

# City of Coral Gables

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



## Meeting Minutes

Thursday, May 5, 2022

4:00 PM

Adult Activity Center

## Senior Citizens Advisory Board

*Chairperson James "Jim" Berlin*

*Vice Chairperson Celia Suarez*

*Board Member Jean Connelly*

*Board Member Edward English*

*Board Member Julian Sevillano*

*Board Member Richard Thurer*

**CALL TO ORDER**

**at 4:03pm**

**ROLL CALL**

**a. Roll Call and Excusal of Absences**

**Present:** 5 - Vice Chairperson Suarez, Board Member Connelly, Board Member Sevillano, Board Member Thurer and Board Member Groves

**Excused:** 2 - Chairperson Berlin and Board Member English

**Present:** 5 - Vice Chairperson Suarez, Board Member Connelly, Board Member Sevillano, Board Member Thurer and Board Member Groves

**Excused:** 2 - Chairperson Berlin and Board Member English

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

**a. Approval of April Meeting Minutes**

**A MOTION TO APPROVE THE APRIL MEETING MINUTES WAS MADE BY RICHARD THURER AND SECONDED BY JEAN CONNELLY. ALL IN FAVOR, PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

## **SUPERVISOR'S REPORT**

### **a. General Updates**

**AAC Supervisor Katherine Anderson began the meeting with sharing the news of Board member Mr. Edward English's passing.**

**Katherine then reviewed the upcoming special events which includes the Annual Spring Fling Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon and the Commissioner's sponsored movie featuring The Birds on June 5th.**

**She is currently collaborating with Ana Lamb and the Coral Gables Crime Watch to host an informational session at the AAC tentatively on May 26th.**

**Katherine has also been working with former fire chief Marc Stolzenburg for a Hurricane Prep and Awareness meeting on May 17th. She also shared with the Board that the fire chief presented at a state conference on how the city responded during COVID. The presentation went extremely well and the former chief and his staff were asked to present at other functions and even do a pod cast.**

**Katherine will sit in on the MDC Evacuation training to see how call centers will be handled. Director Couceyro shared with the Board some inside to the operations to emergency operations with the opening of the new Public Safety Building. The AAC will still be used as an evacuation support facility. The city will be implementing a new communications system called EverBridge which is software which will information about critical events to help with personal safety and business continuity.**

**Interviews for an AAC Assistant Supervisor position have taken place and a selection will be made soon.**

### **c. Administrative Update**

**Director Fred Couceyro shared with the Board updates on the Country Club. The City now officially has ownership of the building and will begin repairs. Repairs will include removal of broken/damage kitchen equipment, termite tenting and repair of damaged wood structures, repairs to floors in ball rooms, and exterior painting of the facility. It was our hop to complete all renovations prior to opening, however due to the extensiveness of the repairs needed, it will be phased in.**

**There will be an open house tentatively scheduled for May 14th-15th and staff expects to open the fitness center starting in June. The fitness center**

will be receiving new fitness equipment through the current contracting company. Pricing and memberships information have already been established and approved by Commission. Neighborhood Tennis will remain at the tennis center until further notice. The Country club will be using the same software as the rest of the department.

The concessionaire agreement is currently being negotiated for the café space of the club. Once finalized then Fred will share the name of the café with the Board. The concessionaire tenant will also be allowed to sell pool side. Catering for events will need to be provided by the renter; the concessioner will not be the in-house catering service. The city is looking in to obtaining a liquor license to add a bar feature to the club.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

**a. Board Coalition Initiative for Funding the Master plan**

The last meeting the Board motioned to have Board Chair Jim Berlin reach out to other advisory boards with whom have interests in parks to see if a coalition can be built to help push an initiative for funding the Master Plan. Katherine Anderson spoke with the City Clerk's office on the item and the Sunshine law will still apply if Jim were to reach out to other boards without prior notification. However, if the Board would like to motion to have Jim reach out to each staff liaison of individual Boards to be able to speak during their scheduled meetings, he could be granted time during each meeting to speak. It would be up to the Board Chair to grant permission. Katherine asked that the SAB relook at the list of possible boards that would share interests in pursuing funding for the Master Plan before reaching out and she will assist in collecting contact information.

A brief discussion took place to narrow down the boards that Jim will reach out to.

Board Chair Jim Berlin also brought up the Gables Insider's recent article about people's interest in supporting the referendum and his disappointment of reading how little exposure they had to our parks. He expressed how much informational advertising its going to take to sell the referendum. Director Couceyro expressed that the validity of the survey was limited to the users that were invited using a specific mailing list and not sent at random so it might not take an accurate snapshot of park goers. The department had a plan on how to reach out to the community to deliver any information on the referendum, but Commission decided to not proceed with the item. Construction Inflation might have some influence on the decision to not pursue the referendum.

**b. Marketing & Advertising Avenues for the AAC**

AAC Supervisor Katherine Anderson spoke with Communications Director Martha Pantin about different marketing & advertising avenues for the AAC to use and was given some pricing options for some publications. Director Couceyro suggested that they work with Martha when they would like to do a press release on a big event. Vice Chair Celia Suarez agreed with Fred and asked how we get in contact with publications for them to attend our events and write up something to get the word out. Fred asked that she share some of these publications and our marketing division will reach out to see how.

Board member Jean Connelly suggested that we write up our own articles and see what publications would use them to advertise. Fred said we can reach out to publications we already work with like Janet's Journal or Coral Gables Magazine to see if we can get something going. But expressed most of our advertising is now done digitally.

**OLD BUSINESS****DISCUSSION ITEMS**

**a. Summer Schedule**

Board meetings will continue as scheduled during the summer months and staff will email members prior to each meeting to confirm attendance.

Board Chair Celia Suarez requested to add the AAC Dance participants to the next agenda to discuss whether participants in programming could receive complimentary entry to events if they are to volunteer to perform. She would also like to discuss other ways to recognize program participants that volunteer.

The board and staff had a brief discussion about possible solutions and if we were to move forward with some kind of reward system then certain criteria will need to be established. We will bring this item forward on the next agenda.

**b. Senior Housing**

With this influx of luxury housing that is being built, it is becoming harder for the senior community to keep up with affordable housing. Vice Chair Celia Suarez brought up the lots near the Youth Center that were recently sold to developers and asked staff if they had anymore information on what was going to be developed. From what Fred has heard, he believes these lots are also going to be developed into high density luxury housing, but this is still pending and will return to commission for approval. Board member Jean Connelly stated she would like to see the commission pass a resolution that a certain percentage of these developments be allocated for affordable housing. Fred expressed that if developments are concerning to the Board, to make sure they speak with their elected officials and keep them informed on decisions directly related to the senior community.

A conversation continued about the rise of property costs and expensive senior housing being offered in the city.

**ITEMS FROM THE SECRETARY****a. Vacant Board Seat**

Commissioner Fors' liaison has been notified of the vacant board seat but there has not been an appointee selected.

The next meeting is scheduled for June 2 at 4 pm

**ADJOURNMENT**

Adjourned at 5:14pm

**NOTE**