

City of Coral Gables

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



Meeting Minutes

Friday, October 15, 2021

8:30 AM

Police & Fire HQ - 2151 Salzedo Street, Coral Gables, FL 33134
Community Meeting Room A
School Community Relations Committee

Chairperson Ariel Fernandez
Vice Chairperson Sam Joseph
Board Member Erin Anding
Board Member Winnie Chang
Board Member Sandy Dimitris
Board Member Carmen Manrara Cartaya
Board Member Cecilia D. Slesnick
Board Member Jennifer Ward Sando
Board Member Sharon Watson

The School Community Relations Committee will be holding its Regular Meeting on Friday, October 15, 2021, commencing at 8:30 a.m. While the Committee is back to live in-person meetings, members of the public may participate in person but are also able to participate via the Zoom platform. Members of the public may join the meeting via Zoom at (<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83893614478>). In addition, a dedicated phone line will be available so that any individual who does not wish (or is unable) to use Zoom may listen to and participate in the meeting by dialing: 786 635 1003 Meeting ID: 838 9361 4478.

To speak on an Agenda Item, please "Raise your Hand" or send a message to one of the meeting hosts using the Zoom Platform. If you joined the meeting via telephone you can "Raise your Hand" by pressing *9.

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order at 8:34 a.m.

ROLL/QUORUM CALL

Present: 9 - Slesnick, Watson, Dimitris, Joseph, Chang, Fernandez, Manrara
Cartaya, Anding and Board Member Ward Sando

Attachments: [SCRC Sign in Sheet.docx](#)

A. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

School Community Relations Committee Meeting of September 24, 2021.

Attachments: [Draft SCRC Sept. 24 Minutes.pdf](#)
[Cover Memo.docx](#)

This Matter was approved on the Consent Agenda.

B. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Estelle Lockhart – Discussed Spanish Magnet Program at Carver, and event hosted in honor of Spanish heritage week/month. Emergency at Little Carver, no Counselor since March. One mental health professional visits the school once a week in the absence of a counselor. What could the SCRC do to broaden the hiring pool? Mentioned that Carver does not currently have a self-contained classrooms and that she believes one is not needed.

Joshua – Question for Mayor Lago. What mitigation efforts were being taken to lessen the impact of development projects on the safety, welfare, and health of students?; 2 Letters form the School Board Attorney's Office, from Nov. 2020 and Jan. 2021 sent to the City regarding the WAWA issue that went unanswered. Mr. Joshua, wanted to express his concern about the lack of response.

Eric Acosta – Responded to several items raised during discussions, including self-contained autism classroom, Carver Elementary counselor issue.

C. NEW BUSINESS

C-1 Miami-Dade County Public Schools Update (Facilitated by Mari Tere Rojas, School Board Member)

- Discussed issue of the school counselor. A counselor will be at Carver Elementary by today.
- Board Member Rojas provided her perspective regarding Mr. Goodman's comments, stating the School Board Attorney sent letters on Nov 16, 2020 to the City requesting certain documentation, and submitted a second request on Jan 11, 2021. The School Board Attorney's Office received the requested documentation, via public records request, and sent documentation to the City stating that they obtained the documentation without their assistance.

C-2 Follow-up discussion on Miami-Dade County Public School Board redistricting (Facilitated by Ariel Fernandez, Chair)

A Resolution of the School Community Relations Committee urging the City Commission to request that the Miami-Dade County School Board include the entire City in a single school district,

Attachments: [Cover Memo for Resolution.docx](#)
[SCRC Resolution Re Redistricting.docx](#)
[Verbatim Transcript - CCMtg Oct 26 2021 - Agenda Item 2-2 - Resolution of the S](#)

Discussion had regarding the fact that sections of the City of Coral Gables currently fall within several school districts. Chairperson Fernandez passes the gavel to Vice Chairperson Joseph and makes a motion urging the City Commission to request that the Miami-Dade County School Board include the entire City in a single school district. Board Member Watson seconds, motion passes.

Yeas: 6 - Watson, Dimitris, Joseph, Fernandez, Anding and Board Member Ward Sando

Absent: 3 - Slesnick, Chang and Manrara Cartaya

C-3 Discussion with Mayor Lago (Facilitated by Ariel Fernandez, Chair)

Discussion Topics:

- How can the committee align with the Mayor's educational initiatives? Mayor described his strategic plan.

West Lab – High level discussion that will take time. Mayor would like to look further into this issue.

- Page Program / Cavaliers Fellowship Program: Discussed ways to keep Coral Gables Senior High School at the forefront of these programs.

Purpose of the programs is to engage young people and provide them with exposure to government and so they can get hands-on experience in different departments.

Commissioner Menendez will provide a possible update on the Cavaliers Fellowship Program.

There is overall a strong Commitment to mentor the youth of Coral Gables.

School Board Member Rojas - Waiting on Page Program applications, to encourage students to start applying as soon as possible.

Chelsea – they are working to merge both programs.

- Mayor's thoughts on the future of the Coral Gables Family Literacy Festival.

Building on the success of last year's event. Hopefully, will become a staple, and compete with many other book fairs.

School Board Member Rojas – Next school board meeting – proposal for national Family Literacy Day that will be held Nov 1st, throughout different schools in the county.

- Discussion on having book readings at the Farmers Market.

Chairperson Fernandez – Encourages community leaders/ elected officials to read a book at the farmers markets.

Mayor – Supports this idea and mentions second farmers market and the possibility of including a tent to advocate for the Literacy Event, and where books could be read.

- Coral Gables Preparatory Academy 100-year Anniversary.

10-1-2023, dedication of 100 years. School in need of beautification.

- How can the City partner with MDCPS to bring self-contained autism classrooms to Coral Gables public schools.

Self-contained special needs classroom in the City. Mayor needs further information on this issue. Funding. Wants a plan of action, which includes Miami-Dade County Commissioner Sosa's possible contribution. Discussed possible sunshine meeting with Mayor Lago, School Board, County Commissioner to discuss and plan before the year ends.

School Board Member Rojas – the district has three self – contained classrooms although there are not any in the city., Next board meeting the School Board Member will be giving an update on this issue.

Request for self-contained classroom in NRSCRC district.

Remaining discussion items deferred until the November meeting with the Mayor possibly returning.

Additional questions from the public.

- What is the City doing to promote public schools in the City, especially during

the Oct 1-Jan 15 magnet application window? (Estelle Lockhart)

- In regard to improving communication to our Coral Gables community in regard to Coral Gables Senior High School as an excellent public high school option. (Jackie Kellogg)

D. ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Update on the number of units in the Gables Village development is provided.
- Request for a discussion at a future meeting regarding traffic studies in general.

F-1 Next SCRC Meeting - Friday, November 19, 2021

Questions/Comments: scrc@coralgables.com

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 10:27 a.m.

NOTE