

City of Coral Gables



Meeting Minutes

Thursday, May 7, 2026

4:00 PM

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

Adult Activity Center

Senior Citizens Advisory Board

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:05 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present:

Thomas Wells
Javier Figueras
Gerardo Alvarez
Judith "Jude" Alexander
Jean Connelly

Absent:

Olga Girod - excused

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

A MOTION TO APPROVE THE MAY MEETING MINUTES WAS MADE BY BOARD MEMBER GERARDO ALVAREZ AND SECONDED BY BOARD MEMBER THOMAS WELLS. ALL IN FAVOR; PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

MANAGER'S REPORT

a. General Updates.

Manager Walters provided a recap of the Adult Activity Center's Cinco de Mayo Fiesta. Manager Walters reported that the event was well attended and received overwhelmingly positive feedback from participants. The mariachi band and entertainment were particularly well received, and attendees enjoyed the festive atmosphere.

Manager Walters recognized Supervisor Silva for her significant efforts in planning, preparing, and cooking for the event, noting that the event was truly a "labor of love."

Board members expressed their appreciation to staff and complimented the team on organizing a successful event. Several members stated that attendees had a wonderful time and praised the quality of the food and entertainment.

Board members also provided constructive feedback regarding event logistics. Discussion centered on the length of the food service line and the limited seating available during the event. Several members noted that participants spent a considerable amount of time waiting in line for food, which limited opportunities to socialize, dance, and enjoy the entertainment. Suggestions included increasing the number of tables, creating an additional food service station, utilizing volunteers to assist with serving food and drinks, and exploring alternative food service methods.

Director Couceyro explained that the nature of the menu contributed to the delays, as food items such as nachos and corn cups had to be assembled individually as guests moved through the line. Unlike previous events featuring pre-portioned meals, the preparation process required additional time and staffing. Staff also noted that the facility's lobby space presents challenges when attempting to add a second food station due to space limitations and the need to accommodate registration, photo opportunities, sponsor displays, and beverage service.

Additional discussion focused on ways to improve efficiency at future events. Ideas included utilizing more pre-packaged or pre-portioned meal options, catering certain menu items, recruiting volunteers from event waiting lists, and bringing in additional staff support from other Community Recreation facilities during large special events.

Director Couceyro acknowledged that staffing resources were stretched due to the extensive food preparation requirements and the need for staff to simultaneously oversee photography, food service, guest assistance, and event operations. He noted that future events will be evaluated to identify opportunities for additional staffing and operational improvements.

Despite the logistical challenges discussed, Board members and staff agreed that the Cinco de Mayo Fiesta was a tremendous success and one of the Center's most enjoyable events. The Board thanked staff for their dedication and hard work in creating a memorable experience for participants.

Board members agreed that despite minor logistical challenges, the event was a tremendous success and continues to be one of the Adult Activity Center's most popular annual celebrations. The Board thanked staff for their hard work and dedication in providing quality programming and special events for the senior community.

Manager Walters announced the upcoming Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon, scheduled for Friday, June 5, 2026, at 1:00 p.m. at The Palace. Manager Walters explained that the luncheon serves as an opportunity to recognize and thank the Adult Activity Center's volunteers and advisory board members for their continued service and support throughout the year.

Board members were reminded that they receive complimentary admission to the event and were encouraged to notify staff if they planned to attend. Manager Walters noted that tickets would go on sale to residents the following week and wanted to ensure Board members had the opportunity to reserve their seats prior to the event potentially selling out.

Board member Jean Connelly, suggested that the luncheon include special recognition of former Board Chair Julian Sevillano and his contributions to both the Advisory Board and the senior community. Manager Walters agreed and indicated that discussions had already begun regarding an appropriate tribute to honor Mr. Sevillano's service and dedication to the Adult Activity Center and the Senior Citizen Advisory Board.

Manager Walters announced that the DMV Mobile Unit would return to the Adult Activity Center on May 18, 2026. The Board was informed that participants would be able to complete a variety of DMV-related services, including driver's license renewals, vehicle registration transactions, and other routine DMV services.

Manager Walters further reported that the City has entered into a partnership with the DMV Mobile Unit program that will allow the service to visit the Center on a recurring basis. Under the new arrangement, the DMV Mobile Unit will be available monthly, providing seniors with a convenient alternative to visiting a traditional DMV office.

Board members discussed additional services that may be available through the mobile unit and shared positive feedback regarding the convenience of having these services offered directly at the Center.

Manager Walters announced a special Mother's Day Concert scheduled for May 8, 2026, at 2:00 p.m. at the Adult Activity Center. The concert will feature Gerardo, a performer who previously participated in the Center's Variety Show, along with several of his students.

The performance is intended as a special celebration of Mother's Day and is open to all interested participants. Manager Walters noted that the event is free to attend and serves as an opportunity for members and guests to celebrate through music and

entertainment.

Manager Walters provided an update on the fabric painting class led by Amy. Manager Walters explained that the class includes different monthly themes and has previously included holiday-themed projects, such as Christmas and Easter. The upcoming June class will be dedicated to Father's Day, and participants will have the opportunity to create gift items such as koozies, aprons, and other fun projects. Board members were encouraged to share the information with anyone who may be interested.

Manager Walters also reported that new Italian language classes were added and have become extremely popular. Manager Walters noted that the classes were almost too popular, with a waiting list already in place. The instructors were initially willing to expand the class size because they did not want to turn participants away; however, after the first month, they requested that the class size be reduced.

b. Special Events.

- "A Saturday at the Cinema" – Saturday, May 2, featuring The Getaway, from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
- Youth Center (YC) CPR Classes – Monday, May 4, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
- Adult Activity Center (AAC) Mother's Day Concert – Friday, May 8, from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
- Accessible Recreation Squad Night Out at Tap 42 – Tuesday, May 12, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
- Country Club (CC) Kids Club Parents Night Out – Friday, May 15, from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
- Youth Center (YC) Gables Family Literacy Festival – Saturday, May 16, from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Youth Center Evolve Theater Presents: Hadestown

- Friday, May 15, from 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
- Saturday, May 16, from 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.
- Friday, May 22, from 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
- Saturday, May 23, from 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

c. Administrative Updates.

Director Couceyro provided an update regarding the Community Recreation Department's annual Literacy Festival, scheduled for May 16, 2026, at the War Memorial Youth Center.

The Board was informed that the event is designed to combat the "summer slide," a decline in reading activity that can occur when children are out of school during summer break. The festival will feature literacy-focused activities, book giveaways, educational resource vendors, guest readers, community organizations, rides, food

vendors, and family-friendly activities.

Director Couceyro noted that elected officials, community leaders, and representatives from local organizations will participate in reading activities throughout the event. The festival continues to be one of the Department's signature educational programs and regularly attracts large attendance from families throughout the community.

Director Couceyro reported that BrightView Landscape Services has begun implementing various maintenance and improvement initiatives at the Granada Golf Course. Current efforts include fertilization applications, weed management, turf improvements, and preparations for upcoming tee box renovations.

The Board was informed that mobilization for the tee box improvement project was anticipated to begin shortly.

Director Couceyro further reported that the recently adopted green fee structure has been implemented and that demand for tee times remains strong. Director Couceyro noted staff reported very few complaints regarding the revised fees and noted that tee sheets remain nearly full throughout the week.

The Board also received an update regarding the Golf and Country Club membership program. Director Couceyro stated that a few golf related memberships have already been sold despite advertising them and expressed optimism regarding future participation levels.

Discussion also included the proposed ADA-accessible rain shelters planned throughout the golf course. Director Couceyro explained that permit reviews and mobilization planning remain underway and that construction will be phased to minimize impacts on golf operations. The majority of the shelter locations will remain consistent with previously presented concepts, while two larger ADA-accessible shelters have been adjusted to accommodate accessibility requirements.

Director Couceyro updated the Board regarding the installation of emergency AED safety poles throughout the park system. The first installations have been completed at Salvadore Park and Maggiore Park. Each safety pole includes an Automated External Defibrillator (AED), emergency lighting, surveillance cameras, and emergency notification features.

Future installations are planned for Phillips Park, Rotary Centennial Park, and William and Leona Cooper Park in conjunction with those redevelopment projects.

Director Couceyro provided a detailed update regarding the ongoing redevelopment of Phillips Park.

The Board was informed that installation of the synthetic turf field and playground equipment has been completed. Current work includes construction of pickleball courts, boundary fencing, landscaping, and other site amenities.

Director Couceyro explained that the completed park will include a synthetic turf athletic field, a large destination playground, pickleball courts, a basketball court, and a tennis court. He noted that the project represents the first City park to combine all of these recreational amenities within a single location and will also feature the City's first synthetic turf athletic field.

The Board was further informed that a future Phase II project remains planned and includes a splash pad, community building, and additional amenities, pending future funding availability.

Director Couceyro provided an update regarding the proposed Soccer World Cup Watch Party at Fritz & Franz Bierhaus. He informed the Board that the City Commission requested a more detailed operational plan addressing noise mitigation, security measures, and event logistics before considering the request further. The item is expected to return to the Commission for additional review once the requested information is submitted.

Director Couceyro informed the Board that staff recently completed the design process for a new Holiday Park concept that will be presented to the City Commission in the coming weeks. Director Couceyro explained that the current contract has concluded and that the proposed Holiday Park will feature a new design and enhanced attractions.

Director Couceyro stated that while the new concept represents an increase in funding, it also represents a significant enhancement to the overall visitor experience. Director Couceyro noted that Holiday Park remains one of the City's most popular seasonal attractions, drawing thousands of visitors throughout the holiday season, and expressed excitement about unveiling the new concept to the public.

Director Couceyro reported that the City Commission recently approved a new youth soccer provider partnership with Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) Academy.

The new program will operate under the Coral Gables Soccer program and is expected to expand youth soccer opportunities within the community. Director Couceyro discussed the history of youth soccer in Coral Gables and explained that the City previously operated highly successful competitive programs that experienced significant participation prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Board was informed that PSG Academy is a nationally recognized soccer organization affiliated with the internationally known Paris Saint-Germain Football Club. Tryouts for the new program were scheduled to begin the following week.

Director Couceyro expressed optimism regarding the future growth of the program and noted that the partnership is expected to attract additional participants and expand recreational and competitive soccer opportunities for local youth.

NEW BUSINESS

a. Appointment of a Chairperson.

A MOTION TO APPOINT BOARD MEMBER JUDITH "JUDE" ALEXANDER AS CHAIRPERSON WAS MADE BY BOARD MEMBER THOMAS WELLS AND SECONDED BY BOARD MEMBER GERARDO ALVAREZ. ALL IN FAVOR; PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

b. Appointment of a Vice Chairperson.

A MOTION TO APPOINT BOARD MEMBER GERARDO ALVAREZ AS VICE CHAIRPERSON WAS MADE BY BOARD MEMBER THOMAS WELLS AND SECONDED BY BOARD MEMBER JEAN CONNELLY. ALL IN FAVOR; PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

OLD BUSINESS

DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. Art Show Committee Update.

Board Member Jean Connelly provided an update on behalf of the Art Show Committee. She reported that committee members had recently met with staff members to discuss plans for the upcoming art show and had reached several preliminary conclusions. The committee plans to meet again prior to the June 4, 2026 Board meeting and will continue refining event details and recommendations.

The Board discussed opportunities to increase participation and awareness of the art show. Director Couceyro explained the various communication tools available to promote events, including RecConnect email notifications, Constant Contact, the City website, social media platforms, and City newsletters. Director Couceyro noted that targeted email campaigns can be sent to specific participant groups and that promotional videos and social media content could be developed to help advertise the event and encourage artist participation.

Board members also discussed potential judges for the upcoming art show. The Board reported that commitments had already been received from several individuals, including representatives from the local arts community and museum professionals. Additional potential judges were being contacted and discussions were ongoing.

ITEMS FROM THE SECRETARY

The next meeting is schedule for Thursday, June 4th at 4 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

A MOTION WAS MADE BY THOMAS WELLS TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AND WAS SECONDED BY BOARD MEMBER JEAN CONNELLY. ALL IN FAVOR; PASSED UNANIMOUSLY. THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 4:51 P.M.

NOTE