



**City of Coral Gables
CITY COMMISSION MEETING
March 10, 2026**

ITEM TITLE: ADVISORY BOARD ON DISABILITY AFFAIRS

MEETING DATE: February 4, 2026

SUMMARY OF MEETING:

QUORUM: Was reached

STAFF:

Jose Rodriguez – Human Resources & Risk Management - Assistant Director
Eglys Hernandez – Human Resources & Risk Management – P/T Administrative Assistant
Yanessa Rodriguez – Community Recreation – Administrative Operations Manager
Catie Hastings – Community Recreation – D.E.I. Coordinator

PUBLIC GUEST: None

CITIZEN ADVISORS:

Debbie Dietz. Citizen Advisor – (Via Zoom)

PUBLIC GUEST: None

CALL TO ORDER: Meeting was called to order at 10:02 am

MEETING ABSENCE:

Wilfredo Jaurequi
Dr. Jennifer Durocher, University of Miami

MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL:

January 7, 2026
Motion by: Bonnie Blaire / 2nd: Jennifer Sando / Approved unanimously

SECRETARY'S REPORT: None

BOARD MEMBERS' REPORTS: None

NEW BUSINESS:

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Autism Acceptance Month –Jose Rodriguez

Mr. Rodriguez advised of proclamation and resolution regarding celebrating April as Autism Acceptance Month to be presented at commission meeting, however there will not be a meeting in April. Mr. Rodriguez advised presentation can be brought forward as an item to the March 27, 2026, commission meeting. Mr. Rodriguez provided copy of previously presented resolution (Exhibit 1) and proclamation (Exhibit 2). Mr. Rodriguez asked the board to review, bring back any suggestions regarding wording and nominate who should be the recipient. The board conducted further discussion and advised they will present further information at the March 4, 2026, board meeting. Ms. Blaire provided suggestions regarding wording to Mr. Rodriguez and stated perhaps board would consider as the recipient Coral Gables Community Foundation. Ms. Blaire advised they have several scholarships and programs they fund. Mr. Martinez stated he will contact them and research further.

Mr. Rodriguez advised that due to renovation commencing at City Hall, the raising of the flag will need to be done at another location. Mr. Rodriguez provided two alternative suggestions; one option could be in front of the Public Safety Building (PSB) and second option could be at the flagpole located at the Youth Center. Board agreed best place would be in front of the PSB.

Ms. Palacio-Pike advised County Commissioner Regalado has advised she would like to sponsor all the flags for all the municipalities and have a main event at Government Center. Ms. Palacio-Pike stated she still prefers having the event in the city. Mr. Rodriguez stated the courtyard at the front of PSB is not a big area and it is not possible to host a large event.

Board agreed to further review and revisit discussion at the March meeting.

OLD BUSINESS:

Audible Crosswalks – Ms. Justine Chichester

Ms. Chichester spoke of presentation provided at the last commission meeting and feels that it has brought back the discussion to the forefront. Ms. Chichester expressed gratitude for everyone's participation. Ms. Chichester stated Assistant City Manager, Ms. Carolina Vester, expressed she would like to assist and requested further information from the board. Ms. Bedoya stated she was happy the issue regarding time allowed for crossing was brought up and how it was stated that at the trolley stops audible crosswalks are going to be placed. Mr. Martinez stated he would like to include into the conversation the issue of having to push the button at the current crosswalks for them to function and how he sees several people who are unaware this needs to be done, just standing there waiting for light change. Ms. Blaire stated this issue has been discussed in the past, in previous meetings and needs to be included once again.

Ms. Chichester stated Ms. Carol Brady-Simons had recommended the commission conduct a tour of the crosswalks while being blindfolded. Mr. Rodriguez stated he had spoken with Ms. Brady-Simons and requested information to be able to coordinate tour. Ms. Blaire stated that she believes the board should also participate in the tour. Mr. Rodriguez advised board member Mr. Wilfredo Jauregui stated that as a resident, he will also be contacting the county and requesting audible crosswalks. Mr. Rodriguez advised the city will be assisting Mr. Jauregui with his request.

Ponce De Leon Park – Review of plans – Mr. Jose Rodriguez

Mr. Rodriguez shared with board final drawings of approved plans and advised no changes could be submitted (Exhibit 3 – Ponce Circle Park Master Plan). Mr. Rodriguez provided information regarding measures including attempting to slow down traffic, electricity components being put underground at crossing areas facilitating installations of pedestrian beacon lighting in the future and other features of the park. Ms. Bedoya asked if it would be possible request lighting be added to the design, which can serve as a boundary and Mr. Rodriguez stated in the design there is a small three-foot wall which goes around most of the park.

Mr. Martinez expressed other concerns he has regarding the area. Mr. Martinez stated he believes there should be more signage, perhaps flags, indicating to drivers that pedestrians are in the area. Mr. Martinez stated this area seems to be a fourth venue space and feels extra safety measures should be put into place.

Ms. Chichester advised regarding this matter, board should continue to further discuss and have this placed on the agenda.

Adventure Day – Ms. Catie Hastings

Ms. Hastings advised tentative date for Adventure Day is Saturday, September 19, 2026, at Salvador Park and it will continue to be same type of event. Board agreed to continue to place this on the upcoming meeting agenda so that further discussion can be conducted.

Board suggestions reference inclusion & accessibility within the school system – School Community Relations Committee – Ms. Mary Palacio-Pike

Ms. Palacio-Pike advised she will be meeting on Friday, February 6, 2026, at 9:30am, with staff at Ponce de Leon Middle school regarding the self-contained classroom. Ms. Sando and Ms. Bedoya stated they will be attending as well. Ms. Chichester requested Ms. Palacio-Pike bring back to the next board information regarding this meeting and her item will continue to be placed on the agenda for further discussion.

Parks & Recreation – Ms. Yanessa Rodriguez

Ms. Rodriguez advised they are looking at having Holiday Park completely redesigned, keeping a few of the special items such as Santa and the Polar Bear in place. Ms. Rodriguez advised construction at Phillips Park is ongoing. Ms. Rodriguez stated the Youth Center has gone through RFP process which is having solicitors provide bids regarding services for children’s programming. Ms. Rodriguez stated they have had in past golf and gymnastics, as well as currently in place a cone of silence regarding soccer. Ms. Rodriguez advised research is currently underway regarding the cost of placing flag poles at city’s parks.

Ms. Rodriguez advised they are also looking into the renovation of the Ruth Bryan Owen Waterway Park Board Walk as well as possibly adding launch. Ms. Rodriguez advised a reopening / renaming ceremony of Blue Road Park to David Lawrence Jr and Family Park Center on March 14, 2026, 10:00am. Ms. Castings advise March 14, 2026, is also summer camp open house as required for accreditation.

Mental Health Assistance – Ms. Vanessa Bedoya

Ms. Bedoya advised Miami Dade County school will no longer be providing funds for students needing assistance regarding mental health. Ms. Bedoya stated she would like to have this placed on next month’s meeting agenda and will try to gather further information to share.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None

NEXT MEETING: March 4, 2026

ADJOURNMENT:

Meeting adjourned at 11:06am

Motion by: Bonnie Blaire / 2nd: Vanessa Bedoya / Approved unanimously

ATTACHMENT(S): Minutes of February 4, 2026