

SENIOR CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD
Minutes of April 7, 2008 meeting
Coral Gables Youth Center

MEMBERS		M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A		APPOINTED BY
Catherine Fahringer		-	-	-	E	P	P	P	P	S	P	P	P		Mayor Donald D. Slesnick II
Norma Lemberg		P	P	P	P	P	P	E	P	P	P	P	P		Vice-Mayor William H. Kerdyk, Jr.
Annie Bentacourt		-	P	E	P	E	E	P	A	P	A	P	E		Comm. Maria Anderson
Dr. William Schiff		P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P		Comm. Rafael "Ralph" Cabrera, Jr.
Josefina Cabrera		E	P	P	E	P	E	P	P	E	A	P	P		Comm. Wayne "Chip" Withers
Ginger Jochem		-	-	-	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P		City Manager David Brown
Carol Brock		P	P	P	E	E	P	P	E	E	P	P	P		Senior Citizens Advisory Board

A = Absent
C = Cancelled
E = Excused absence
P = Present
N = No quorum
R = Recessed
S = Sick

STAFF:

Luanne Santangelo
Assistant Parks & Recreation Director

Paul Hunt
Senior Citizens Coordinator

Anastasia Smith
Recreation Specialist – Senior Programs

GUESTS:

Commissioner Ralph Cabrera

Fred Couceyro
Parks and Recreation Director

1. Norma Lemberg, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m. and welcomed Commissioner Cabrera and Mr. Couceyro to the meeting.
2. Approval of Board minutes from March 3, 2008 Board meeting – A motion was made and seconded to approve the Board minutes of the March 3, 2008 meeting with the following amendment:

Item #7 "Discussion on Lease Renewal with University Baptist Church"
To include the names of the selected representatives who will represent the Board during the negotiation process: Carol Brock and Annie Bentacourt

3. Approval of Board absences for April 7, 2008 Board meeting – The Board excused the absence of Annie Bentacourt.
4. Commissioner Cabrera – Commissioner Cabrera presented two items to the Board for consideration and input.

The first item presented to the board was the proposed resolution for the waiving of the garage sale fee for seniors 70 years and over. Commissioner Cabrera asked the Board for their input on the age and if they had a collective recommendation on what would be appropriate. Norma Lemberg asked each member their opinion and all members with the exception of Dr. Bill Schiff stated that they thought the age should be 65 years and above. Dr. Schiff stated that the Commission may want to consider a blanket statement that the age would be reflective of the age for Social Security retirement benefits.

Commissioner Cabrera then informed the Board of his efforts regarding a Taxi Discount Program with the assistance and expertise of Paul Hunt. Commissioner Cabrera gave a brief overview and then asked Paul to elaborate on the Program. In essence, the program would offer senior residents a discount for use of a taxi, targeting perhaps the Coral Gables Taxi Company. The program might be operated as a discount coupon program. Paul indicated that when he was in the Mayor's office in Boston, they developed a city-wide taxi discount coupon program for seniors. This has been a long term, successful program in Boston, MA that over the years have increased the discount to 50%.

Kaye Fahringer expressed her pleasure with use of Coral Gables Taxi Company and their willingness to transport passengers, herself included, short distances (4, 6 or 10 blocks)

Commissioner Cabrera continued with his plan to meet with representatives of Coral Gables Taxi, along with Paul and the City Manager, to discuss the possibility of the program. He promised to keep the Board informed of the progress and the need, and his desire, for their input on the program.

5. Report of Fred Couceyro – Mr. Couceyro gave a synopsis on the state of the Senior Services Division. The intent of the presentation was to highlight the progress that has been made in the City in the provision of services to seniors of the community.

Mr. Couceyro began his presentation by stating how Senior Services is and integral and important part of the Parks and Recreation Department. Over the years the opportunities and monies allocated have increased. In fiscal year 2002-2003 the Senior Service budget was \$74,825. In this current fiscal year

the budget has grown to \$311,604, an increase of approximately 415%. In a year when most divisions have seen budget decreases of 5%-10%, the Senior Services Division was excluded from those budget cuts.

Mr. Couceyro went on to state that within the Parks and Recreation Department, the other divisions such as Granada Golf, Biltmore/Salvadore Tennis, Youth Center, and Venetian Pool, also serve the needs of seniors within the community. A conservative estimate is that the Department of Parks and Recreation spends approximately 16% of its entire budget on serving the needs of the senior population.

Mr. Couceyro stated the department needs to do a better job in communicating our activities with the members of the Board. Mr. Couceyro promised that the Department would make sure that there was a consistent flow of information between the two entities and that he would attend a meeting of the Board, hopefully at least quarterly.

Mr. Couceyro then went on to the topic of staff and offered a clarification of duties. Luanne Santangelo distributed job descriptions of the Senior Services Coordinator and the Recreation Specialist. Mr. Couceyro stated that Paul Hunt, the Senior Services Coordinator would be the conduit for information to/from/between the Board and the Department. Requests for information, or the sharing of information from a Board member should go through Mr. Hunt. It would be incumbent upon Mr. Hunt to then share that information with the Department representative or the Board.

The topic of grants and grant writing was brought up. Mr. Couceyro clarified that if the Board was aware of a grant opportunity that they should inform Mr. Hunt. Mr. Hunt would then look to see if the Department/City would qualify for submittal based on the grant criteria. Mr. Hunt would report his findings to the Department Administration and Board. If there is a funding opportunity the writing process could be handled one of two ways. First would be in-house, whereby a current member of the staff, potentially Mr. Hunt, would complete the grant application. Second would be through an agreement with a professional grant writer. In either case, the City administration would have to approve of the grant opportunity prior to proceeding especially if there is a required match in funding from the City.

Carol Brock announced that there would be a 'celebration of his life' for Charlie Terry, who passed away on Easter Sunday, at the Country Club of Coral Gables on April 16, 2008 from 5 – 8 p.m. Charlie was a well known figure throughout the City and served on various City Boards, including some years on the Senior Citizens Advisory Board. All are welcomed to the April 16th event.

6. Report on Activities and Programs – Anastasia Smith

Ms. Smith provided a brief overview of the programs at UBC. The Spanish Language class began on March 28 with 7 participants; the April Lunch and Lecture will be held on Monday, April 21 at 11:30 am. The topic is Hurricane Preparedness with a representative of the Hurricane Center as the guest speaker; the weekly lunch program continues to be enjoyed by the participants; the overnight trip to St. Augustine was conducted the week of March 30 with 38 very happy travelers, eager to register for the next overnight excursion; the Art Show application was submitted to Golden Gables for inclusion in the upcoming publication; feature Golden Gables articles will be on the Spanish Language class and volunteer instructor and the Knitting for a Cause group spawned from the Knitting class conducted by the Senior Services Division.

7. Board member Josefina Cabrera - Norma Lemberg stated that this would be the last meeting of Josefina Cabrera, long time member of the Senior Citizens Advisory Board. Josefina will be resigning her position. Norma stated how much she has enjoyed working with Josefina over the years and that she will miss her presence on the Board. All members expressed their gratitude to Josefina and their sadness in her resignation. Josefina thanked the Board and commended the Board on the progress they have made over the years, “we started with nothing and now look at us.” Josefina encouraged the Board to continue their good work and that she is still here and available to assist if and when needed.
8. Date and time of next meeting - The next Senior Citizens Advisory Board meeting is scheduled for **Monday, May 5, 2008**. The meeting will start at **5:00 p.m.** and will be held in the **Conference Room at the Youth Center, located at 405 University Drive.**
9. The meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.