

City of Coral Gables

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



Meeting Minutes

Thursday, May 4, 2023

4:00 PM

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86149844627>

Adult Activity Center

Senior Citizens Advisory Board

Chairperson James "Jim" Berlin

Vice Chairperson Celia Suarez

Board Member Jean H. Connelly

Board Member Kelley Schild

Board Member Julian Sevillano

Board Member Richard Thurer

Board Member Hendrik Woods

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting began at 4:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

a. Roll Call and Excusal of Absences

A MOTION TO APPROVE THE ABSENCE OF RICHARD THURER WAS MADE BY JEAN CONNELLY AND WAS SECONDED BY JULIAN SEVILLANO. ALL IN FAVOR; PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Present: 6 - Chairperson Berlin, Vice Chairperson Suarez, Board Member Connelly, Board Member Schild, Board Member Sevillano and Board Member Woods

Excused: 1 - Board Member Thurer

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

a. Approval of April Minutes

A MOTION TO APPROVE LAST MEETINGS MINUTES WAS MADE BY JULIAN SEVILLANO AND WAS SECONDED BY HENDRIK WOODS. ALL IN FAVOR; PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

SUPERVISOR'S REPORT

a. General Updates

AAC Supervisor Katherine Anderson began the supervisor's report by stating that the center has been very busy setting up the Volunteer Appreciation Fiesta for the next day. Katherine stated that all 135 tickets have already been sold with a waiting list of over 20 people despite non-resident tickets only being available since the previous Monday. Katherine then informed the group that Maria and some of the ladies will be leading a dance again and that the newly elected commissioner Fernandez has confirmed that he will attend the luncheon.

AAC Supervisor Katherine Anderson briefly highlighted the upcoming special events, which include An Afternoon Cinema "Casablanca" sponsored by Commissioner Menendez on May 6th, and for the first time ever the showing has sold all 140 tickets. The next showing is scheduled for Saturday, June 24th and while awaiting official confirmation, the planned movie is Monty Python and the Holy Grail.

AAC Supervisor Katherine Anderson notified board members that Fire Chief Mark Stolzenberg who is now the Emergency Manager, will be leading a hurricane preparation presentation on Thursday, June 1st at 3pm right before the Senior Advisory Board meeting.

AAC Supervisor Katherine Anderson then detailed new programming coming to the AAC in the next few months, beginning with the Joy Share Club set to begin in June and Spicy Yoga set to begin in July. The Joy Share Club will be led by a volunteer named Eleanor with the goal of helping people find joy in life. Katherine then stated that the aim is to begin the Spicy Yoga class in July on Tuesday afternoons at 4pm, to be led by a new instructor by the name of Luz.

Board Member Hendrik Woods then inquired whether the contractors would be recognized along with the volunteers at the luncheon, to which AAC supervisor Katherine Anderson stated that they were welcome to purchase tickets and will be thanked, however they will not be formally recognized.

AAC Supervisor Katherine Anderson mentioned that there was a discussion tabled during the previous Senior Advisory Board meeting due to the absence of Board Vice-Chairperson Celia Suarez regarding the influx of new members the AAC has been seeing in 2023. To begin the discussion, Katherine reviewed the difference in fees between the resident and non-resident rate for all registrations, stating that the current price difference is set to a 25% difference. Community Recreation Director Fred Couceyro requested Katherine to explore the possibility of raising the difference in price from 25% to 35%. Administrative Operations Supervisor Sarah Espino then stated that this is a directive the department was given by city management to review across the board, not just at the AAC. Katherine then continued to discuss a change in the registration windows to allow residents to register as usual, however only allowing non-residents to register monthly starting about two weeks prior to the beginning of the next month. Katherine then stated that these are ideas that they are hoping to implement beginning when registration opens in the Fall.

Board Member Jean Connelly then inquired whether it would be possible to require members to register for a three-month window rather than monthly, AAC Supervisor Katherine Anderson then responded by stating that this would be difficult to implement since some members do live on a fixed income and would be unable to meet those costs.

Board Vice-Chairperson Celia Suarez then suggested that there be information sessions held and community meetings to ensure that members are aware of the pending changes to both the fees and registration process, since there are many non-residents who have been staples at the center since its opening. AAC Supervisor Katherine Anderson stated that there will be a push to inform everyone and that informational sessions may be possible, however when it comes to the final decisions on changing pricing of programs those decisions will be made by the commission. Administrative Operations Supervisor Sarah Espino then mentioned that, while we just went to the commission to set the fee rates for the next couple of years, that due to the rising cost of materials, the commission has asked the department to explore the possibility of raising non-resident prices to meet the raising costs.

Board Member Jean Connelly then stated that it needs to be made very clear that there are changes occurring and what these changes are, to which AAC Supervisor Katherine Anderson stated that this will be the goal and that we want everyone to be informed of the changes before they take place. Board Vice-Chairperson Celia Suarez mentioned that she believes that members need to be told that these changes are under consideration. AAC Supervisor Katherine Anderson then stated that if any of the changes become official, they will be advertised and made very clear to all the members of the center. Celia Suarez then stated that if this membership growth continues, it should be considered that we may need to expand both the facility and staffing of the AAC.

Board Chairperson James "Jim" Berlin then went on to state that he would like to give a special appreciation to Sergeant Escobar for the tour that he led around the new PSB. AAC Supervisor Katherine Anderson then stated that if there are any specific dates that work for the board to schedule a second tour for those who could not make it, to please advise AAC staff so they can reach out and begin scheduling a date for the tour. Katherine also stated that regarding the fire tour and questions Board Member Richard Thurer mentioned in the previous meeting, Chief Stolzenberg did say they would address some fire safety topics in the hurricane preparation presentation.

b. Special Events:

Administrative Operations Supervisor Sarah Espino began by discussing the literary event at the YC, stating that it is scheduled for May 20th from 11am-3pm with the goal of helping to prevent the summer slide that can occur. Sarah then stated that there will be a petting zoo and rock-climbing wall at the event as well to make it more exciting. Sarah then mentioned that the Memorial Day celebration will be taking place

on Monday, May 29th at 10am and will be about an hour long with some light refreshments being served.

Administrative Operations Supervisor Sarah Espino resumed by discussing the Fourth of July celebration that is still scheduled to take place at the Biltmore Hotel. Sarah did note that while it will still be occurring at the Biltmore Hotel, the logistics may be slightly different than usual due to the construction.

c. Administrative Updates:

Administrative Operations Supervisor Sarah Espino began by stating that the department is getting ready to move forward with community input meetings towards the end of May for parks Toledo and Alava open space and Blue Road open space, both will be converted into parks. Sarah then mentioned Cooper and Moore Park stating that they are hoping to have a community input meeting sometime in June for the park design while the Phillip's Park redesign will most likely be brought to the community after the summer to receive more feedback from the local community. Sarah then introduced the new Administrative Assistant, Susan Lainfiesta, stating that the board will get to know Susan very well moving forward as she begins to step in and handle more regarding the boards.

Board Chairperson James "Jim" Berlin then inquired about the Board and Committee dinner scheduled for May 11th. Administrative Operations Supervisor Sarah Espino then confirmed that the dinner has been scheduled for May 11th and that all members of the board should have received an email inviting them to the dinner. AAC Supervisor Katherine Anderson then stated that both Community Recreation Director Fred Couceyro and herself would be unable to attend the dinner recognizing the board this year.

NEW BUSINESS

a. Potential Majorca Dog Park

Administrative Operations Supervisor Sarah Espino began by discussing the proposed changes for the Majorca Park to turn it into a dog park. Sarah stated that the plans had already been presented in a community meeting on April 6th. However, she did want to share the plans with the board. Sarah discussed how the plan is not to make this a dog only park, but rather to create a hybrid park, designating a certain area of the park for dogs and another area of the park would remain designated for the children of the community.

Board Member Kelley Schild then stated that the temporary dog park at Catalonia Park is not used very often, stating that many people bring their dogs to Catalonia Park, however instead of using the fenced in temporary dog park they let use the rest of the park. Administrative Operations Supervisor Sarah Espino stated that this is the first time she has heard this complaint stating that they will investigate it, however the number of complaints for dogs in the park had reduced since the installation of the temporary dog park.

b. Police and Fire Headquarters - Fire Department Walk-Through

OLD BUSINESS

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Board Member Julian Sevillano proposed a motion to recognize the 75th anniversary of Israel's Independence as a nation and was seconded by Board Chairperson James "Jim" Berlin. Both Board Member Hendrik Woods and Board Vice-Chairperson Celia Suarez stated that they felt this was not the appropriate setting for this kind of motion to be made. Board Chairperson James "Jim" Berlin proposed an amendment to the motion to have the seniors of Coral Gables honor the seniors of Israel and what they have endured throughout their lives, to which Julian Sevillano agreed.

Board Member Julian Sevillano mentioned there is a study being run through FSU and conducted by a company in Israel to study seniors regarding their mental acuity and memory abilities, specifically focused to Alzheimer's. Julian then asked if there was any way that the board or the AAC could become involved and possibly even participate in the study.

A MOTION TO RECOGNIZE THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE INDEPENDENCE OF ISRAEL AND HONOR THE SENIORS OF THIS NATION AND THE STRUGGLES THEY HAVE ENDURED WAS MADE BY JULIAN SEVILLANO AND WAS SECONDED BY JAMES "JIM" BERLIN. THREE IN FAVOR, THREE AGAINST; FAILED TO PASS.

ITEMS FROM THE SECRETARY

a. Administrative Operations Supervisor Sarah Espino brought up the April election and the newly elected commissioners, Commissioner Ariel Fernandez, and Commissioner Melissa Castro, can now assign their own appointees to the Senior Advisory Board. Sarah recommended that both Board Members Kelley Schild and Hendrik Woods reach out to the new commissioners, due to their appointed commissioners no longer serving for the city. The new commissioners would need to re-appoint them if they are interested in remaining on the senior board. Sarah mentioned that once the status of the board has been confirmed they will need to elect a new Chair, a Vice Chair and a new board member at large, which is currently Board Vice-Chairperson Celia Suarez.

b. Next Meeting Date - June 1st, 2023 at 4:00p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 5:19pm

A MOTION TO END THE BOARD MEETING WAS MADE BY JULIAN SEVILLANO AND WAS SECONDED BY JAMES "JIM" BERLIN. ALL IN FAVOR; PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

NOTE

