

City of Coral Gables

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



Meeting Minutes

Friday, March 15, 2024

8:30 AM

2151 Salzedo Street, Coral Gables, FL 33134

Police and Fire Headquarters, Community Meeting Room

School Community Relations Committee

Chairperson Winnie Chang
Vice Chairperson Sandy Dimitris
Board Member Erin Anding
Board Member Joshua Goodman
Board Member Ana Lam
Board Member Andrew Nadal
Board Member Cecilia D. Slesnick
Board Member Sharon Watson

The School Community Relations Committee will be holding its Regular Meeting on Friday, Mar. 15, 2024, commencing at 8:30 a.m. While the Committee is back to live in-person meetings, members of the public may participate in person but are also able to participate via the Zoom platform. Members of the public may join the meeting via Zoom at (<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83893614478>). In addition, a dedicated phone line will be available so that any individual who does not wish (or is unable) to use Zoom may listen to and participate in the meeting by dialing: 305-461-6769 Meeting ID: 838 9361 4478.

To speak on an Agenda Item, please "Raise your Hand" or send a message to one of the meeting hosts using the Zoom Platform. If you joined the meeting via telephone, you can "Raise your Hand" by pressing *9.

CALL TO ORDER

ROLL/QUORUM CALL

- Present:** 6 - Board Member Anding, Board Member Lam, Chairperson Chang, Board Member Goodman, Vice Chairperson Dimitris and Board Member Watson
- Excused:** 2 - Board Member Nadal and Board Member Slesnick

A. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

[24-6988](#)

School Community Relations Committee Meeting of January 12, 2024.

Attachments: [Draft Minutes - SCRC Jan. 12 Meeting Cover Memo](#)

A motion was made by Vice Chairperson Dimitris, seconded by Board Member Goodman, that this matter be approved. The motion passed by the following vote.

- Yeas:** 5 - Board Member Anding, Chairperson Chang, Board Member Goodman, Vice Chairperson Dimitris and Board Member Watson
- Excused:** 3 - Board Member Lam, Board Member Nadal and Board Member Slesnick

B. PUBLIC COMMENT

April Jones on behalf of Coral Gables Preparatory Academy PTSA:

1) Wants to be proactive in discussing with the city the schedule of the upcoming renovation of Phillips Park. Carolina Vester (City Staff) provided comments: An architecture firm has been engaged. A community meeting will be held, and all will be notified, especially those who are approximately 1500 feet from the property. A survey of the school property nearby is being conducted. Project is approximately two (2) years ago and it's not been fully funded; it's an 8 to 10 K project that includes among other things a pickle ball area. This will be a highlight for the city. There is an MOU in place; this is a public park and to enclose a physical education area will not be done. Further details will be provided as progress is made. The community meeting will most likely occur in late August or September.

2) PHIT America program that Vice Mayor Anderson supports: PHIT America had scheduled a walk thru. Wants to know who the authorized parties are to ensure that this moves along.

Samuel Joseph: commentary regarding recent death of a university student outside of Coral Gables Senior High School who was riding a scooter. There are many students who use scooters and e-bikes; this is dangerous and unsafe for those students. The city needs to look at solutions to make it a safer ride for all. Important to get conversations going on looking into possibly additional crossing guards, additional police. Important to come up with a solution to ensure the protection and safety of the kids.

Aillette Diaz from the school district: Provided comments related to Phillips Park. Important to use the park for after-school sport activities. Consider incorporating a school tract team, school pickle ball team. Further commented the importance to schedule a walk-thru of the park.

C. NEW BUSINESS

C-1 Introduction to Fernando Weiner, Government Affairs Manager for Coral Gables (Facilitated by Solanch Lopez, Acting Staff Liaison)

Fernando introduced himself and his role in the city. Board Members introduced themselves.

C-2 Miami-Dade County Public Schools Update (Facilitated by Mari Tere Rojas, School Board Chair)

School Chair was unable to attend the School Community Relations Committee meeting since she is attending the Miami-Dade College 2024 Alumni Hall of Fame induction.

Proffered items from Chief of Staff were not received. Updates provided by Alex Perez from Central Region:

Mr. Perez provided a brief introduction to his role and background.

- He will follow up on the PHIT America site visit request.
- On March 4 School Board Chair Rojas was presented with a highly prestigious award from the Consul General of France. This award was granted for her dedication, enthusiasm in academics and cultural education.
- Gables Prep- Resolution at next School Board meeting to recognize 100 years of the school.
- Henry West Lab magnet letter awards will be sent out today.
- George Carver Elementary will be a 2024 National Magnet School of Excellence, they have the IF Italian program. They are also designated as the STEM Gold designated school for the last four (4) consecutive years.
- George Carver Middle School is going to be a Magnet school of America, it's a school of Excellence and will be running for the 2024 top National Magnet award. The announcement will be held in New York.
- Francis Tucker school will be a full K-8 under the Magnet Stars Program.
- Ponce Middle is a Magnet demonstrations school and a top Magnet School of Excellence. Alec Angulo is a National Finalist for Magnet School of America.
- Sunset Elementary is also a Magnet School of Excellence and a 2023 National Blue Ribbon School and one of Miami Herald's best Elementary schools in Dade County.
- David Fairchild is rated an A school, School of Excellence. Also named NAF distinguished Academy.
- International School Preparatory Academy (ISPA) Magnet School of Excellence 2024.
- Coral Gables Senior will be receiving a new gym.
- Vice Chairperson Dimitris inquires on required criteria for STEM designation. Mr. Perez responded that STEM designation is a participation by school. Schools must apply and have and have activities throughout the year to be able to be designated as a STEM school. Not every school will apply.

C-3 Update on the Coral Gables Family Literacy Festival (Facilitated by Carolina Vester, Community Recreation Deputy Director)

Carlos Pichard is the new contact individual for the May 18, 2024, event. Carolina Vester explained the vendor application form and provided a brief overview of the event. The application will be finalized today and will be sent out soon. Chairperson Chang suggests that the department collaborate with the Chamber of Commerce. The School Community Relations Committee may choose to have a table at the event, however, will need to commit to manning the table.

Add discussion item regarding Table at Literacy Fest to April School Community Relations Committee agenda.

C-4 Review and selection of the 2024 Coral Gables Literacy Festival - Literacy Laureates Honorees (Facilitated by Winnie Chang, Chairperson)

Vice Chairperson Dimitris nominated Chantel Acevedo.

Sam Joseph's past criteria was to ask for a list of prominent people that should be recognized that do good work regarding literacy in our community.

Nominations should be sent to scrc@coralgables.com no later than April 4. The final decision will be made at the April School Community Relations Committee meeting.

[24-7151](#)

Attachments: [CGFLF Literacy Laureates Nominees List 2024](#)

C-5 A resolution of the Coral Gables library Advisory Board to the School Community Relations Committee and the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board recommending the renaming of Literacy Row at the Coral Gables Family Literacy Festival in honor of Jeanette Slesnick.

[24-7152](#)

Attachments: [Resolution - Literacy Row Renaming](#)

Vice Chairperson Dimitris moves to support the LAB resolution in the renaming and announcing during opening ceremony. Board Member Lam moves. No vote. Motion amended to Honor Slesnick's memory and commitment to literacy during the opening ceremony, Board Member Pass Sandy moves to support the LAB resolution and rename Jeannett Slesnick Literacy Row on the event maps. Board Member Lam, pass. Motion Passed.

Yeas: 6 - Board Member Anding, Board Member Lam, Chairperson Chang, Board Member Goodman, Vice Chairperson Dimitris and Board Member Watson

Excused: 2 - Board Member Nadal and Board Member Slesnick

C-6 Presentation by Stem Tree of Coral Gables (Facilitated by Ty Gabriel)

Presentation made by Ty Gabriel from Century of Coral Gables- opening an after-school STEM education program in Coral Gables a K-12 program. Opening is scheduled on April 6 at noon at 101 Aragon Avenue. STEM Tree is a franchise business with over twenty (20) locations throughout the United States. Programs included all the sciences, math, computer coding, robotic and electrical engineering. Also partners with schools, PTA. PTA's for school referrals to raise money.

The target audience for STEM Tree, are those students that possibly fallen behind in academic due to pandemic situation. Also catering to those students that demonstrate interest in medical, NASA etc., he is eager to help these students. Provide technical training but a road map to help the students attain their goals. Pricing on average is \$30.00 per hour. Will keep student ratio of 1 to 5. Also assist with homework help.

D. OLD BUSINESS

- D-1 Review of updates made to the schools page on the City's website (Facilitated by Solanch Lopez, Acting Staff Liaison)

Updates were shared and viewed on the screen. On the city's website, under the School Relations and Events heading additional buttons were added notifying residents on upcoming events along with a community calendar.

E. ONGOING BUSINESS

- E-1 General Updates

F. ANNOUNCEMENT

- F-1 Next SCRC Meeting - Friday, Apr. 19, 2024 | 8:30 a.m.

Questions/Comments: scrc@coralgables.com

- F-2 Join a local PTA or subscribe to their newsletters using the following links:

- F-3 American Sign Language Class - Every Thursday, 6 - 7 p.m.

- F-4 Music at McBride Plaza - Thursday, Mar. 21 | 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

- F-5 School Board Chair Rojas' Office Hours - Thursday, Mar. 21 | 12:30 to 3:00 p.m.

- F-6 Gentle Egg Hunt - Saturday, Mar. 23 | 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

- F-7 Keep Coral Gables Beautiful Events

ADJOURNMENT

NOTE