



**City of Coral Gables
CITY COMMISSION MEETING
July 7, 2026**

ITEM TITLE: ADVISORY BOARD ON DISABILITY AFFAIRS

MEETING DATE: May 6, 2026

SUMMARY OF MEETING:

QUORUM: Was reached

STAFF:

Clifford Friedman – Human Resources & Risk Management Director
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 (Via Zoom)
Catie Hastings – Community Recreation – D.E.I. Coordinator

CITIZEN ADVISORS:

Debbie Dietz, Citizen Advisor – Not Present
Dr. Jennifer Durocher, University of Miami (Via Zoom)

PUBLIC GUEST: Mr. Ernie Martinez

CALL TO ORDER: Meeting was called to order at 10:05am

MEETING ABSENCE: None

MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL:

March 4, 2026
Motion by: Bonnie Blaire / 2nd: Wilfredo Jauregui / Approved unanimously

SECRETARY'S REPORT: None

BOARD MEMBERS' REPORTS: None

NEW BUSINESS:

Introduction of New Human Resources & Risk Management Director Clifford Friedman
Director Friedman presented himself briefly to the board due to also participating in interviews being conducted

*City Commission Agenda Cover Memo
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and was unable to remain at the meeting.

Sitting Pretty Presentation – Ms. Justine Chichester

Ms. Chichester spoke regarding a show she was part of “Sitting Pretty”. Ms. Chichester states this show provides information on the challenges faced by people with disabilities and feels it would be a great tool to utilize as training for directors. Ms. Chichester stated original production time has been reduced to facilitate its presentation at schools and it can easily be presented to directors as part of October Disability Awareness Month. Ms. Chichester said it would be a topic the board can commence to discuss early, therefore easier to plan. Ms. Chichester stated she would be sending information to staff regarding the presentation for distribution to board.

The board agreed to add this to the June 3, 2026, meeting agenda to be further discussed.

OLD BUSINESS:

Village of Key Biscayne Summitt – Mr. Jose Rodriguez

Mr. Rodriguez asked the board members who would be attending the Village of Key Biscayne to please advise due to having to public notice meeting. Mr. Rodriguez was advised two board members have already confirmed their participation and city has public noticed this as well.

Project Victory Program – Mr. Jose Rodriguez

Mr. Rodriguez advised board this program is now based in the Human Resources & Risk Management department and provided information on their duties as well as the activities they are participating in. Mr. Martinez stated he would like to have more information regarding this program and perhaps introduce at the Chamber of Commerce. Ms. Palacio-Pike provided some information regarding the program. Ms. Sando Ward asked if the Chamber was aware of this project and she advised she did not believe so. The board discussed addressing this subject at the Chamber’s October breakfast.

UM Autism Friendly Initiative – Ms. Mary Palacio-Pike

Ms. Palacio-Pike asked Dr. Durocher regarding the status of City of Coral Gables completing and obtaining UM Autism Friendly Initiative. Dr. Durocher stated she is not aware of the status regarding this initiative, only there has been a temporary hold regarding all municipalities. Dr. Durocher stated the process regarding municipalities is complex and they are currently experiencing a shortage of staff members. Dr. Durocher stated she would research and advise board.

Coral Gables Accessibility Web Page – Mr. Jose Rodriguez

Mr. Rodriguez shared with the board preview of the city’s accessibility web page, which is just a draft at this time. Mr. Rodriguez spoke of various functions available on the page including helpful links. Mr. Rodriguez stated there will be a link of events, however, this will be limited to events which will be taking place in the city. Ms. Bedoya asked how easy was to access this page. Mr. Rodriguez showed the various choices available to get information. Mr. Rodriguez stated that the live page will have more resources.

Ms. Palacio-Pike stated that when she took this concern to the mayor, it was after touring the public schools in the area and how on their websites it does not state services available for people with disabilities. Ms. Palacio-Pike stated even thou it is good to have links to such organizations as Light House for the Blind, she feels local resources within the city should be highlighted with their link. Ms. Palacio-Pike stated she believes this is important and

needed so that local families can have easier access to local information.

Ms. Sando Ward stated she believes that she would not search under “A” for accessibility, she would go to “D” for disability. Ms. Bedoya stated after further review of drop box on the city web page, why not have both, keeping under “A” and then add under “D” Disability, Mr. Rodriguez said this will be reviewed.

Mr. Martinez asked if any event will be listed on this webpage. Mr. Rodriguez stated it would be events only being hosted in the city. Ms. Blaire requested clarification regarding events being placed on this list and expressed concern regarding oversight of events reference ADA. Ms. Blaire stated if there are ADA requirements through the permit process why would those events not be automatically placed on list. Ms. Hastings stated there are three people who can review and advise events to be placed on city website. Mr. Rodriguez stated he can bring it up to Mr. Fred Couyero, Director of Community Recreation, and will be placed on the agenda for next month’s meeting for further discussion. Ms. Hastings provided information as to why noncity links have been removed from the city web site. The board discussed possibility of adding to the noncity links popup stating, “leaving City of Coral Gables site”. Mr. Rodriguez advised this would be further researched.

Adventure Day – Catie Hastings

Ms. Hastings stated a decision must be made during this meeting regarding upcoming Adventure Day which will be taking place on September 19, 2026. Ms. Hastings stated there are currently five options to be considered. Ms. Hastings stated the options are 1) host Adventure Day as it has been done always, 2) have a 5K, 3) A movie night event outside with food trucks and a movie from ReelAbilities, 4) A family formal ticketed event similar to the current Dad Daughter dance to be held at the country club, catering, dancing, etc. Mr. Rodriguez asked what the most affordable ticket would be available and Ms. Rodriguez stated it would be \$50.00 a ticket, 5) A pickleball tournament.

Mr. Martinez stated the last Adventure Day was the first one he went to and would like to know what was wrong with the event that needs to be changed. Ms. Hastings stated when the first Adventure Day took place in 2018, the city was the only one conducting this type of event. Thereafter, other municipalities have had their own event with similar resources making them seem repetitive. The board proceeded with further discussion of possible suggestions. Ms. Blaire stated Community Recreation has provided five ideas to be taken into consideration and perhaps the board needs to rank them. The board determined five would be the least favorable to move forward with and stated the following to be presented to Community Recreation staff:

- 1) Adventure Day with a Walk & Roll – 5K Element added to it
- 2) Adventure Day as is
- 3) Night & Food Truck
- 4) Family Formal
- 5) Pickleball Tournament

Mr. Rodriguez stated this information will be forwarded to Director Couceyro.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None

NEXT MEETING: June 3, 2026

ADJOURNMENT:

Meeting adjourned at 11:20am

Motion by: Jennifer Sando / 2nd: Wilfredo Jaurequi / Approved unanimously

ATTACHMENT(S): Minutes of May 6, 2026