



**City of Coral Gables
CITY COMMISSION MEETING
February 24, 2026**

ITEM TITLE: ADVISORY BOARD ON DISABILITY AFFAIRS

MEETING DATE: January 7, 2026

SUMMARY OF MEETING:

QUORUM: Was reached

STAFF:

Jose Rodriguez – Human Resources & Risk Management - Assistant Director
Eglys Hernandez – Human Resources & Risk Management – P/T Administrative Assistant
Yanessa Rodriguez – Community Recreation – Administrative Operations Manager
Catie Hastings – Community Recreation – D.E.I. Coordinator

PUBLIC GUEST: None

CITIZEN ADVISORS:

Dr. Jennifer Durocher, University of Miami
Debbie Dietz. Citizen Advisor – Via Zoom

PUBLIC GUEST: None

CALL TO ORDER: Meeting was called to order at 10:03am

MEETING ABSENCE: Debbie Dietz, Citizen Advisor

MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL:

December 3, 2025
Motion by: Bonnie Blaire / 2nd: Vanessa Bedoya / Approved unanimously

SECRETARY'S REPORT: None

BOARD MEMBERS' REPORTS: None

NEW BUSINESS:

Sunshine Law Reminder – Mr. Jose Rodriguez

Mr. Rodriguez provided reminder to all board members regarding Sunshine Law. Mr. Rodriguez stated if a board member had any type of information they would like to share with the rest of the board, they can advise him or Eglys Hernandez, and it will be distributed by either one. Mr. Rodriguez advised Ms. Palacio-Pike and Mr. Eddy Martinez can communicate directly with board members.

OLD BUSINESS:

Audible Crosswalks – Mr. Jose Rodriguez

Mr. Rodriguez shared with board sample of wording to be used for Resolution (Exhibit 1). Mr. Rodriguez stated that this will be placed on the agenda for the Commission meeting scheduled for January 27, 2026. Mr. Rodriguez advised when a board item is presented to commission, the board usually elects someone from the board to come up to the dais and address it. Mr. Rodriguez stated board items are usually addressed later during the commission meeting; however, he can ask for a time certain.

Ms. Ward Sando expressed in the past, she was not aware that someone from the board had to present resolution. Mr. Rodriguez explained that he will be presenting the resolution, asked someone from board to come up and express their thoughts regarding item and then the commission will be the one reading the resolution.

Ms. Palacio-Pike suggested that it be Ms. Bonnie Blaire, since she has knowledge of history regarding this matter. Ms. Bedoya stated she is in contact with Ms. Virginia Jacko, who was one of the first people to address this and perhaps she would be the best to address the commission. Ms. Bedoya stated having if there was a time certain she would be glad to extend invite to Ms. Jacko. Board members agreed it would be great for Ms. Jacko to address the commission. Ms. Chichester said it may be a good idea to also have someone from the board present. Mr. Jauregui expressed interest in being present. Ms. Chichester said she would like to also be present.

Board reviewed sample language provided by Mr. Rodriguez and expressed changes they would like. Board wants to assure history of how long this has been discussed be included in presentation. Mr. Rodriguez advised he will take all suggestions into consideration, re-draft and provide updated to board prior to submitting resolution. Ms. Blaire provided information regarding this commencing during the plans with streetscape. Ms. Blaire stated it would be important to establish that audible crosswalks are not just for people with disabilities, it is for the safety of all. Mr. Martinez stated he would like to also attend the January 27, 2026, commission meeting. Ms. Blaire stated she believes it would be best to establish project to commence on Miracle Mile and then move forth in other areas. Ms. Ward Sando asked if it would be possible for Ms. Jacko to address dais via zoom and Mr. Rodriguez advised it is possible.

Adventure Day – Ms. Catie Hastings

Ms. Hastings shared with the board an exciting idea to revisit revamping Adventure Day. Ms. Hastings stated the purpose of Adventure Day should not be just doing something that is good, but it is something that is doing something good. Ms. Hastings stated idea is to set a world record of having the most disabled people swimming in pairs with professional mermaids at the same time. Ms. Hastings stated event will be held at Venetian Pool. Ms. Hastings states this will be open to everyone, small, old or young. Ms. Hastings stated this is a new world record, there will be an actual representative from Guinness to ensure record is met and documented. Ms. Hastings advised she had spoken to everyone, and they were all excited.

Ms. Ward Sando stated her concern was in the past no one younger than three years old could attend pool, and Ms. Hasting advised this has been addressed and there will be bands assigned to allow young children to take part in this one-time event. Ms. Hastings stated this will be a one-time adventure and next year's 2027 Adventure Day will be a completely different thing. Ms. Hastings provided information about other activities which will be available on site of event for those who do not wish or are not able to participate in the water concept of event. Ms. Hastings stated there will be sword fighting, resources tables, Ms. Rodriguez stated they are still seeking other suggestions from the board.

Board motion:

“To endorse this type of thinking and encourage the Community Recreation Department to continue with this line of adventurous thinking. “

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

Ms. Yanessa Rodriguez, Community Recreations Department stated due to the scope and magnitude of this proposed event further research needs to be conducted. Ms. Rodriguez asked the board to continue to explore possible ideas to be shared at upcoming meetings.

Ms. Chichester stated it would be important that not all the focus is placed on the swimming component and that there will be other activities outside of the water available. Ms. Palacio-Pike suggested that media be brought in early on to ensure information is made available to all.

Board suggestions reference inclusion and accessibility withing the school system – SCRC -

Ms. Mary Palacio-Pike

Ms. Palacio-Pike stated she continues to want to hear suggestions from board about what they would like to see happen with the school system. Ms. Palacio-Pike advised she has been trying to coordinate a visit to Ponce De Leon middle school but has run into difficulty doing so. Ms. Palacio-Pike also stated she continues to try to obtain information regarding accessibility to all to the culinary program at Coral Gables, however, has not been able to do so. Board discussed various ways to navigate this matter and suggested this continue to be placed on agenda for next meeting.

Parks & Recreations – Ms. Catie Hastings

Ms. Hastings provided information about various upcoming My Squad events and advised information on all events is currently available on the city web site. Ms. Hastings stated they are having both in-house and going out events.

Ponce de Leon Circle – Ms. Mary Palacio-Pike

Ms. Palacio-Pike asked regarding the subject of Ponce De Leon Circle which was discussed at the end of last month's meeting, and what is going to finally be done. Mr. Rodriguez stated there is a developer who is redeveloping area as part of their permit. Mr. Rodriguez stated initial request regarding placing of audible crosswalks by Ms. Melissa DeZayas, however, the plans have been submitted and approved. Ms. Palacio-Pike asked if it would be possible to see what was being done. Mr. Rodriguez stated he can communicate with Ms. DeZayas and place this item on the February 7, 2026, agenda.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None

NEXT MEETING: February 4, 2026

ADJOURNMENT:

Meeting adjourned at 11:06am

Motion by: Jennifer Ward Sando / 2nd: Vanessa Bedoya / Approved unanimously

ATTACHMENT(S): Minutes of January 7, 2026