

# City of Coral Gables

405 Biltmore Way  
Coral Gables, FL 33134  
[www.coralgables.com](http://www.coralgables.com)



## Meeting Minutes

Friday, February 11, 2022

8:30 AM

Police and Fire Headquarters, Community Meeting Room

### 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, February 11, 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 8:37 a.m.

## ROLL/QUORUM CALL

**Present:** 7 - Slesnick, Dimitris, Joseph, Chang, Fernandez, Anding and Board Member Ward Sando

**Absent:** 2 - Watson and Manrara Cartaya

### A. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

School Community Relations Committee Workshop of January 14, 2022.

**Attachments:** [Cover Memo](#)  
[Jan. 14 - Workshop Minutes](#)

A motion was made by Board Member Anding, seconded by Board Member Slesnick, that this matter be approved. The motion passed by the following vote. Vice Chair Joseph absent from vote but present for the remainder of the meeting.

**Yeas:** 6 - Slesnick, Dimitris, Chang, Fernandez, Anding and Board Member Ward Sando

**Absent:** 3 - Watson, Joseph and Manrara Cartaya

### B. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Estelle Lockhart – Ms. Lockhart asked for the support of the SCRC in addressing a “major leak” in the roof of the media center at Carver Elementary. Ms. Lockhart stated that the ceiling has been damaged due to this issue and is requesting a new roof be installed. Ms. Lockhart also stated that the media center is in the process of several upgrades and that a new carpet had been installed due to mold.

School Board Member Mari Tere Rojas reminded the SCRC of the process of reporting issues at schools. The School Board Member stated that school principals should be approached first with any issues, especially one as described by Ms. Lockhart. School Board Member Rojas also stated that she will be in contact with the school to address the issue.

M-DCPS’ Region Administrative Director Dr. Eric Acosta stated that he would follow up with maintenance for a long-term solution for the issue Ms. Lockhart brought up and will report back to the SCRC with his findings. During the School Board Member’s update, Dr. Acosta informed the SCRC that the current leak at Carver Elementary was caused by a lightning strike and the roof replacement is scheduled. Dr. Acosta also clarified that every time a roof issue has been reported the issue was addressed.

## C. NEW BUSINESS

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

The School Board Member started the update with a brief recap on the February School Board Meeting. Stating that the February Meeting commemorated the final meeting with Superintendent Alberto Carvalho in which he was recognized for his time at M-DCPS and the Board wished him well on his new endeavors. The School Board Meeting also commemorated the first day for Superintendent Jose Dotres.

Also, at the February Meeting the School Board Member proffered the following items:

- Endorsement of Read Across America Day, in the hopes of inspiring students to read for enjoyment, as well as inviting elected officials, members of the community, and parents to read to their children.
- A campaign to inform parents and young adults of the consequences of possessing a counterfeit/ fictitious driver's license or fake ID.
- Recognition of Miami- Dade County Schools Police Officer - Detective John Messenger Sr., Officer of the Year Award recipient.

School Board Member Rojas attended the Teacher of the Year and Rookie Teacher of the Year ceremony in which Unethia Fox, a special education math teacher at South Miami Senior High School, was named the 2023 Francisco R. Walker Miami-Dade County Teacher of the Year. As well as, Annaly Rodriguez from Blue Lakes Elementary for being named the Miami-Dade County Public Schools Office Employee of the Year. Both Ms. Fox and Ms. Rodriguez will be recognized by School Board Member Rojas at the March School Board meeting.

The School Board Member mentioned the planning of a Town Hall Meeting in Coral Gables in which hopefully Superintendent Dotres will be in attendance. School Board Member Mari Tere Rojas' next satellite office hours will be held at the Coral Gables City Hall on Thursday March 17 at 12:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

School Board Member Mari Tere Rojas gave a utilization report for schools in Coral Gables.

**C-2 Presentation on Project Victory (Facilitated by Angie Torres, Administrative Director of MDCPS Exceptional Student Education)**

A presentation was facilitated by Angie Torres Administrative Director of M-DCPS Exceptional Student Education. The Supervisor of the Transitional Services and programs Magali Garcia presented to the SCRC an overview of the types of services, programs, and resources their office offers the community.

Project Victory is program that prepares students for financial, personal, and social independence through work experience. Students start at a half-day basis with option to extend to full day after a year in the program based on the student's individual needs. Ms. Garcia highlighted the skills students gain from the program as well as the current partnering work sites.

Chairperson Ariel Fernandez inquired about the distance between the school and Publix (one of the work sites), and how the program makes the assessment on which work site is best for the students. Ms. Garcia replied by stating that when a need is identified, the program reaches out to Publix and the corporation identifies which of their store's is better suited for the program based on their criteria (area, size of store, number of employees, etc.).

Chairperson Fernandez further inquired on what a City of Coral Gables backed program would look like. Ms. Angie Torres stated that they wish to replicate the model currently established at the cities of Hialeah and Miami Gardens - starting with a half day program in which a teacher and a job coach would accompany 8 – 10 students, in which students will gain computer and customer service skills. Vice Chairperson Sam Joseph suggested the Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce and the business community involvement.

**C-3 Discussion on traffic studies (Facilitated by Ariel Fernandez, Chair)**

A discussion regarding the current methods and applications in which a traffic impact study is conducted and whether asking for an amendment to methodology will improve the process moving forward. Solanch Lopez read the methodology behind traffic impact study requirements. In summary, a traffic impact study is required for a new development if the proposed development will generate fifty (50) or more new peak hour two-way trips to or from the site. Whenever a new development is being proposed, the developer will send our department a trip generation letter which indicates the number of vehicle trips being generated by the proposed development. The letter will indicate how many peak hour trips are generated by what is existing at the site and how many peak hour trips will be generated by what is proposed. If the difference is fifty (50) or more in the AM or PM peak hours, a traffic impact study is required. Once we receive the letter, we review it to verify the number of trips and advise the developer if a traffic impact study is required.

Board Member Cecilia D. Slesnick suggested other methods of traffic alleviation be explored. Chairperson Ariel Fernandez suggested engaging the Transportation Advisory Board on this topic, as well as having a conversation with the chair of the board and report back to the SCRC on the discussion. The School Board Member stated that M-DCPS does conduct traffic studies, and she will put the SCRC in contact with the region personnel in charge of the topic.

Vice Chairperson Sam Joseph requested an attendance update report for schools in Coral Gables.

**D. OLD BUSINESS**

**E. ONGOING BUSINESS**

**E-1 Notice Pursuant to Resolution No. 2020-245 (Facilitated by Naomi Levi-Garcia, Staff Liaison)**

Staff Liaison Naomi Levi-Garcia briefed the SCRC on the Madeira Project and a discussion on the specifics of the development took place.

A discussion was also had regarding the impact this project might have on Coral Gables Preparatory Academy enrollment. Coral Gables Prep is currently under an "Advised" status by the Attendance Boundary Committee (ABC). Board Members discussed the process of the ABC, and members attending ABC meetings.

Board Member Cecilia D. Slesnick made a motion to present a recommendation to the City Commission urging them to consider the "Advised" status of Coral Gables Preparatory Academy before the ABC and the potential impact of the forthcoming Madeira Project on the school's attendance boundaries. Vice Chair Joseph seconded, and the motion passed.

Attachments: [Staff Report - 301 Madiera w attachments B thru E](#)  
[Attachment A - Applicant Submittal](#)

**F. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

F-1 Next SCRC Meeting - Friday, March 11, 2022

Questions/Comments: [scrc@coralgables.com](mailto:scrc@coralgables.com)

F-2 Join a local PTA or subscribe to their newsletters using the following links.

F-3 Farmers Market - Saturdays - 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

F-4 Valentine's Event at the Venetian Pool - Monday, Feb. 14 - 6:00 p.m.

F-5 School Board Member Rojas' Satellite Office Hours - Thursday, Feb. 18 - 12:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

F-6 City Hall Lit Purple for Rare Disease Day - Monday, Feb. 28

F-7 Downtown Community Cleanup - Monday, Feb. 28 - 5:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m.

**NOTE**