



**City of Coral Gables
CITY COMMISSION MEETING
August 26, 2025**

ITEM TITLE: ADVISORY BOARD ON DISABILITY AFFAIRS

MEETING DATE: June 4, 2025

SUMMARY OF MEETING:

QUORUM: Was reached

STAFF:

Raquel Elejabarrieta – Human Resources Director
Eglys Hernandez – P/T Administrative Human Resources & Risk Management
Catie Hastings – Community Recreation – D.E.I. Coordinator
Sarah Espino – Community Recreation – Administrative Operations Supervisor (Via Zoom)

GUEST:

CITIZEN ADVISORS:

Debbie Dietz, DIG – Disability Independence Group, Inc. (Via Zoom)

PUBLIC GUEST: None

CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order at 10:06am

MEETING ABSENCE:

Jennifer Ward Sando
Jennifer Durocher, Director of UM-NSU Card
Ana Lam – Crime Watch Volunteer / School Community Relations Committee

MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL:

May 7, 2025
Motion by: Bonnie Blaire / 2nd Vanessa Bedoya / Approved unanimously.

SECRETARY'S REPORT: None

BOARD MEMBERS' REPORTS: None

NEW BUSINESS:

Introduction of New Board Member – Director Elejabarrieta

Director Elejabarrieta advised the board Ms. Mary Palacio-Pike has been termed out and will no longer be serving on this board.

Director Elejabarrieta introduced Mr. Wilfredo Jaurequi as the new board member. The board introduced themselves to Mr. Jaurequi and he addressed the board as well.

Director Elejabarrieta advised the board it was necessary at this time that a vote take place regarding the appointment of a new Chair and stated it was open for board discussion. Ms. Blaire stated that she feels it is important that active participating board members have the opportunity at some time to serve as chair and nominated Ms. Justine Chichester for the position. Ms. Bedoya expressed her agreement with Ms. Blaire and stated support for Ms. Chichester. The board made a motion to nominate and vote for Ms. Chichester as their new Chairperson.

Motion by: Bonnie Blaire / 2nd: Vanessa Bedoya / Approved unanimously

OLD BUSINESS:

Audible Crosswalks on Miracle Mile – Ms. Bedoya

Ms. Bedoya stated perhaps it is time for the board to once again return to the discussion regarding audible crosswalks on Miracle Mile. Mr. Jaurequi said these would be very beneficial not only to someone like himself, but also to tourists and others in the community, especially during the weekends. Director Elejabarrieta stated perhaps it would be best to invite to the next board meeting Ms. Melissa DeZayas, Assistant Public Works Director for Transportation, who has been managing the audible crosswalks on LeJeune Road, and can provide better assistance with the process if the city chooses to move forward with this project.

Ms. Chichester requested more information regarding past discussions on audible crosswalks on Miracle Mile and some information was provided.

Update: Crosswalks – Director Elejabarrieta

Director Elejabarrieta provided updates regarding the crosswalks to the Granada Golf Course sidewalk. The Segovia side should be completed no later than the fall and the Anderson side Miami-Dade County commences construction in October. Director Elejabarrieta advised the city was provided with a grant or some funds to have a sidewalk constructed on Granda from Bird to Ponce, commencing construction in fiscal year 2027.

Updates:

Parks & Recreations: Catie Hastings,

Ms. Hastings addressed the board regarding the upcoming Sensory Friendly July 4, 2025, event. Ms. Hastings advised AIRA will be activated for this event as well. Ms. Blaire requested further information as to what AIRA is. Ms. Hastings provided information about services provided for AIRA and that it is a free service. Ms. Hastings stated AIRA is activated throughout the Business District, and the city can activate it for other events, expanding its GO fence. Ms. Bedoya asked Mr. Jaurequi if he was aware of this service being available and he replied he was not. Mr. Jaurequi asked questions regarding making this information available to others, perhaps including this type of information in a newsletter distributed within the city. Mr. Jaurequi asked if the city keeps metrics on how much this service or others utilized. Director Elejabarrieta stated perhaps it would be good to invite the city's Communications Affair department to the next meeting.

Ms. Chichester spoke briefly regarding the community training program being worked on together with the police department.

The board conducted further discussion regarding various possible ways to facilitate information to the community. Ms. Chichester advised board members to share any ideas they may have. Ms. Hastings provided some additional information regarding AIRA program. Ms. Hastings advised she will be contacting AIRA to obtain any brochures or other information which can be made available to the community.

4th of July Celebration – Ms. Catie Hastings / Ms. Sarah Espino

Exhibit 1 – Flyer Sensory Friendly July 4 Event 2025

Ms. Hastings provided board information regarding set up and accessibility for the 4th of July Celebration and the Sensory Friendly Fourth of July Event.

Biltmore Celebration:

Ms. Hastings advised of trolleys, golf carts, wheelchair and other available services. Ms. Hastings stated the best way to access the event is utilizing the trolley system.

Ms. Hastings advised the city has requested hard copies of all food truck menus and there will be runners available to assist with ordering and obtaining food.

Director Elejabarrieta shared the site map with the board, however, Ms. Espino advised this was not the final map and once it is completed, it will be sent to the board. Ms. Espino provided additional information regarding accessible features of the event. Ms. Espino advised this year's show will be an extended one including a ten-minute drone show prior to the fireworks. Ms. Espino advised Ms. Hastings has provided information regarding the ability to utilize share ride services with assigned specific drop-off zones for the event and the golf carts will conduct rounds at this drop-off point. Ms. Hastings advised there will also be performance interpreters present. Ms. Espino advised they are continuing to review the best way golf carts can be utilized. Ms. Hastings advised golf carts are available for anyone who needs them.

Sensory Friend Fourth of July Celebration: Ms. Catie Hastings

Ms. Hastings advised information regarding the Sensory Friendly Fourth of July Event from 7:00pm to 10:00, which takes place further from the fireworks and has onsite parking on the grass. Ms. Hastings stated there will be a bouncy house, marshmallow roasting, an indoor a/c quiet area and an accessible portable potty. Ms. Hastings stated participants can arrive at 7:00pm, reducing the waiting time for the show. Ms. Hastings stated the parking area allows thirty vehicles. Ms. Blaire asked if the event is free and Ms. Hastings stated it is not, however they charge twenty-five dollars per vehicle, not per person. Director Elejabarrieta asked if registration is required. Ms. Hastings stated registration is required and the event will sell out.

ArtLabbe – Liberte 2025 – Mr. Eddy Martinez

(Exhibit 2 Liberte 2025 Flyer)

Mr. Martinez shared he recently attended an event at ArtLabee regarding an art contest for individuals with special needs, which this year's focus is Gables Architecture. Mr. Martinez stated participants with special needs are encouraged to create artwork, poems, etc. and there is a cash prize. Ms. Chichester stated this was discussed a few meetings back and there was a question regarding the parameters for participants and Mr. Martinez advised it is open to all disabilities. Director Elejabarrieta advised they will be present at this board's upcoming meeting on July 2, 2025.

Mr. Martinez advised the Chamber has sent up a Coral Gables Chamber Foundation and he will be able to disseminate information in that way as well.

School Community Relations Committee – Ms. Ana Lam

Ms. Lam was not present at the meeting. Director Elejabarrieta advised Ms. Palacio-Pike may be joining the School Community Relations Committee as a new board member.

Activities for older people with disabilities – Ms. Chichester

Ms. Chichester stated that during the last meeting Ms. Ward Sando had brought up the subject regarding the possibility of

activities for older participants with disabilities and she would like to add this to the agenda for the next meeting for the board to further discuss. Ms. Chichester mentioned the upcoming DIG bowling event and stated once further information is available, it will be shared with the board.

TEXT 911 – Ms. Debbie Dietz

Ms. Dietz advised of the new service TEXT 911. Director Elejabarrieta advised this program commenced this weekend throughout the county. Director Elejabarrieta stated that perhaps not at the next meeting, but one or two after, the Police Chief can attend to discuss this new feature.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

ADJOURNMENT:

Meeting Adjourned 11:11am

Motion by: Vanessa Bedoya / 2nd: Bonnie Blaire / Approved unanimously

NEXT MEETING: July 2, 2025

ATTACHMENT(S): Minutes of June 4, 2025