

# City of Coral Gables

405 Biltmore Way  
Coral Gables, FL 33134  
[www.coralgables.com](http://www.coralgables.com)



## Meeting Minutes

Thursday, February 1, 2024

4:00 PM

<https://coralgables.zoom.us/j/86149844627>

Adult Activity Center

**Senior Citizens Advisory Board**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Meeting called to order at 4:03 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

**a. Roll Call and Excusal of Absences**

**Present:** Board member Julian Sevillano, Board member James “Jim” Berlin, Board member Judith “Jude” Alexander, Vice-Chair Kelley Schild, Board member Jean Connelly and Board member Richard Thurer

**Absent:** Chair Celia Suarez

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

**a. Approval of January Meeting Minutes**

**A MOTION TO APPROVE LAST MEETINGS MINUTES PENDING THE CORRECTION OF REACHING OUT TO ADULT LIVING FACILITIES TO GET THEIR MEMBERS INVOLVED AT THE AAC WAS MADE BY JAMES “JIM” BERLIN AND WAS SECONDED BY JULIAN SEVILLANO. ALL IN FAVOR; PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**SUPERVISOR'S REPORT**

Community Recreation Director Fred Couceyro stated that there was a recent change in the excusal of absences, where it will no longer be determined by the board members, but rather by the staff liaison with each member be allowed 3 unexcused absences in a year. Director Couceyro then stated that meeting scheduling must be voted on at the end of the previous meeting because the meeting must be publicly advertised. Director Couceyro then stated that Celia Suarez Board Chairperson would have an excused absence from this meeting due to her medical appointment.

Board member Judith "Jude" Alexander then inquired whether attending over zoom would be considered an absence, Community Recreation Director Fred Couceyro stated that this would not be considered an absence, however you would be unable to vote and would not count towards quorum.

In discussion of the previous meetings minutes Community Recreation Director Fred Couceyro stated that Board Chairperson Celia Suarez had some comments on the previous minutes and those changes were made and shared with the board over email earlier today. Board Vice Chairperson Kelley Schild then stated that regarding ALFs in the community she was not referring to sponsorship opportunities, but rather making sure that they know about the AAC and getting their residents involved with the AAC.

#### a. General Updates

AAC Supervisor Norma Gavarrete began by stating that Spring registration is open with non-resident registration for March opening on February 19th. Norma then continued to discuss new program and upcoming special events in the Spring including Mindful Meditation on Fridays from 12:30-1:30, the Variety Show on Friday April 19th, and the Spring/Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon which has been rescheduled for Friday May 10th. The first Spring session of An Afternoon at the Cinema is scheduled for Saturday February 24th at 12pm showing "Duck Soup" and two "Three Stooges" short films, "Disorder in the Court" and "Men in Black" and the next session will be on Saturday April 27th with the film still to be determined.

AAC Assistant Supervisor Gregory Walter then discussed having drop-ins for full classes as discussed in the previous meeting, Gregory stated that following conversations it does not seem like a viable option to sell away a position in a class someone has already paid for and reserved, and having people come to the AAC without a guarantee of being able to attend their classes. Community Recreation Supervisor Fred Couceyro then stated that the goal is to not manage to the exception, that we have adjusted registration to allow more residents to register for the popular classes at the AAC and looking at the attendance numbers and increasing the maximum capacity as allowable emphasizing resident priority.

Board Member Richard Thurer then inquired if there is a policy to make sure that members notify the staff when they are not attending the classes. Community Recreation Director Fred Couceyro then stated that everyone is encouraged to reach out if they will be leaving for an extended period and could potentially open a spot for someone on the waitlist, stating that we can look at refunding a portion of the class if

we are able to fill it with a paying registrant, and potentially even displaying this information on a sign or notice for members.

Board member Jean Connelly then inquired about having instructors announce the opening of registration during their classes so that everyone is aware of the registration dates and policies. Community Recreation Director Fred Couceyro then stated that there was a large effort to spread the word of the change in registration policy that members are aware of at this point, however AAC supervisors are looking into expanding facility hours to increase access to popular classes.

AAC Assistant Supervisor Gregory Walters then discussed how many people do submit refund request forms allowing staff to notify the waitlist promptly so that the spots can be filled. Gregory then stated that AAC supervisors monitor the attendance numbers for these popular programs allowing them to raise the class capacity when allowable.

AAC Assistant Supervisor Gregory Walters then handed out a copy of the survey developed for AAC members aimed to gauge openness to later class times and what programs members are looking for. After reviewing the survey board Vice Chairperson Kelley Schild and board member James "Jim" Berlin then inquired about the possibility of including a question asking if the individual had experienced any difficulty registering due to capacity limits. Board member Richard Thurer then requested that the age categories be adjusted to only include ages 50 years and older.

**A MOTION TO APPROVE THE SURVEY PENDING ADDITION OF QUESTION REGARDING REGISTRATION DIFFICULTY DUE TO CLASS CAPACITY AND CORRECTION OF AGE CATEGORY ON QUESTION 13 WAS MADE BY JAMES "JIM" BERLIN AND WAS SECONDED BY JULIAN SEVILLANO. ALL IN FAVOR; PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

AAC Supervisor Norma Gavarrete then stated that there have been discussions with Matt Anderson of Sustainability and the Keep Coral Gables Beautiful Foundation about future presentations and the installation of plastic bag recycling bins.

#### **b. Special Events**

**An Afternoon at the Cinema, Saturday, Feb 24 at 12p.m.**

#### **c. Administrative Updates**

**The Coral Gables Farmers Market - Saturday, Feb 3 - Mar 30 at 8 a.m., Daddy Daughter Dance - Saturday, Feb 10 at 6:30 p.m., and Valentine Milonga Rouge at the Country Club - Wednesday, Feb 14 at 7p.m. and Movies Under the Gables Moonlight - Featuring BIG - Friday, Feb 16 at 6 p.m.**

Community Recreation Director Fred Couceyro began by stating some of the different events occurring around the city starting with the Farmer's Market on

Saturdays, the Daddy Daughter Dance, Valentine's at the CC, and the Movie on February 16th.

Community Recreation Director Fred Couceyro then gave an update on the ongoing projects with hopes of scheduling community meetings within the next couple months for Phillips Park and Cooper Park. He then discussed the Gables Diner stating that construction has begun and that the Pro Shop is already fully open and operational. Fred then stated that there are two new projects currently going out to bid for construction, the Toldeo-Alava Park, and Blue Road Park with the Rotary Park in the beginning of the design phase.

Board member James "Jim" Berlin then inquired about the departments methods to notify the surrounding community of upcoming community meetings, Community Recreation Director Fred Couceyro stated that the department has found door hangers to be the most effective method and stated that there is a parks projects page on the Coral Gables website where the department posts updates of different projects for the community.

Community Recreation Director Fred Couceyro then gave an update of some ongoing maintenance projects at existing facilities noting that the clay courts are set to be redone at the Salvadore Tennis Center and the ongoing Venetian Pool construction to refinish the pool bottom and revamp the café. Noting that there have been some complications adding additional work and delaying the final completion date of the Venetian Pool café.

Board member Richard Thurer then asked for an update regarding the pending Phillips Park renovation, Community Recreation Director Fred Couceyro stated that there has been a concept plan, however they are working to receive a more detailed plan to move forward. Fred then shared that there was a change that had to be made to the original plans due to the existing trees that they need to design around. Fred then stated that the funding is set to become available to begin construction by October 2025 pending the finalization of the park plan.

Board member Jean Connelly then asked if there were any updates on the new dog park under the Metrorail, Community Recreation Director Fred Couceyro then stated that there is a design and while the city is paying for the park it is being built by the county. Fred then continued to discuss additional dog park locations, stating that the city just received a lot on 301 Majorca where they are considering inputting a dog park pending the approval of funding requests. Fred then stated that they are planning on updating the Salvadore Dog Park by redesigning the surfacing and moving away from the sand initially installed.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Board member Jean Connelly then showed a mailer she had received for a facility called "Senior Planet Miami" stating that she feels this may pose potential competition and may be worth keeping in mind moving forward.

Board member Jean Connelly then inquired about what days the AAC accepts the Golden Passport applications stating that certain businesses offer discounts if you have a Golden Passport with you. AAC Assistant Supervisor Gregory Walters responded that the AAC accepts applications on the second and fourth Wednesday of every month functioning as a satellite station submitting received applications to the county. Jean then discussed the Golden Ticket program where you can receive a book that offers certain discounts and tickets for different events around Miami-Dade County which you can access online or by calling and having them mail you your own copy of the Golden Ticket Book.

Board member James "Jim" Berlin then inquired about having AAC events advertised within the Golden Ticket book. Community Recreation Director Fred Couceyro stated that the AAC special events have been selling out therefore they are not necessarily looking for further advertising opportunities, however stating advertising the Art Show may be worth looking into. AAC Assistant Supervisor Gregory Walters then stated that this is something that they will investigate.

Board member Julian Sevillano then shared that that the Center for Cognitive Research is looking for additional volunteers to participate in their ongoing research. Board member James "Jim" Berlin then shared that he is a volunteer and that it is very interesting to see the difference in how your abilities change year to year. Board member Jean Connelly asked where you would participate in the research studies, Julian responded that it is usually at the University of Miami at the cognitive research building.

Board member James "Jim" Berlin then shared that there was a setback on Alzheimer's medication with Aduhelm no longer being available. Leading to a discussion about the ramifications that this change could have.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **Follow up - Workshop Plans**

- Senior Quality of Life
- Senior Pros & Cons
- Health Care & Aging
- Cost of Housing
- Senior homelessness
- Board Sunshine Rules & Board Liaison

Board Vice Chairperson Kelley Schild then inquired as what was intended with the follow up to the workshop plans. AAC Assistant Supervisor Gregory Waters stated that this was something Board Chairperson Celia Suarez wanted to discuss further with the addition of board member Judith "Jude" Alexander. The board agreed to table to topic until the next meeting when Celia would be in attendance.

## DISCUSSION ITEMS

### Discussion Farmers Market February 17 and March 30

AAC Assistant Supervisor began by stating that the AAC had reserved February 17th and March 30th to advertise at a table at the Farmers Market asking inviting the board to join and advertise the Senior Advisory Board and all the work that they do. Board members James "Jim" Berlin and Julian Sevillano agreed to attend on February 17th from 8am-11am and Judith "Jude" Alexander from 11am-2pm. Board Vice Chairperson Kelley Schild and board member Jean Connelly agreed to advertise the board on March 30th.

Board member James "Jim" Berlin then inquired of the board potentially giving something to Hendrik Woods to thank him for his time serving on Senior Advisory Board. Community Recreation Director Fred Couceyro then mentioned that we could give him a certificate to thank him for his service at the Spring luncheon in May, however Board Vice Chairperson Kelley Schild fears this may allow too much time to pass asking about sending a certificate to Hendrik to thank him for his service. Fred stated that this is something that can be done.

A MOTION TO SEND A CERTIFICATE TO THANK HENDRIK WOODS FOR HIS TIME ON SENIOR ADVISORY BOARD WAS MADE BY JAMES "JIM" BERLIN AND WAS SECONDED BY JULIAN SEVILLANO. ALL IN FAVOR; PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

## ITEMS FROM THE SECRETARY

Next meeting date March 7, 2024 at 4 p.m.

A MOTION TO SCHEDULE THE NEXT MEETING FOR THURSDAY MARCH 7TH AT 4PM WAS MADE BY JAMES "JIM" BERLIN AND WAS SECONDED BY JEAN CONNELLY. ALL IN FAVOR; PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

## ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 5:05 p.m.

## NOTE