discussion on items which can be included in the Annual Report.

Handicapped Parking Enforcement in Garages

Ms. Blaire questioned as to whether any parking enforcement is done in the garages with respect to handicapped parking which creates tremendous revenue.

Discussion on city's portion of parking fee funds collected in prior years with a substantial decrease in same for the past several years, provision what funds can be used for. Ms. Blaire discussed if City has a Disabled Parking Enforcement Team, the City will receive a larger percentage of fines from County. The funds were being matched by the State. So it can be imagined how popular this Board was for bringing money into the city fifteen or twenty years ago when no one was doing anything. It was a very small Board then.

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About a year ago there was a discussion about rejuvenating the parking enforcement team since it is a really big piece of the parking money and the City could be helping itself by generating those monies since when they ear mark those monies from Coral Gables for those fees, rather than getting only 30% of that, the City would get a higher percentage. The new Parking Director, Kevin Kinney, was to check to see if his department would take that over but never reported back to the Board. Mr. Delgado suggested inviting him back to the Board in order to give an update. Ms. Blaire discussed requirements for being on the team, equipment supplied. Mr. Delgado will check with Mr. Kinney as well as the Police Department to determine what can be done.

Mr. Delgado discussed another program the Board has been working on which is attempting to find out how many disabled residents are in Coral Gables. The Board was considering what type of survey can be performed in order to obtain this information. The Senior Citizens Board conducted a good survey done with the assistance of the University of Miami and they obtained good information about senior people's needs. This Board has no idea as to how many disabled people are in Coral Gables which need the help of this Board. Mr. Delgado feels a way to obtain this information needs to be found. In the event the Board were to know the people they are serving in Coral Gables as far as the deficiencies, it would be able to address those needs better. This is why some kind of survey needs to be done. Dr. Whittington suggested one way would be to contact the State of Florida to see how many disability stickers they issued to residents of Coral Gables and then an idea can be obtained of all the disabilities. Not all disabled people have disability stickers but it is an idea and perhaps from that number it can be applied to the city.

Approval of Minutes

Ms. Blaire moved to accept minutes of May 6, 2009, second by Dr. Whittington, all members were in favor.

Liaison Reports

None

Newspaper Articles

None

Old Business

None

New Business

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Annual Report.

The report is due October 1. Ms. Blaire suggested the report be mailed to members since aside from the mission statement which does not change, the report itself will have a different outline of what has been done. Probably, Mercy will include a paragraph regarding the projects. Ms. Blaire suggested having a meeting in October in order to compile the report and then go over it and use it as a basis for the year.

Discussion regarding having a meeting the second week of October, possibly Thursday, October 8, 2009, at 3:00 p.m. location to be determined.

Boards and Committees Seminar

Mr. Delgado handed out and discussed notice of upcoming seminar for new board members which he encourages new members to attend. This is a workshop sponsored by the City Attorney with speakers, Robert Myers, the Miami Dade County Commission on Public Ethics and Trust and some people from the attorney's office to discuss a lot of things pertaining to the Boards, i.e., Sunshine Laws, Public Records Laws, Financial Disclosure Laws. It is very good for new members. This will happen on Friday, October 2, 2009. Mr. Delgado encouraged new members to attend, if possible.

Proclamation declaring October Disability Month

Mr. Delgado advised that the proclamation will be done by the City Clerk for presentation at the commission meeting in October and Mr. Delgado will confirm the proclamation presentation date so members can attend. Ms. Blaire stated it is quite important that members show up attend the presentation.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 A.M.