

## CORAL GABLES ADVISORY BOARD ON DISABILITY AFFAIRS

Minutes of September 3, 2008

Youth Center, Second Floor Conference Room

MEMBERS	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	APPOINTED BY
Linda Scarcell-Degrave			*	P	P	P	P	E	*	*	*	P	Donald D. Slesnick II
Zenaida Fernandez	P	P	*	E	E	P	P	E	*	*	*	E	Maria Anderson
Kelly Sastre	P	P	*	P	P	P	P	P	*	*	*	P	“Ralph” Cabrera, Jr.
Bonnie Blaire	P	P	*	P	P	E	P	P	*	*	*	P	William Kerdyk, Jr.
Deborah Swain	P	P	*	P	P	P	P	P	*	*	*	P	Wayne “Chip” Withers

(\*) There were no meetings.

### STAFF:

Alberto Delgado, Secretary  
Beatrix Falstreau, CPS

**A - Absent**

**P - Present**

**E - Excused**

### GUESTS:

None.

Ms. Swain, Acting Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 8:45 a.m.

### SECRETARY’S REPORT:

Ms. Swain stated they will forego the staff report inasmuch as Mr. Delgado had to attend a storm meeting in the EOC room and will be late to this meeting.

### *Board Related Commission Items*

Presentation of Proclamation making October Disability Awareness Month.

### PROFESSIONAL MEMBER REPORT

#### *Meeting Attendance*

Ms. Blaire entered motion to excuse Ms. Fernandez due to her having sustained an injury.

Ms. Sastre seconded the motion. All members were in favor.

#### *Approval of Minutes*

Ms. Blaire moved to accept the minutes of May 7, 2008, as written, second by Ms. Sastre. All members voted in favor.

#### *Old Business*

#### *Board Web Page*

Ms. Sastre advised that in doing some research to find out the theme for this year’s Disability Month she realized that the Board’s web site could not be located. Ms. Sastre discussed prior status of web site, pending final approvals due to links to be used. Ms. Sastre will find out what transpired.

**Coral Gables Advisory Board on Disability Affairs**  
**Minutes of September 3, 2008**  
**Page 2**

Also, the City web site still has the ad for the disabled parking enforcement specialist but Ms. Sastre was unable to locate a possible ad by the Youth Center for a specialized individual who could start a program for children with disabilities.

***Liaison Reports***

***Merrick Educational Center DCAT Team***

Ms. Blaire reported this year the Merrick Center children scored a C for the school in the FCAT test. There was such a celebration going on. The team has now been disbanded.

Ms. Blaire stated she feels the City should do something to connect with this center on a regular basis rather than just on an emergency basis. Perhaps they should be in touch with the new principal, Barbara Wehking. Discussion on the center having so many needs and not having been the focus for the longest time as well as the areas covered including sending teachers to the homebound children. Ms. Sastre discussed the Rotary Club having given \$3,000.00 one year to be used at the principal's discretion. Ms. Sastre will check to see if something can be like this can be done to help them. Ms. Blaire suggested helping the teachers which would serve as an incentive. Ms. Swain suggested taking the opportunity to honor the school during Disability Month (October) making a report about the school, reflecting the progress made and what they are.

Ms. Sastre stated this year's theme is 'America's People, America's Talent, America's Strength' and it is National Disability Employment Awareness month. Ms. Sastre questioned as to whether the City is a member of the National Organization on Disability and if not, possibility of becoming a member, the cost, and benefits of Board being able to obtain all types of information. Ms. Blaire further elaborated that this would provide a channel of information which could be posted on the web site which would maximize the Board's role. Mr. Delgado agreed to look for funding. Ms. Sastre advised that in all the years she has been involved with the Chamber, she never heard anyone say anything about disability awareness. She suggested possibly talking to Mark Trowbridge to see if this something the Chamber has even thought about, i.e. making businesses aware of disability issues.

Ms. Sastre discussed that since next month is Disability Awareness Month should the entire Merrick School in general be honored with the suggestion that the faculty of Merrick School be honored, and some of the teachers be interviewed. Ms. Sastre will call the Assistant Principal. In the event the Board honors the teachers along with a Proclamation for the school, Ms. Sastre suggested having the Mayor's office issue a personalized letter for each teacher. Also, perhaps the Rotary Club might be able to do something for the teachers by way of issuing to the school a \$25.00 gift certificate for each teacher which could then be redeemed by the school since the Rotary Club does not give directly to individuals. Ms. Sastre will contact Merrick School and find out number

**Coral Gables Advisory Board on Disability Affairs**  
**Minutes of September 3, 2008**  
**Page 3**

of teachers and support staff. Once the information is obtained, Ms. Swain will contact Maria Rosa Higgins-Fallon to arrange for interviews and/or video taping for a brief presentation about the school to be made at the October 14 commission meeting. Further discussion regarding staff, outside visiting teachers, possible awards for other individuals. Ms. Sastre further stated that in the event they find that there are excessive teachers making the request of the Rotary Club too much, she will call the Chamber to see if they could get some contributions. Ms. Sastre stated the reason for bringing up the Chamber is that while looking at the National Organization on Disability awards where a city is selected every year, they all have representation in the Chamber via a specific committee.

Further discussion on Proclamation usually being presented at the first commission meeting in October.

***Newspaper Articles***

Ms. Blaire discussed an article about fraternity brothers who ride and raise money for disabled persons along with another one on a gentleman who does simplifying travel for people using wheel chairs. Also, an article by Gloria Burns not only on the special Olympics but also listing the special programs/events which will be happening this summer involving challenged children.

***New Business***

Mr. Blaire discussed the appointment of the new Acting Police Chief.

***Election of Chairman and Vice chairman***

Mrs. Scarcell-Degrave requested removal of her name from the nomination for chairman. Ms. Blaire nominated Ms. Sastre for new chairman, seconded by Ms. Scarcell-Degrave. Ms. Sastre accepted. Ms. Swain moved for Ms. Scarcell-Degrave to be vice chairman, seconded by Ms. Blaire. All members voted in favor.

***Meeting Dates***

Ms Swain stated that at a previous meeting the members voted to have quarterly meetings with the intention of meeting in between if necessary. Obviously the October preparations need to be finished as well as start to work on the holiday event following the same procedures as always in contacting Ms. Chojnicki and the Colonnade. Ms. Sastre suggested all that can be done via e-mail and fax.

***Proclamation/video of Merrick Educational Center programs***

Discussion on the members touching base regarding the proclamation presentation and video honoring Merrick Educational Center at the October 14 commission meeting.

***Adjournment***

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 A.M.