

SENIOR CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD
Minutes of March 3, 2008 meeting
Coral Gables Youth Center

MEMBERS	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M		APPOINTED BY
Catherine Fahringer	-	-	-	-	E	P	P	P	P	S	P	P		Mayor Donald D. Slesnick II
Norma Lemberg	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	P	P	P	P		Vice-Mayor William H. Kerdyk, Jr.
Annie Bentacourt	-	-	P	E	P	E	E	P	A	P	A	P		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	E	P	P	E	P	E	P	P	E	A	P		Comm. Wayne "Chip" Withers
Ginger Jochem	-	-	-	-	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P		City Manager David Brown
Carol Brock	P	P	P	P	E	E	P	P	E	E	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

Judy Kries
 Recording Secretary

GUESTS:

Sebastian del Marmol
 Coral Gables Gazette

Katie Kreter, Citizen

1. Norma Lemberg, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 5:10 p.m. and welcomed Katie Kreter and Sebastian del Marmol.
2. Approval of Board minutes from February 4, 2008 Board meeting – A motion was made and seconded to approve the Board minutes of the February 4, 2008 meeting.
3. Approval of Board absences for March 3, 2008 Board meeting –All Board members were present for the meeting.
4. Report on Annual Senior Luncheon – Anastasia Smith

Anastasia Smith said we had approximately 220 people who came to the luncheon. She handed out a copy of the budget for the event. The Board said

it was a beautiful luncheon and the Coral Gables Country Club was a great place to have it and that parking was not an issue. Anastasia Smith said that attendees also had the opportunity to make suggestions, via a short questionnaire, regarding activities and topics for the *Golden Gables*.

The Board discussed event sponsorship for the luncheon as well as the Art Show. Annie Betancourt suggested that now that we have a track record of success that the Board should consider the development of a sponsorship packet with various levels of contributions. She suggested that the packet should include pertinent information and pictures of the event(s). Carol Brock suggested a “combo” sponsorship and with pre-approved potential sponsors. Dr. Schiff added the need to begin that process soon and that the Palace has committed to the same level of sponsorship for the 2008 Art Show as they had for the 2007 event. It was decided that the Art Show committee would look at sponsorships and make recommendations to the Board.

There will be an Art Show Meeting next Wednesday, March 12, 2008, at 5 p.m., at the Youth Center to discuss sponsorships for major events and programs for next year.

5. Report on Activities and Programs – Anastasia Smith

Anastasia Smith said the weekly paid lunches have been a great success. She said 13 people attended the event on Wednesday, February 13; 25 people attended the event on Wednesday, February 20; and 12 people attended the event on Wednesday, February 27. Carol Brock said AARP is concerned that these luncheons conflict with the AARP luncheon on the same day. After much discussion, the weekly lunch will remain on Wednesday and we will work with AARP to distribute their information to our attendees each month.

Anastasia Smith reported participation numbers for several activities being held at UBC: Dancercise - 23 people (February); 16 people enrolled for March (so far); Flamingo Gardens Trip – 12; Footloose @ Actor’s Playhouse – 52; Let’s Do Dinner – 6 (January) and 14 (February). Programs have been well attended and continue to grow at UBC.

New activities which start in March include language, poetry writing and decoupage classes. She said we also have 38 seniors who are interested in the computer classes which start in April. Carol Brock said seniors have indicated an interest in computer classes on both beginner and intermediate levels. Anastasia Smith said there are plans for a Computer Lab with volunteer instructors who will be able to work with the more advanced students.

Anastasia Smith said she would develop a calendar so that seniors can have a view of the monthly schedule of activities, and she will collaborate with Public Affairs to put this information in the *Golden Gables* booklet.

5. Discussion on Transportation

There was discussion on transportation for seniors. Items discussed included a taxi voucher system for seniors subsidized by City funding, and insurance and liability considerations for private transportation. These items will be discussed at a future meeting.

6. Discussion on Annual Report

Norma Lemberg said she sent a copy of the Annual Report to the City Manager, but did not send copies to the City Commission. The Board asked Norma Lemberg to forward copies to the City Commission. Additionally, the proposed resolution asking that the City Commission consider creating a new Department in the City called the Department of Senior Citizen Services was revised and will be discussed later in the meeting.

7. Discussion of Lease Renewal with University Baptist Church

Norma Lemberg said the one year lease on University Baptist Church is up on June 1, 2008. She said that at least two members of this Board need to be involved in the negotiations for next year. After discussion, the Board made and passed the following motion:

The Senior Citizens Advisory Board recommends that at least two members from this Board be included in negotiations for renewal of the Lease Agreement with University Baptist Church. The motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

This recommendation will be handled administratively.

8. Discussion on Senior Services Resolution – Dr. Schiff

Discussion resumed on the proposed resolution. Norma Lemberg asked that the revised resolution be read and included as a part of the meeting minutes: Carol Brock read as follows:

“Resolution for the consideration of the City Commission of the City of Coral Gables, Florida in reference to the Senior Citizen Service Division of the Parks and Recreation Department.

Whereas, when the Division of Senior Services and the Senior Citizens Advisory Board were first established they reported to the City Manager’s Office. And,

Whereas, the City’s Division of Senior Services and the Senior Citizens Advisory Board have since been operating under the auspices of the Department of Parks and Recreation and

Whereas, The Parks and Recreation Department is designed to service the recreational needs of the community and to operate the city’s parks and is fittingly located in the War Memorial youth Center and

Whereas, All services designed to cater to the needs of the City’s older citizens are now directed by the Parks and Recreation Department, and

Whereas, There is ample evidence that the age of population over the age of 65 has increased by 20% in Coral Gables, and

Whereas, there will be a rapid increase of this age group in the next several years due to the inclusion of the aging baby boomers

Therefore requiring increased inter-departmental services and cooperation and coordination for seniors with county, state and federal programs, and

Whereas, these services for senior citizens can more efficiently be handled as a division reporting to the City Manager’s Office reporting to the City Commission on the programs and projects developed to serve our seniors and

Whereas, the personnel and budget needed to run the division are already in place so there will be no additional costs to the City under the present budget.

Now therefore, be it resolved that the City of Coral Gables, Florida shall return the Senior Services Division back to the City Manager’s Office the Division shall consist of division head, existing support personnel and the Senior

Citizens Advisory Board it shall be dedicated to serving the changing needs of the Senior Citizen's of Coral Gables.”

The Board commented that there was one correction. The total senior population for the City of Coral Gables is 20%, not that the senior population had increased by 20%.

Catherine Fahringer asked about the makeup of the Division and whether the budget and the staffing were 100% dedicated to Senior Services or spread out in other divisions of the Parks and Recreation Department. It was confirmed that the current budget and personnel are 100% dedicated to the Senior Services Division.

There was much discussion about the basic organization of Senior Services including whether it should be a Department or Division, about how the budget should be handled, and about the job descriptions and duties of the employees currently assigned to Senior Services. Norma Lemberg stated that the proposed resolution recommends that the Division of Senior Services be reassigned to the Office of the City Manager. Board members questioned the benefit of this change. The point was made that there is no one in the Parks and Recreation Department that works full time just for senior issues inclusive of the administrative duties and grant writing.

The Board discussed the need for a divisional structure where there is an Administrator working one hundred percent for seniors and senior programs. There was a question as to the duties of the Senior Services Coordinator and that the position should be the division administrator. There was discussion on the current duties of that position and that it did not include several key needs. Luanne Santangelo clarified by stating that while one of the main duties of that position is to link those in need of services with those providing that service, there are many other duties of that position, including grant writing, clearly defined in the job description. Catherine Fahringer stated that it appeared that the board had assumed many of the duties of an Administrator. Norma Lemberg and other Board members agreed. There was discussion on the function of the Administrator and that the Administrator's duties should include grant writing and to work as an advocate for the needs of the senior community. Norma Lemberg noted that the division has been administered by the Parks and Recreation Department Administrative team while the Senior Services Coordinator has not taken on those duties. This position has assumed the duties of a Social Worker. There needs to be a structure where there is an administrator. Luanne Santangelo commented that perhaps the issue could be addressed by reviewing the duties of employees in the Senior Services Division, specifically the Senior Services Coordinator, and ensuring that those duties are in line with the growing needs of the senior community.

Carol Brock summed up the intent of the resolution to be an efficiency of running this City better in the terms of serving the needs of Senior Citizens. Carol went on to state that there are increasing social problems such as transportation and affordable housing within the senior community and that while the problems are here today, we need to look to and prepare for the future. We need to set up a division that can act on these problems, come up with solutions and take advantage of the county, state and federal programs currently available. There also needs to be a clarification of the responsibilities of that current staff members have towards the Senior Division.

Carol Brock went on to address the budget and the need for the Division to have autonomy over its own budget. As the situation exists now if we go out and seek and obtain donations, the money then belongs to the City and may be used for general purposes rather than exclusively for senior benefits. Annie Bentacourt brought up the idea of a “Friends of....” group that would seek foundation funding and grants whereby the monies collected would stay within the Senior Services Division.

The motion to submit the resolution as read failed to pass by vote of the board.

After further discussion, the Board made the following motion:

To submit a resolution adding in a report to clarify the Board's intent to create a more effective functioning Division of Senior Services.

Discussion on the motion included the need to look at the duties of the positions of the Division and provide a full factual report on the issues discussed.

The motion passed unanimously by vote of the Board.

This motion is an internal item for the Board only.

9. Date and time of next meeting - The next Senior Citizens Advisory Board meeting is scheduled for **Monday, April 7, 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.**
10. The meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.