

SENIOR CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD

Minutes of March 2, 2015 Meeting

Coral Gables Youth Center

MEMBERS	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	APPOINTED BY
Nadejda Mishkovsky	N	P	P	P	P	P	R	R	P	P	P	N	Mayor Jim Cason
Carol Brock	N	P	P	P	P	P	R	R	E	P	P	N	Vice Mayor William H. Kerdyk, Jr.
Jane Mass	N	P	P	P	P	P	R	R	P	P	P	N	Comm. Patricia Keon
Maria Cruz	N	P	P	P	P	P	R	R	P	E	P	N	Comm. Vince Lago
Ying Pestien	N	P	P	P	P	P	R	R	P	E	P	N	Comm. Frank C. Quesada
Evelyn Budde	N	P	P	P	P	P	R	R	P	P	P	N	City Manager Patrick G. Salerno
Joan Valdes	N	P	P	V	E	P	R	R	P	P	P	N	Senior Citizens Advisory Board

A = Absent

B = Not on Board at Time of Meeting

C = Resigned

E = Excused absence

P = Present

N = No quorum

R = Recessed

S = Sick

V = Vacant Position

STAFF:

Letty Ellis
Adult Activities Coordinator

Sarah Espino
Acting as Administrative Assistant

GUESTS:

Cathy Swanson-Rivenbark
City Manager

Katie Kreter
Coral Gables Resident

Cindy Birdsill
Economic & Cultural Development Director

Patricia Tracey
Executive Director of REACH

1. Chairperson Carol Brock called the meeting to order at 5:03 p.m.
2. Carol Brock welcomed staff, board members and guests to the meeting.
3. **Approval of Excused Absences** – There were no absences to approve.
4. **Approval of Meeting Minutes: February 9, 2015** – A motion was made by Carol Brock to approve the meeting minutes of February 9, 2015. Motion was passed unanimously by the Board.

5. **Adult Activities Center Divisional Report**

a. **Adult Activities Center Report - Letty Ellis**

Letty Ellis notified the Board that the Annual Luncheon is scheduled for March 25th, 2015. Seats are being held for board members but members need to contact Letty as soon as possible. If there are left over seats they will be released for other guests that have been waitlisted for the event. There will be 190 people invited to the event. Carol Brock took a show of hands of board members attending the Annual Luncheon. Dr. John Lewis, University of Miami Professor from the School of Behavioral Sciences and Psychology, will be a guest speaker to the event. The April-May calendar will be published soon. There will be ESOL (English as a Second Language) classes available for the first time in four years. Next calendar will include a flyer from DIG, Disability Independence Group, that Disability Board Executive Director Debbie Ditz gave to Letty Ellis for promotion. DIG is based here in South Florida and is a nonprofit disability rights league legal advocacy center. For June/July, adult activities will be held at the library and police station. Programs will also be using the conference room in Youth Center until September.

6. **Old Business-** There were no matters to discuss.

7. **Disabilities Board Report - Katie Kreter**

Katie Kreter announced to the Board that most of the time was dedicated to Cindy Birdsill's presentation on the new Adult Activity Center. Cindy told members that all comments were relayed to Public Works.

8. **New Business**

a. **Discussion on Adult Activities Center with City Manager, Cathy Swanson- Rivenbark.**

Carol Brock began with introducing City Manager Cathy Swanson-Rivenbark with a brief history of Cathy's involvement with the City of Coral Gables. City Manager Cathy Swanson-Rivenbark, began her discussion with stating that she has been going to all the Boards and thanking them for all the volunteer input the boards provide to make the City of Coral Gables better. She also notified the Board that appointments will be up May 31st so new appointments will begin June. This will help with the Board's attendance calendar to restart. The City Manager's appointment will be Evelyn Budde. Cathy went on to give the board a brief history of her coming to be the City Manager of Coral Gables. She continued with saying that she is working on new initiatives for Coral Gables. Some of these will be internal with our employees and others will be external making some organizational modifications to make sure we are staying true to the coalition of the City and expectations of the Commission. We have an election in April, bigger issues are being held off until after the elections to present it to a full new board; some things require a long term view. Cindy Birdsill showed Cathy the plans for the Adult Activity Center and she is very excited about the center. If the board has questions or want to discuss certain things related to the center, she will be happy to be a part of that conversation. Any policies, issues or recommendations the seniors set forth, the City appreciates it. She looks forward to working with them moving forward.

Carol Brock had a few questions for Cathy. How does she want to work with us as a board? In the past, Carol acted as a liaison for the board and would have monthly meeting with Pat Salerno. What would her preference be on how she would want to work with the board? Cathy responded she is very available

but she believes in empowering our directors and backing their decisions. If they would want to come to her office and discuss all things important, she would be happy to do so. Carol wants to establish this direction. Cathy Swanson-Rivenbark said once the contract is signed, and issues have been resolved, Cindy Birdsill's work will be done. Continuing work on the center from that point forward would fall on management, Letty Ellis, and Director Fred Couceyro. Following that question, Carol asked if the decision of a separate division of Senior Services from Parks and Recreation will be established. Carol spoke on behalf of the board that they strongly feel that there should be a separate division. Cathy responded to agree to look at the concern.

To sum up the question about meeting with her, Cathy suggested that if the Board is seeing good progress on the center, concerning issues and needs, then she will interpret that as no news is good news. If the board feels that the City is not being responsive than they can come to her and they will discuss issues the Board has concerns with.

Carol Brock also brought up to City Manager Cathy Swanson-Rivenbark that the Board had a list of needs and ascertainments from 3 years ago that still have not been addressed. Cathy responded she would like the Board to update her on those issues but are these still the same concerns of your group? Are they the same priority as they were? Are they interested in forwarding that as the new agenda for this new appointment period? What are the short term and long term goals? Short term might be addressed before that appointment period begins. Cathy suggested for longer term issues the Board should use the opportunity to use the new board together, reaffirming or adding to those agendas. Cathy told Carol to bring these issues to her office and they will discuss it together. The board agreed to reevaluate and discuss these issues before presenting them to Cathy.

Cathy relayed to the board what she and Cindy Birdsill had discussed and there are certain financial needs that the City needs to figure out in order to get the center open. Discussed options were perhaps the Board would want to help the City figure out additional funding to cover the \$300,000 financial gap. Cathy described a few ways in doing so with the Board.

Cathy was excited to tell the board that the City is now starting to budget for maintenance, repair and refurbishment. The City will be budgeting for a percentage every year so that when a refresh is needed, the money is already in place.

Joan Valdes brought up the issue with the possible funds that could come from Commissioner Sosa. There are concerns if this would tie the Adult Center to long term implications with Dade County. Cathy responded that Commissioner Sosa is very interested in investing in our community; so something in terms of a multipurpose room that would be open to all citizens of Dade County on equal preference could be considered. This may be different than the vision the Board may have for the Adult Activities Center, it might be better to say together, that we will use that money in another way but not in the Adult Activities Center. Cathy told the Board that she met with Commissioner Sosa, and she believes Commissioner Sosa has different expectations for the Adult Activities Center that Cathy thinks will not fit perfectly with the requirements of what the Board envisions the center to have. We will look elsewhere within the City to fund the new center.

Carol Brock explained to Cathy ways the Board had fund raised in the past and the concerns she has with fund raising now for the future. The City notified the Board that there is a special account that money could go through for donations to be tax deductible. The Community Foundation is also available. But issues with this foundation were they were refusing to accept the money through the Community Foundation because too many people were donating money that was less than \$10,000.

Cindy Birdsill responded that the City now has an account with the Community Foundation so anyone could make donations to the City which will be tax deductible.

Carol Brock also mentioned the Board's concerns with transportation, parking and security issues for the Adult Activity Center and The Palace. Cathy stated that the Board's concerns are legitimate but the Palace has significant security. The garage will be operated by the CDD that is managed by the Palace. The Community Development District is a nonprofit that manages the public spaces for the community development district and the Palace will be very involved in that management.

Discussion amongst the Board and Cathy Swanson-Rivenbark continued on potential budgeting solutions and possible fund raising options for the Adult Activity Center.

Cindy Birdsill gave the Board an update on where the City is at in the process of the property closing. The final forms should be given to City Attorney Craig Lean in the next couple weeks. After the closing on the property, the build out of the facility will need to occur.

Discussion continued on demographics that the Center would like to attract, emphasis on 'Active Adults' and possible ways for retired residents of the City of Coral Gables to contribute to the center's construction and design. Discussion also ensued on a future mission statement and vision statement of what Senior Services will encompass.

b. Discussion of Publications and Communication Material for Adult Activities by Cindy Birdsill

Cindy Birdsill started the discussion by stating that she has been working with Letty Ellis and communicating with Fred Couycero and the Communications Department and they have been trying to coordinate Golden Gables publication and the Calender of Events better. Cindy then asked for feedback from the Board about their feelings on the publications. Letty Ellis suggested changing the printing schedule to seasonal and marring the Golden Gables and the Events Calendar; perhaps starting this coming autumn or winter calendar. Carol Brock asked Cindy Birdsill's thoughts on what should be done, which Cindy responded that we currently spend \$28,000 on the publications, it might be beneficial to convert to online content. Things can be easily updated if classes became cancelled or changed versus in printed material. The Board discussed personal preferences and some possible solutions. The Board has asked Cindy Birdsill for an easier method to access the Senior Services page on the City's website. Cindy agreed to look in to it. Carol Brock suggested to the Board to consider options for the transitioning period between the Youth Center and the new Adult Activities Center. Cindy thinks it should be less than a year before the new center should open, but she would have to sit with Public Works for a realistic timeline.

c. Presentation from Patricia Tracey on R.E.A.C.H

Patricia Tracy, Executive Director of S. Florida for the Real Estate, Education and Community Housing, Inc., began her presentation by reciting her non-profit organization's mission statement. She then went on to speak about two programs that her organization works with that would benefit those in our Adult Services programs. The Florida Elderly Mortgage Assistance (ELMORE) Program and the Florida Hardest-Hit Fund through the Florida Housing Program were discussed. Patricia Tracey gave brief descriptions of both and handed to the Board pamphlets and business cards for reference. Board members think it will be a good idea for Patricia to give a presentation at the Adult Activities Center. Board members discussed personal accounts of individuals who would qualify for these programs.

Patricia Tracey with the help of Cindy Birdsill, are working to apply for a grant through Wells Fargo and the US Mayors Association. In order to be nominated, a Mayor recommends you and you can put together a written program by March 15, you could qualify for funds to help repair and maintain community homes. Patricia and Pastor Carson from the Granada Presbyterian Church are focusing on the elderly and those who need their homes repaired. They are trying to mark about ten homes that would qualify and that would be a possible \$150,000 brought into the City to help with those homes.

Patricia gave additional information about the ELMORE program. And the hotline number is 1-800-601-3534 Monday through Friday 9am- 5pm. Letty will be relay information about the programs to the Board.

9. **Date and Time of Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held on **Monday, April 13, 2015** at **5:00 p.m.** in the Youth Center Conference room.

10. **Adjournment**

Nadejda Mishkovsky motioned for adjournment; Motion was passed unanimously by the Board. The meeting adjourned at 6:28 p.m.