

# City of Coral Gables

405 Biltmore Way  
Coral Gables, FL 33134  
[www.coralgables.com](http://www.coralgables.com)



## Meeting Minutes

Thursday, September 2, 2021

4:00 PM

The Board meets the first Thursday of each month.  
Adult Activity Center, 2 Andalusia Avenue, Coral Gables, FL 33134  
**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**

## **ROLL CALL**

### **a. Board Attendance and Excused Absences**

**Present:** 5 - Chairperson Berlin, Vice Chairperson Suarez, Board Member English, Board Member Sevillano and Board Member Thurer

**Absent:** 1 - Board Member Connelly

## **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

### **a. Approval of July Meeting Minutes**

A MOTION TO APPROVE THE JULY MINUTES WAS MADE BY RICHARD THURER, MOTION WAS SECOND BY CELIA SUAREZ. NO DISCUSSION, MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

## **COMMISSIONER APPEARANCE**

**a. Commissioner Menendez Meet & Greet with the Board**

Commissioner Menendez began the Meet & Greet by giving a brief history of his professional career and described his commitment to the City and becoming a Commissioner. The conversation continued with the Board prompting Commissioner Menendez with questions about his history with the city and why he decided to run for the position.

Vice Chair Celia Suarez briefly outlined to the commissioner on what the Senior Advisory Board hopes to accomplish while serving which included better health for seniors both physically and mentally and to remedy any issues that affect the Center and its patrons.

Commissioner Menendez offered some advice and encouraged the Board to pass formal resolutions on important items that greatly affect what the board stands for so that these items get attention by the Commission. Board Member Celia Suarez brought up the issue of Parking at the AAC as an example and was suggested by Commissioner Menendez to create a resolution.

During the discussion, Board member Richard Thurer requested that the Board be more involved with the City's hired lobbying firm and be able to communicate to them directly. Commissioner Menendez explained that he would be happy to take three areas of concern that affect the seniors of Coral Gables to the City's hired lobbying firm. He asked that staff and the board work together to compile these areas of concern.

Board member Richard Thurer showed the desire for the Board to have input in developments both city owned and privately owned that affect the senior population. This sentiment was brought forth after Richard had heard talk of a senior building being constructed. Staff member Mitch Zuriarrain believes the building that Richard was referring to is the proposed location to a newly constructed Mobility Hub that will replace an existing parking garage. Mitch quickly gave an overview of the proposed building and its function.

Commissioner Menendez has requested that the Community Recreation Director and staff share any progress on projects with the Senior Advisory Board as this board represents a very large segment of our population.

On behalf of the department, Mitch informed Commissioner Menendez and the Board that we will continue to share any updates or progress with the board, and we will keep all our advisory boards involved in the process on any projects that are being managed by our department. Regarding the proposed Mobility Hub, the Community Recreation department will only have design input with the buildout of the top deck which we hope will be a rooftop park space. Mitch also added if the Board would like updates or information on any of our park's projects, the Board can use our City webpage under Park Projects or email us at [ParksProjects@coralgables.com](mailto:ParksProjects@coralgables.com).

**SUPERVISOR'S REPORT**

**a. General Updates**

Assistant AAC Supervisor Manual Guerrero began his report by having a Senior Day event recap and thanked the Board for setting up a table at the event.

Commissioner Menendez brought up that he would love to see more events for our senior community and broadly asked the questions of how many seniors participate in city events and how many participate at the Adult Activity Center. He then broadly mentioned, how many seniors want to participate and don't have the information or means to do so. He would like to tap into those groups and have the Board aid in a outreach program that would help bring seniors that have become more isolated as they have become older to allow for them to become more social.

Jim Berlin agreed with Commissioner Menendez and stated that this was part of the board's strategic plan of working on visibility of the Adult Activity Center and the Senior Advisory Board.

Manual Guerrero continued his report by going over upcoming Fall programming. Programs include arts & crafts classes, barre intensity, language classes, support groups, and a new program called 'La Comunidad Eschucha Y Apoya' which is a Spanish support group to discuss everyday life issues.

September 25th and October 2nd they will have SHINE do a weekend series on Open Enrollment for Medicare.

The AAC will be offering hours during the month for seniors to register for the Miami Dade County special transit pass called the Golden Passport. This passport will allow seniors the ability to ride Transit free with a Golden Passport EASY Card for 20 years. Days to register will be every second and fourth Wednesday of the month.

The AAC will also become the temporary home for programming geared towards Adults with Special Needs. Mitch Zuriarrain spoke to the board about how the department has absorb the program from an outside group. Programming will be held on Wednesdays.

The AAC was used again by the Coral Gables Fire Department to administer the COVID vaccine booster shot. The shot was available for those that had initially done their vaccinations at the center.

A MOTION TO FORMALLY RECOGNIZE THE CORAL GABLES FIRE DEPARTMENT FOR THEIR EXCELLENT SERVICE AND KIND MANNER IN OFFERING THE VACCINE BOOSTER FOR THE COMMUNITY HOSTED AT THE ADULT ACTIVITY CENTER WAS MADE BY JULIAN SEVILLANO AND WAS SECOND BY CELIA SUAREZ. ALL IN FAVOR, MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

**b. Brain HQ Update**

The Brain HQ program was offered prior to the pandemic by Board member Julian Sevillano. The AAC staff would like to bring the program back to the Center. Julian gave a brief overview of how the program will work in conjunction with new technologies and new research. The program is tentatively scheduled for Fridays at 2:00 pm.

A MOTION IN SUPPORT OF BRINGING BACK THE BRAIN HQ PROGRAM TO THE ADULT ACTIVITY CENTER WAS MADE BY JULIAN SEVILLANO AND SECOND BY JIM BERLIN. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

A MOTION OF SUPPORT TO MAKE A PROPOSAL OFFERING BRAIN HQ TO THE POLICE AND FIRE DEPARTMENT WAS MADE BY JULIAN SEVILLANO AND SECOND BY CELIA SUAREZ. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

**NEW BUSINESS****a. Identify Organizations within Coral Gables to Advertise the SAB and it's Purpose**

Prior to Commissioner Menendez leaving the meeting, he shared a few examples of how the Senior Board could reach out to their community. Examples included to associate or partner with cutting edge services, reach out to the community members who are isolated and alone, and focus on getting the Center and programming up and running again. Commissioner Menendez also shared his desire to host a cinema event for seniors and asked the board for their support.

A MOTION TO SUPPORT COMMISSONER MENENDEZ'S EFFORTS TO ACTIVATE THE CORAL GABLES CINEMA FOR OUR SENIOR COMMUNITY WAS MADE BY JULIAN SEVILLANO AND SECOND BY JIM BERLIN. MOTION WAS PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

**OLD BUSINESS**

Board member Richard Thurer requested to know how far in the AARP application process staff was. Mitch Zuriarrain responded now that the entire Community Recreation department has been nationally accredited by the NRPA, we can continue with the AARP process to become an Age Friendly City. AAC Supervisor Katherine Anderson has already reached out to the AARP to continue the process and to receive any updated materials. The completion process could take anywhere from eight months to a year. Commissioner Menendez requested that the Board and his office receive a periodic update on the AARP application process.

**ITEMS FROM THE SECRETARY**

The next board meeting is scheduled for Thursday October 7th at 4:00pm at the Adult Activity Center.

**a. Board Member Vacancy**

Board Chair Jim Berlin asked that Commissioner Menendez recommend a potential board member that could be appointed by Commissioner Mena to complete the Senior Advisory Board.

**b. Meeting Minutes**

Board Chair Jim Berlin asked staff what the time frame on the approval of minutes was and how it was published. Mitch explained the process of minutes being entered in as a draft version until the Board can approve. There is also a digital copy of the meeting that is supplied as public record until minutes can be transcribed.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Adjourned at 5:30pm**

**NOTE**