

City of Coral Gables

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



Meeting Minutes

Thursday, August 4, 2022

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 Connelly
Board Member Edward English
Board Member Julian Sevillano
Board Member Richard Thurer*

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting began at 4 pm

ROLL CALL

a. Roll Call and Excusal of Absences

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

Present: 5 - Chairperson Berlin, Vice Chairperson Suarez, Board Member Sevillano, Board Member Schild and Board Member Woods

Excused: 2 - Board Member Connelly and Board Member Thurer

Present: 5 - Chairperson Berlin, Vice Chairperson Suarez, Board Member Sevillano, Board Member Schild and Board Member Woods

Excused: 2 - Board Member Connelly and Board Member Thurer

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

a. Approval of July Minutes

A MOTION TO APPROVE THE JULY MEETING MINUTES WAS MADE BY JULIAN SEVILLANO AND WAS SECOND BY HENDRIK WOODS. ALL IN FAVOR; PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

SUPERVISOR'S REPORT

Prior to the start of the Supervisor's report, introductions were made welcoming the Adult Activity Center Assistant Supervisor Gregory Walters.

a. General Updates

AAC Supervisor Katherine Anderson began her report by introducing new Assistant Supervisor Gregory Walters again, and then discussing a popular new program that just began at the AAC called stretching with Christine which has already filled up and has been receiving positive marks.

A past volunteer, Ying, has reached out hoping to both bring mahjong back and to help bring over a new intro to Spanish course that uses television by October. Currently finalizing a new technology course that is also set to begin in October of this year.

b. Special Events

The AAC has decided to turn National Senior Citizen Appreciation Day on August 21st into a Senior Week event where there will be special programming held Sunday through Thursday.

August 21st will be a night at the cinema hosted by commissioner Menendez at the CG cinema to kickoff the Senior Week events.

August 22nd Baptist Health is sending a nutritionist to give a presentation "Eat Right to Feel your Best".

August 23rd SHINE will be at the AAC to help connect seniors with different healthcare options available to them.

August 24th there will be a crime watch presentation on site at the AAC including a self-defense demonstration.

August 25th there will an end of summer ice cream social to celebrate the end of summer and the end of the Senior Week programs.

Katherine then brought up that there has been a new GSS for the AAC has been selected and offered the position, hopefully will be able to start before the next time the board meets.

Planning and date selection has begun for a Halloween event on Friday October 28th, the art show in November, and the holiday luncheon in December.

Also possibly using the Venetian Aquatic Club to provide some sort of aquatic programming using the pool across the street from the AAC at the Palace.

Hoping to add a yoga program on Saturday mornings and bring back Saturday pickleball to the AAC.

c. Administrative Updates

Director Fred Couceyro quickly went through department updates with the Board. He shared that the Country Club is still under renovation and there have been issues with the pool. However, they hope to have the pool open by Labor Day. Some setbacks have occurred with renovating the café, the floors had to be redone once again. Hoping for an unofficial soft opening of the café in late August.

A Country Club director has been hired, she is a resident of the City and used to be the director of the Club at the Biltmore.

Director Couceyro discussed the end of a very hard summer season and the city-wide struggle with staffing in all Community Recreation facilities, and to celebrate the successful summer there will be a Summer Bash held for all Community Recreation employees as a thank you for their hard work at the Kerdyk Tennis center.

Board Chairperson James "Jim" Berlin inquired as to whether the Country Club was operational at this time, director Couceyro informed him that the athletic club has been open and there are hopes that the opening of the pool will increase membership numbers. Director Couceyro also informed the committee that the Country Club has also had some reservations for private events be made along with the City of Coral Gables employee of the year breakfast.

NEW BUSINESS

a. Neighborhood Information Meeting on FRDAP Grant - Phillips Park

Director Couceyro began by going over the fact that some commissioners were pushing for further development in some of our parks in order to meet the needs of our community which were already listed in the master plan of the Community Recreation Department, one of the main parks that was discussed was Phillips Park. In order to bring these renovations to fruition, there is a state grant that is being applied for, one of the requirements is to present the project to your local community which will be taking place on August 18th and promote to all of the boards.

Director Couceyro then went on to detail the many different aspects of the renovation and what he is hoping to complete with the project, from adding two pickle ball courts, to adding a splash pad, to extending the building on location to host classes and move the restrooms indoor. There are also plans to turn the baseball field into a multipurpose field that can be used for many different activities. A plan to gain access to a piece of property very close to Phillips Park in order to create a pet friendly park to keep Phillips Park a dog-free park was detailed as well.

Board member Hendrick Woods inquired about any other parks in that area, and Director Couceyro went on to detail some of the ideas for a new rooftop park that would include a playground, exercise area, and an area for catered events.

OLD BUSINESS

a. Review of Referendum Letter to the Boards

Board Chairperson James “Jim” Berlin discussed how the referendum letter was received by the disability board when he spoke with them the day before, stating that it seemed to go very well. He noted that the disability board shared their approval for the master plan and that they would be willing to support the plan in a commission meeting.

Chairperson Berlin did share that the disability board recommended being more specific to the board he was reaching out to, noting that what really got their attention was the fact there would be a focus on upgrading walkways and making them more accessible for those with disabilities.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. Recap of DAB Meeting

Vice Chairperson Celia Suarez mentioned that it may be time to reconsider pushing for the carrying out of the master plan at this time, and possibly circling back to it later prompting chairperson Berlin to question when the right time would be. Director Couceyro then suggested reaching out to any commissioner who may possibly support this plan to see what their recommendation would be.

Board member Kelly Schild then inquired about how one would go about getting the referendum on the ballot being told that the commission must vote for the decision to go to referendum. Board member Schild then went on to ask whether the referendum could be placed on the April ballot, which she was told the commission did not want to happen.

Vice Chairperson Celia Suarez then went on to detail that she does believe that there needs to be a different strategy, and that the idea to reach out to commissioner who support the referendum is a great way to start. Board member Jean Connelly went on to voice her support for reaching out to other boards in order to form a coalition that supports the referendum.

Board member Kelly Schild then inquired as to the increase in tax rate that would be associated with the passing of the referendum, which Director Couceyro told directed her to the master plan which had listed the expected tax increase. However, he did caution everyone to keep in mind that since this was done there has been some changes not only in the economic climate, but also that this numbers are estimates and not guarantees.

AAC Supervisor Katherine Anderson then brought up that the Communications Board was open to meeting with Chairperson James “Jim” Berlin, they would just like to receive a letter containing a synopsis of what will be discussed beforehand.

A MOTION FOR CELIA SUAREZ, JULIAN SEVILLANO, AND JIM BERLIN TO MEET WITH COMMISSIONER MENEDEZ IN ORER TO DISCUSS THE NEXT STEPS IN PURSUING THE MASTER PLAN BEFORE THE NEXT MEETING, AND INVITE THE COMMISSIONER TO THE NEXT MEETING WAS MADE BY CELIA SUAREZ AND WAS SECOND BY KELLY SCHILD; PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

A MOTION TO APPROVE CHARIPERSON BERLIN'S LETTER AND TO ALLOW FOR MINOR MODIFICATIONS TO THE LETTER WAS MADE BY CELI SUAREZ AND WAS SECONDED BY JULIAN SEVILLANO; PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

b. Recap on the History of the Master Plan

Board Member Jean Connelly then inquired as to whether Mayor Lago had shared any ideas for how to provide funding for the projects within the master plan, for which Director Couceyro shared that that they would be providing funding for each individual project one at a time. He then went on to detail that ideas that have been floated have ranged from debt service to selling property that is not going to be developed into parks.

ITEMS FROM THE SECRETARY

Next Meeting is set for September 1st at 4:00pm

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 5:29pm

NOTE