

SENIOR CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD

Minutes of August 3, 2009 meeting
Coral Gables Youth Center

MEMBERS	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	APPOINTED BY
Catherine Fahringer	P											Mayor Donald D. Slesnick II
Norma Lemberg	P											Vice Mayor William H. Kerdyk, Jr.
Esther Castiglia	E											Comm. Maria Anderson
Dr. William Schiff	P											Comm. Rafael "Ralph" Cabrera, Jr.
Frank Lynn	P											Comm. Wayne "Chip" Withers
Evelyn Budde	P											City Manager Patrick G. Salerno
Carol Brock	P											Senior Citizens Advisory Board

A = Absent
C = Cancelled
E = Excused absence
P = Present
N = No quorum
R = Recessed
S = Sick
V= Vacant Position

STAFF:

Luanne Santangelo
Assistant Parks & Recreation Director

Paul Hunt
Senior Services Coordinator

Anastasia Smith
Recreation Specialist-Senior Services

Tricia Spencer
Recording Secretary

GUESTS:

Katie Kreter, resident
Coral Gables

Marli Lutz
Executive Director, Coral Gables @ Home

1. Chairperson Carol Brock called the meeting to order at 5:03 p.m.
2. C. Brock welcomed all newly appointed Board members and guests Katie Kreter and Marli Lutz to the meeting. C. Brock welcomed new member Evelyn Budde to the Board and expressed how pleased she was to have her as a member.
3. C. Brock gave a special thank you to Marli Lutz, the Coral Gables Community Foundation and CoralGables@Home for providing their conference room and refreshments for the meeting.

4. Vice Chair Catherine Fahringer moved to elect Carol Brock as the Boards selection for Board Member as a Whole. The motion was seconded by Frank Lynn. The motion passed unanimously.
5. Vice Chair C. Fahringer moved to elect C. Brock as the Chairperson of the Board, this motion was seconded by Dr. William Schiff. The motion passed unanimously.
6. Norma Lemberg moved to re-elect C. Fahringer as Vice Chair, the motion was seconded by Dr. W. Schiff. The motion passed unanimously.
7. Approval of Board minutes from June 1, 2009 – A motion was made by N. Lemberg and seconded by F. Lynn to approve the meeting minutes of June 1, 2009. Motion was passed unanimously by the Board.
8. Approval of Excused Absences – A motion was made by C. Brock to approve an excused absence for Esther Castiglia. Motion was passed unanimously by the Board.
9. E. Budde asked for an explanation on the “Board As A Whole” appointment. C. Brock clarified that this person is not appointed by the Mayor, City Commissioners or City Manager, but selected as a representative to the Board by the appointed members of the Board. K. Fahringer interjected that anyone who is interested in serving on the Board could submit a request.
10. Senior Services Divisional Reports:
 - a. **Report on Senior Services – Paul Hunt**

P. Hunt reported on the Pilot Taxi Discount Coupon Program. He said that progress has been made and we are a few weeks away from implementation. P. Hunt distributed a package of information including a sample of the coupon, an application/questionnaire that will be completed by each one purchasing a coupon book and the proposal. He explained that those eligible to purchase the books are 65 years and up and residents of the City of Coral Gables. Books will be sold at the Coral Gables Youth Center.

The questionnaire, that each purchaser will be asked to complete, is an attempt to gather some basic information about the purchaser’s transportation needs. After the pilot program ends, follow up phone calls will be made to all or a sampling of those purchasing the books. Mr. Hunt is working with a colleague from Florida International University who has developed a tool that is used nation wide to compile data.

After much discussion on the Transportation Program several questions and concerns were raised: L. Santangelo stated that there will be calls from those who do not use all their coupons by the expiration date (December 31, 2009) seeking a refund. She asked that the information include the statement “No Refunds for Unused Coupons”.

M. Lutz asked P. Hunt if receipts are given, he said yes. She also wanted to know what would be the best way that members of CoralGables@Home could purchase the tickets,

since they also have limitations with driving. Dr. W. Schiff suggested that volunteers from CoralGables@Home could take the purchased coupons to the members. M. Lutz suggested that since some of the members attend events at UBC, that maybe we would consider setting aside a day to sell the coupons at one of the luncheons? The majority of the Board felt this was an acceptable idea. L. Santangelo suggested that we could have the coupons for sale at the Youth Center and at the Adult Activity Center; Anastasia and Letty would be there to monitor and CoralGables@Home could bring their members over to purchase the coupons.

Other questions included: Who can purchase the coupons? The coupons are only for Coral Gables residents aged 65 years and above. Will identification be needed to purchase the coupons? Identification is required when an individual claims residency of Coral Gables. Are there any limitations for use of the coupons? The coupons can be used 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. There is no limitation on the distance travelled. How many coupon books can be purchased? Since this is a pilot program, sales will be limited to one coupon book per person. A coupon book will contain four (4) \$5 coupons. Each book will sell for \$10 each.

The Board asked about funding of this program after the Pilot Program has been completed and viability of the program to continue long term. P. Hunt said that he has been working with the Alliance for Aging writing a grant for submittal to the Retirement Research Foundation of Chicago. The total grant requested was \$250,000. A portion of those funds are designated for transportation. There is the hope that the Alliance for Aging, if awarded the grant would consider funding a portion of the Taxi Discount Program.

P. Hunt has also previously investigated funding through insurance companies. In a previous conversation with a representative from an insurance company, he stated that the program was a great idea and something the company would be interested in investing in. Because of the nature of accidents with Seniors, typically severe structural damage or personal injury, expenses and payouts are higher. It would benefit the insurance industry to invest in a viable transportation option to reduce the number of Seniors driving, the number of accidents involving Seniors and the increased payouts attributed to those accidents.

C. Brock thanked P. Hunt for his diligence in providing this transportation option to our seniors.

As a last comment C. Fahringer said that she finally was approved by STS services after she was turned down many times; when she was turned down this final time she wrote a letter to STS explaining to them why she qualified for STS and she even set up an appointment to see the person in charge, a week later her STS card arrived in the mail.

b. Senior Center Programs – Anastasia Smith

A. Smith provided new member E. Budde with an overview of the senior activities held at UBC. A. Smith stated that the Senior Services website has been updated; users can now go on-line to access the “Golden Gables” and the monthly Activities Calendar.

The church will be closed for the first (2) two weeks of August. Programs will be suspended until they reopen. The next lunch/lecture will be held on Monday, August 17 with the topic of the History of Chocolate. Right before the lunch/lecture, representatives from the Take Care Clinic, part of Walgreens located on 8th street and Lejeune Road, will talk briefly about their services and specifically about Shingles.

Volunteers were used to assist with the folding and mailing of the July activity calendar.

The first Conversational French class was a success. Classes will resume in September. Line Dancing starts on August 20th for 5 weeks. There will be a casino trip in September to the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino, a total of 48 spaces were available only 4 remain.

F. Lynn stated that several participants of the French class commented to him how much they enjoyed the program.

C. Brock mentioned that last Wednesday, July 29th was the biggest weekly lunch they had, 32 people attended. She also congratulated Anastasia and Letty for doing a great job.

8. Old Business

a. Sr. Citizens’ Budget Update

L. Santangelo said that there is no new information to report on the budget. The public hearings will be scheduled in September.

C. Brock said that, unbeknownst to her, seniors participating in Senior Services classes created and signed a petition to keep the adult activities. The petition was submitted to the City Manager.

b. Art Show Report

Dr. W. Schiff said that Anastasia, Belkys Perez and he worked on the Golden Gables for the inclusion of the Art Show information. There is an article about the upcoming art show on the front and the Art Show application is on the back page of the newsletter. Dr. W. Schiff and the Board agreed that this was one of the best issues of the Golden Gables Newsletters.

The art show already has its first applicant; Dr. W. Schiff also asked the board members to help out at the art show if need be. There is confirmed sponsorship from The Palace, Inc. and Dr. W. Schiff will work with their Public Relations Department for event

announcements. A. Smith is in the process of getting prizes. The Senior Art Show will be held on November 13th and November 14th, 2009; the deadline for all applicants is October 1st.

c. Coral Gables at Home Update

M. Lutz distributed the August edition of The@Homebody newsletter and a “Save the Plate” card, a fundraiser event on January 15th – 16th, 2010. M. Lutz provided information on the activities listed in newsletter.

d. GablesHomePage Update

C. Brock said that she met with Beverly Mills Gyllenhaal about setting up the on-line newspaper. Gyllenhaal really needs Senior volunteers who would be interested in writing and blogging on-line. There will be a focus group held for Seniors who are interested in writing or blogging for GablesHomePage.

9. New Business

a. Positive Living Awards/Alliance for Aging

C. Brock was happy to say that she nominated Dr. W. Schiff for the Positive Living Intergenerational Award because of his work on the Senior Art Show.

C. Brock was nominated for two Positive Living Award categories, one nomination by N. Lemberg and one nomination by M. Lutz. Both nominations were made because of C. Brocks commitment to improving the lives of seniors in Coral Gables.

b. Annual Report of Board to City Manager

The Board would like to provide City Manager, Patrick Salerno, with their annual report prior to his attendance at the September 14th meeting; they would also like Carol to compose a cover letter that would state a few specific topics of interest of the Board.

The Board decided to include these items in the cover letter to serve as discussion points:

- a. To ask Mr. Salerno to expand on his experience with seniors and his future plans for senior programs.
- b. Permanent Senior Center
- c. Senior Transportation

c. Fire Fees - Senior Exemption

Dr. W. Schiff discussed the Fire Fees being proposed by the City. Dr. W. Schiff made a motion that the Board is in favor of fire fees but with a reduced rate for seniors; E. Budde seconded the motion. After much discussion, the vote was called. The motion failed by a vote of 1 in favor and 5 against, with Dr. W. Schiff being the one favorable vote.

A second motion was made by E. Budde, that the Board submit their recommendation to the Mayor with copies to the City Commission and City Manager that they are not in favor of fire fees for seniors. The motion was seconded by N. Lemberg. The motion passed with a vote of 5 in favor and 1 against.

10. Date and time of next meeting

The next meeting of the Senior Citizens Advisory Board will be held on Monday, September 14, 2009 at 5:00 p.m. at the Coral Gables Youth Center at 405 University Drive.

11. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m.