

City of Coral Gables

405 Biltmore Way
Coral Gables, FL 33134
www.coralgables.com



Meeting Minutes

Thursday, March 3, 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

Meeting began at 4:06pm

ROLL CALL

Present: 4 - Chairperson Berlin, Vice Chairperson Suarez, Board Member Sevillano and Board Member Thurer

Excused: 3 - Board Member Connelly, Board Member English and Board Member Groves

Present: 4 - Chairperson Berlin, Vice Chairperson Suarez, Board Member Sevillano and Board Member Thurer

Excused: 3 - Board Member Connelly, Board Member English and Board Member Groves

a. Roll Call and Approval of Absences

A MOTION TO EXCUSE THE ABSENCE OF JEAN H CONNELLY, EDWARD ENGLISH, AND MARGARET GROVES WAS MADE BY CELIA SUAREZ AND SECOND BY JULIAN SEVILLANO. ALL IN FAVOR. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

a. Approval of February's Meeting Minutes

A MOTION TO APPROVE THE FEBRUARY MINUTES WAS MADE BY CELIA SUAREZ AND SECOND BY RICHARD THURER. ALL IN FAVOR. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

PERSONAL APPEARANCES

a. Meet and Greet with Commissioner Fors

Prior to any questions for Commissioner Fors, the Senior Board introduced themselves and gave a brief history of their backgrounds. Commissioner Fors wanted to thank the Board for serving the City and holding the City Commissioners accountable.

Commissioner Fors began to discuss the incoming migration into South Florida and what that means for Coral Gables. He states that one of his main focuses is making sure that Coral Gables does not change the history with the new incoming population.

Commissioner Fors also brought up the upcoming Centennial for Coral Gables in 2025 and those plans are already started. Director Couceyro states that he's planning to do something with the Historic department and a centennial trail that is self-guided tour and something historically with the University by placing a bench or marker. Also hopes to do an event at the Venetian Pool for the Centennial.

Board Chair Jim Berlin wanted to know Commissioner Fors impression of elders, the Adult Activity Center and where they fit in his priorities. Commissioner Fors is always impressed by the AAC and has intentions to visit more often. The commissioner also knows the impact our seniors have on legislative initiatives and always has their demographic in the forefront when planning.

Commissioner Fors discussed his initiative of Youth Zones which seeks to designate certain areas as zones with slightly different traffic rules in areas in which there is a large population of children parks, libraries, youth centers, etc. He wants to introduce a spin-off of the Youth Zones which will be Senior Zones meaning different traffic rules for areas in which there are predominantly seniors.

The discussion with the commissioner turned to rent control and new senior living facilities. Vice Chair Celia Suarez brought up concerns about new senior living facilities in the city such as the Watermark and Belmont. She has concerns about a crisis within the senior community because they are expensive and that there are no levels of service; there is standard pricing and no variations in what people can afford. She is also concerned that with these new arrivals into the city, the local citizens who have been in the city for many years will be pushed out and won't be considered or cared about. With the many people who are migrating into South Florida are therefore causing a housing crisis and housing rates are going up. Commissioner Fors also brings up concerns about the younger population not being able to afford living in the city because of the rise in real estate prices. Commissioner Fors brings up possible affordable housing conversations including possible rent control options, although very unlikely, or options of requesting a certain percentage of developments be reserved for renters with a lower average annual income.

Prior to Commissioner Fors leaving the meeting, we urge the Board to reach out to his office if they have any needs or items in which they would like to discuss.

SUPERVISOR'S REPORT

a. General Updates

AAC Supervisor Katherine Anderson stated that summer registration for residents opens on March 14 for June, July, and August although members don't tend to register early.

March 26th there will be a flash mob at the Farmer's Market.

The Annual Variety show is April 1. There will be light refreshments. Vice Chair Celia Suarez suggested advertising the event in the Miami Herald's Neighbors section.

Sunday, March 6, at 1 pm, Young Frankenstein is playing at Coral Gables Art Cinema hosted by Commissioner Kirk Menendez. Carnival on the Mile is the same day.

Tentatively on April 6, Mayor Lago will be hosting his annual Town Hall Meeting at the Adult Activity Center.

At the last Farmer's Market on March 26th, we are going to try to have a local Bier Garden with 10 or 11 beer brewers with samples.

b. Administrative Updates

Director Fred Couceyro began with a discussion about Pickle Ball courts that was an item at the previous Commission meeting in February. Fred Couceyro talks about strategies to expand pickle ball court availability. One of which is to paint pickle ball lines in the basketball courts at the youth center and then put portable pickle ball nets in the afternoon. He is also looking at four or five alternate solutions.

This discussion also led to another commission agenda item on resident vs non-resident fees across all facilities in Community Recreation. It was explained when the GOB funding that the City received from Miami Dade County for capital improvement projects had the stipulation that there be no discrimination of access or fees based on residency status. These stipulations are in place until the bond monies are returned set within a 25-year term. Some of these funds received went to renovate the Salvador clay courts which in turned allowed for Dade-County residents to pay resident prices. Fred continued the discussion sharing some of the other locations that received bond funding but were not affected due to being considered open access areas or being land acquisitions.

Board member Richard Thurer asked about the City's plans pertaining to the Coral Gables Country Club and if they will have the same interest in solely making revenue. Director Couceyro spoke to the Board about the plans for the Country Club and its transition plan that was presented to the Commission. In order to make the Country Club a sustainable enterprise, the Great Room rentals will need to continue along with some aspect of catering or dining. However, the City will activate more of the spaces to allow for programming, special events for members, dining opportunities, etc while still keeping it reasonable priced for the community. Memberships for the Country Club will have social amenities with the intention to include fitness access,

the pool area, certain access to tennis and we hope to tie in the Granada Golf Course.

Director Couceyro will be presenting a fee structure for charging, anticipated cost expenditures and revenue projections to Commission. These numbers have been provided to Budget and city management to be reviewed and vetted. They will formally be presented at Commission at the end of March for the Commissioners to review. Fees to be charged include memberships, banquet rental fees, and fees for programming. We will receive more direction from Commission on whether an additional dining or bar will be added to any of the available rooms.

The City is waiting on how to formally proceed with transitioning after the current tenant vacates the space and what condition they leave the facility. The City is also looking to maintain and hire formally the existing contracted staff to aid in the transition but we will need to hire seven full time positions and twenty four part time positions.

NEW BUSINESS

OLD BUSINESS

a. Parks Referendum Review

Director Couceyro briefly spoke on the Master Plan Referendum and the conversation continues how to finance these projects with either finding other mechanisms to fund these projects or going out for referendum for a much more reduced amount. Staff will present a prioritized listing of projects along with the approximate costs and Commission will decide how much of the plan to fund.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. Farmers Market Recap

ITEMS FROM THE SECRETARY

Next meeting will be April 7, 2022 at 4pm.

ADJOURNMENT

Adjourned at 5:26pm

NOTE