

City of Coral Gables

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



Meeting Minutes

Thursday, July 7, 2022

4:00 PM

Adult Activity Center

Senior Citizens Advisory Board

*Chairperson James "Jim" Berlin
Vice Chairperson Celia Suarez
Board Member Jean Connelly
Board Member Edward English
Board Member Julian Sevillano
Board Member Richard Thurer*

CALL TO ORDER

@ 4:00pm

ROLL CALL

a. Roll Call and Excusal of Absences

Present:

Celia Suarez

Kelley Schild

Jim Berlin

Hendrick Woods

Julian Sevillano

Richard Thurer

Absent:

Jean H Connelly

A MOTION TO APPROVE THE ABSENCE OF JEAN CONNELLY WAS MADE BY RICHARD THURER AND WAS SECONDED BY JULIAN SEVILLANO. ALL IN FAVOR; PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

a. Approval of May Meeting Minutes

A MOTION TO APPROVE THE MAY MEETING MINUTES WAS MADE BY JULIAN SEVILLANO AND WAS SECOND BY CELIA SUAREZ. ALL IN FAVOR; PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

SUPERVISOR'S REPORT

Prior to the start of the Supervisor's report, introductions were made welcoming the Board's newest members

a. General Updates

AAC Supervisor Katherine Anderson began her report by going over staff vacancies that have now been filled. Gregory Walters, the new Assistant Supervisor, has been selected and will begin as soon as all onboarding procedures have been completed. He currently works as the part time GSS at the Venetian Pool. The part time maintenance position has also been filled and Tadary Scott will report to the AAC on Monday.

The Fall registration dates have been advertised and residents will be able to register for any fall programming beginning July 18. Non-residents can register starting August 1st.

New programming is set to start in the fall. Programs include music, technology classes, a partnership with Miami-Dade Library Systems for a community outreach program, and a partnership with Golden Palette.

b. Special Events

In June, the center hosted a Hurricane Preparation presentation in partnership with the Fire Department and EOC with 25 participants.

July 12th at 1pm the Coral Gables Community Foundation will be offering a presentation called Leaving a Legacy – Strategies in Smart Philanthropy.

July 28th at 3pm the Coral Gables Crime Watch in partnership with the CG Police Department will be offering a presentation at the AAC.

August 21st is National Senior Citizen Day and to celebrate, the AAC will be combining with Commissioner's Menendez Movies at CG Cinema to kick off a week of events. The movie that is scheduled to play is 'Love and Death'. Other partnerships to celebrate will be with SHINE and Baptist Health.

c. Administrative Updates

Director Fred Couceyro quickly went through department updates with the Board. He shared that the Country Club is still under renovation and there have been issues with the pool. However, they hope to have it reopened beginning in August. The concessionaire that has been selected to run the café space will be named Le Parc and we hope to have it open the first week of August. The kitchen area and wood floors in the ball rooms are still being renovated.

A Country Club director has been hired and will begin in August after notifying their current employer of their departure.

Board member Hendrick Woods was interested in knowing if there will be senior programming offered at the Country Club for its members. Fred does not know what programming will be offered but it is definitely something the Club will look at in the future. The focus at this time is to have the building fully operational, staffed and begin to collect revenues to help offset what has been spent already in renovations.

Director Couceyro also shared that there have been two new park openings at Lamar Louis Curry Park in front of the Venetian Pool and Maggiore Park near the Chinese Village that is expected to open within the week. Staff will still need to add shade structures, but the park will remain open during that addition.

He also shared with the board that the department will be receiving a new parcel of land that will be used as a park space. This land is being obtained by a new ordinance where Transfer Development Rights have been released to another development site in trade of usable green space allocated towards park usage. The Development and Zoning department has already received a motion of approval from our Parks Advisory Board agreeing the land could be used as potential park space. The 18,000 sqft lot located at 301 Majorica, will hopefully be able to be used as a dog park.

NEW BUSINESS**OLD BUSINESS**

a. Board Coalition Initiative for Funding the Master plan

Board Chair Jim Berlin began the discussion on the item of creating an initiative amongst other advisory boards to pursue support in funding the Master Plan with the tax referendum. He briefly explained to new board members Kelley Schild and Hendrick Woods the stance the Board has taken on supporting the funding for the plan and the process in which the Board would like to reach out to other advisory boards.

Director Couceyro and staff explained that the best course of action to not break any Sunshine Laws, would be to reach out to each board liaison and ask to speak to each prospective board on behalf of the Senior Advisory Board; City personnel is required to remain neutral in any matters pertaining to the referendum. Fred gave a quick recap of the original decision to go to referendum and options still available to fund the Master Plans. Fred also explained any projects moving forward will be based on a priority list created through community input within the Master Plan.

Katherine Anderson has reached out to the following boards:

Communications Board

Disability Affairs Board

Economic Development Board

Parks Board

The Communications Board is open to having Jim speak on behalf of the Senior Advisory Board in September however, they would like an emailed outline of what is to be communicated prior to the meeting date.

b. Follow-up on Marketing & Advertising Avenues for the AAC

Vice Chair Celia Suarez continued the discussion of marketing the AAC in a way to showcase events and programs that are currently taking place. She was able to get in touch with a contact from a local Gables magazine through a contact of the AAC, so she will prepare something to submit on behalf of the center. Staff also reminded the Board to put together a list of publications they would like to have the AAC be advertised in, and the department's advertising team will see how we can get space in their publication. Katherine let the board know of current publications and online platforms the department currently advertises in.

Board Member Hendrick Woods wanted to suggest having Coral Gables local Dave Berry, popular humor columnist for the Miami Herald, speak at an event or function at the AAC. He believes he would draw a lot of attention to the center. Or staff can look at other famous Coral Gables residents and try to honor them through an event to draw participants to the center. Staff said this could be a great idea, but we will have to see how much it would cost to have Mr. Barry speak at the center.

c. AAC Dance Group

Vice Chair Celia Suarez spoke to participants of the dance programs at the AAC and have decided to not pursue making their performances as part of a club or troop. However, she still would like a way to recognize its volunteer dancers at events along with complimentary admission to the events in which they participate at. Katherine said she will look into ways to recognize it's participants.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. Mena's comments regarding TAB Board

Board Chair Jim Berlin wanted to discuss with the Board the comments made my Commissioner Mena to the Chair of the Transportation Board at the June Commission meeting. Jim found the comments to be upsetting because he believed Mena's comments to the TAB undermined the purpose and tried to minimize the power given to the city's advisory boards. Director Couceyro spoke to the board about the interactions at Commission and shared his opinion on the matter. He believes both parties involved were equal in how they expressed their opinions on the matter and urged Jim and the Board to go back to review the Zoom recording of Commission. He would like to talk about it again after Jim reviews the video to see if he still feels the same way after discussing the issue. Fred will review as well.

Board Member Hendrick Woods brought up a discussion about the 4th of July parking at the Biltmore. Fred Couceyro explained how traffic and parking patterns changed due to new construction of homes across the street from the Biltmore. As construction continues, parking will change again next year.

A MOTION COMMENDING THE PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT AND CITY STAFF FOR PUTTING ON A WONDERFUL EVENT AT THE BILTMORE HOTEL THAT WAS ADA COMPLIANT AND ENJOYABLE FOR SENIORS WAS MADE BY CELIA SUAREZ AND SECOND BY HENDRICK WOODS. ALL IN FAVOR, MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

ITEMS FROM THE SECRETARY

Next Meeting is set for August 4th, 2022 at 4:00pm

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 5:15pm

NOTE