

# CORAL GABLES SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMITTEE

## MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING

February 10, 2009

Coral Gables Police Department

Coral Gables, Florida

### J J A S O N D J F M APPOINTED BY:

#### MEMBERS

Andrew Yagoda	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	Mayor Donald Slesnick, Jr.
Joan Reitsma	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	P	P	Commissioner Maria Anderson
Victor Shabanah			P	P	P	P	P	P	P	City Manager David Brown
Pat Kiel	P	E	P	P	E	P	E	A	P	Crime Watch
Barbra Harley	E	E	P	P	P		E	P	P	Commissioner Rafael "Ralph" Cabrera
Doug Austin						P	E	P	A	Vice Mayor William Kerdyk, Jr.
Vacancy	P	P	P	P	*					PMS
Vacancy	A	P	P	P	P	P	P			CGHS
Debbie Korge	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	Commissioner Wayne "Chip" Withers

A = Absent      E = Excused      P = Present      \* = Resigned      \*\* = no meeting

**STAFF:** Lt. Brian Lawrence, Sgt. M. DeJong, and Recording Secretary Anna Garcia

#### GUESTS:

Dr. Nestor Diaz, Assistant Principal on behalf of Coral Gables High School  
Anna Rodriguez, Principal of Ponce de Leon Middle School

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*There being a quorum present, the meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m.*

**Excused Absence:** At this meeting no one asked for an excused absence. However, Member Pat Kiel asked for an excused absence for the January 2009 meeting. Vice-Chairperson Joan Reitsma made a motion to excuse his absence. It was seconded by Member Victor Shabanah. Motion passed.

**Vacant Committee Positions:** The official documentation was received by Ponce de Leon; however the Coral Gables High School documentation has not been received. Principal Anna Rodriguez was recommended to become the representative by the Miami-Dade School Board. A motion was made by Member Victor Shabanah and seconded it by Andrew Yagoda. Motion passed unanimously. Secretary A. Garcia was instructed to forward the official documents to the City Commission.

**Education Compact:** Miami Dade School Board and the Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce met regarding the compact. A couple of changes were made and once the changes have been reviewed and approved by the Chamber, Chair Korge will bring it before the committee for review and forwarding to the City of Coral Gables Commission.

**Minutes:** A motion was made by Victor Shabanah to accept the January 13, 2009 minutes with one minor change. Motion to approve minutes was made by Victor Shabanah and seconded by Andrew Yagoda. Motion was accepted and passed.

**Informed Families:** The committee members were invited to attend a Lunch and Learn program at Informed Families on Thursday, February 26, 2009, from 12 noon to 1 pm. The luncheon will be held at 2490 Coral Way. For those who are planning to attend, RSVP at [www.informedfamilies.org](http://www.informedfamilies.org) or call the office. The topic for the February lunch is Media Literacy For Safety, Healthy, and Drug-Free Kids. The guest speaker is Dr. Peter DeBenedittis. He is a dynamic person who talks about how the message we see and hear in the media are not always the messages being delivered. .

**Grant:** Ponce de Leon Middle School received a \$40,000 grant in order to assist the school with its Magnet Program. This will allow more training to be available for the teachers who teach the Magnet Program.

**FCAT:** Both schools are preparing for the FCAT. The crunch session has begun! At Ponce de Leon, approximately 35 students are showing up to take advantage of the after school tutoring and approximately 120 students previously attended the Saturday session. At the Coral Gables High School, Dr. Diaz expressed that four sessions are available on Saturdays. At the end of the tutoring program, a raffle will take place raffling a Plasma TV. This is an incentive for all students to attend Saturday tutoring. Vice-Chairperson Joan Reitsma was appalled by the fact that students needed this sort of incentive to appear, as opposed to the school/parents fostering a positive attitude of wanting to learn for the sake of learning, not just to receive some material item. A small informal discussion ensued among members with the merits of both sides being weighed. The winner will be announced after FCAT. The FCAT session is from March 10 to 17, 2009. Both schools are confident that the students will do well.

**Coral Gables Police Department:** The Youth Resource Unit mentioned that the unit has been extremely busy with the Coral Gables trolley situations. Pat Kiel and Sgt. Melissa DeJong mentioned that meetings were conducted with Mr. Ed Cox who is the Trolley Manager, the Kathy Swanson at the Development Office Kathy Swanson and the 7-11 Convenience Store regarding Coral Gables High School students and related issues. They expressed that students should be in line formation, be polite, and be quiet. Sgt. DeJong expressed that as long as the students are not being destructive, the better course is to allow children to be children.

At the time, an enormous number of students use public transportation. He stated that this was a no-win situation because people on the one side complain about the student's behavior on the trolley or on the other side non use of public transportation increases the number of vehicles and of traffic as parents pick them up. She continued advising that it is generally more convenient for parents if high school students ride the trolley to get home.

Crime Stoppers have designed a poster to be posted in the trolley and at the high school. The message is use the texting feature on your mobile phone if a crime is being committed. The person texting will remain anonymous. Member Pat Kiel mentioned that he is confident that the program will bring success to the area since there has been a slight increase in crime on school grounds.

**Walkathon:** The Walkathon at Coral Gables High School was a great success. The event took place by the school on the track. This walkathon was sponsored by the IB Group and they were able to raise \$5000.00. The money was given to assist a school in Santo Domingo. This will become an annual event.

**SAT News:** Two students from Coral Gables High School received recognition that they are two students who are considered as a National Merit Scholar Finalist. More information will follow.

**SLC Grant - Coral Gables High School:** The school will be divided into different six academies with an average of 500 students assigned to the academy. Adding one more academy to the group will make learning more personalized.

**School Budget:** A very short discussion ensued regarding the budget. Both principals are managing with all of the budget cuts. The main concern for administrators is staffing and money for supplies. Everybody at the schools is aware of prioritizing correctly in order to conduct teaching without affecting the students learning. Due to the budget cuts, the Media Center at Coral Gables High School now closes at 3 pm instead of 11 pm. Ponce de Leon Middle School lost an assistant principal which was a huge impact. Working hours for all members in the administrative team have been extended. Principal Anna Rodriguez mentioned that Ponce de Leon Middle School is a Title One School so the monies received from the Federal Government is helpful. The school also receives funds since they are a Magnet School. Chairperson Korge asked about cuts in transportation expenses for the magnet schools and what would the possible effects be if this becomes a reality and would it impact enrollment? Member Barbra Harley mentioned if that is the case, the enrollment would greatly be impacted. Students living the area will not be affected as much as those who live farther away. Member Andrew Yagoda mentioned that transportation for after-school activities was removed at South Miami High School. Chairperson Korge recommended that the committee monitor the effects if the transportation would be cease. Perhaps this board would be able to recommend to the commission that transportation is needed in order to conduct the Magnet Program.

**Volunteers:** Since there is a shortage of personnel at the school, volunteers are always welcome to do office duties.

**City Projects Update:** None

**Next Meeting Dates:** The SCRC will meet again on March 10, 2009, at 6 PM at the Youth Center's 2<sup>nd</sup> floor conference room.

*There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:30 PM.*

Respectfully Submitted,

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Anna G. Garcia-Recording Secretary