

**COMMUNITY RELATIONS BOARD
MEETING MINUTES FROM
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2008**

Board Members Present

Barbara Bisno, Vice Chair
Mary Coombs
Roudy Thomas
Marjorie Weber
Teresa Zorrilla-Clark

Board Members Absent

Tonja Carter, Secretary
Helena Del Monte
Erie Rodriguez
Jennifer Vasquez
Haydee Wheeler, Chair

Guarav Sen, Student Member
Samantha Imbert, Student Member

Guests Present

Amy Carswell

Staff Present

Natasha Colebrook-Williams, Community Relations Outreach Specialist
Yarenis Diaz, Administrative Aide II

Barbara Bisno, Vice Chair, convened the meeting at approximately 6:58 P.M.

Natasha Colebrook-Williams did Roll Call of all Board members.

III. Items to be approved by the Board

A. APPROVING THE MINUTES OF:

The Board considered a motion to approve the minutes of the October 18, 2007 meeting, which resulted in the following vote:

The motion was made by Marjorie Weber, seconded by Mary Coombs, to approve the minutes, and was passed by the following vote:

Aye: Barbara Bisno, Mary Coombs, Roudy Thomas, Marjorie Weber, and Teresa Zorrilla-Clark

Nay: None

B. APPROVING OF THE NOMINATING SLATE:

The Board considered a motion to approve the Nominating Slate which resulted in the following vote:

The motion was made by Mary Coombs, seconded by Teresa Zorrilla-Clark, and was passed by the following vote:

Aye: Barbara Bisno, Mary Coombs, Roudy Thomas, Marjorie Weber, and Teresa Zorrilla-Clark

Nay: None

IV. Committee Reports

A. NOMINATING COMMITTEE

There are four vacancies on the Community Relations Board. The Nominating Committee met on February 11, 2008 and a list of the nominees was provided to the Board members. Upon approval of the Nominating Slate the nominations will be forwarded to the City Clerk.

B. PROGRAMS AND OUTREACH COMMITTEE

Barbara Bisno reported that the Programs and Outreach Committee has been working with the Little Haiti Neighborhood Enhancement Team (NET) regarding pre-foreclosure and foreclosure clinics. The clinics were taking place on Tuesdays at the Little Haiti NET office. However, because of low attendance, the clinics will take place at the Little Haiti NET by appointment only. In addition, the clinics will be offered at West Flagler on Saturdays, by appointment only.

Marjorie Weber also mentioned that Washington Mutual Bank will be providing foreclosure and lender trainings.

Barbara Bisno asked that Board members try to get involved with these clinics and trainings.

The Programs and Outreach Committee is also getting involved with anti-defamation programs in schools. Mrs. Bisno made mention to "Hate Comes Home Teen Training". This training was conducted at Miami Northwestern High School and had great success. In efforts to replicate this training, the Programs and Outreach Committee will be working with Booker T. Washington High School to implement the same training with their student body.

Mary Coombs mentioned implementing a similar training with the Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) at the high school as well as with the local GLSEN chapter to help create inter-group understanding among school children. Ms. Coombs said she would research more into the subject and provide the information to the Community Relations Coordinator.

Budget:

Yarenis Diaz briefed the Board on the budget expenses for the month of February. An inquiry by the Board was made for the three hundred eighty five dollars and ninety-nine cents (\$385.99) that was allocated to the Goodwill Ambassadors. These funds were used to provide food for the Goodwill Ambassadors during the Coconut Grove Arts Festival. The Board reminded staff that only when issues involving community events, as was the Coconut Grove Arts Festival, should Goodwill Ambassadors be activated. However, aside from the mission of the Community Relations Board, Goodwill Ambassadors should not be activated.

The Board considered a motion to activate Goodwill Ambassadors only when the event concurs with the mission of the Community Relations Board, which resulted in the following vote:

The motion was made by Mary Coombs, seconded by Barbara Bisno, and was passed by the following vote:

Aye: Barbara Bisno, Mary Coombs, Roudy Thomas, Marjorie Weber, and Teresa Zorrilla-Clark

Nay: None

The Board also requested that two separate budget reports be created, separating the Office of Community Relations' expenses and the Community Relations Board's expenses.

Natasha Colebrook-Williams explained the second page to the budget analysis, which included an estimate of the expenses incurred by GSA to print promotional materials for the United Nations Film Festival held in January. Mary Coombs questioned the amount of hours (2,507.08 hours) reported by GSA on the estimate analysis. Natasha Colebrook-Williams will contact GSA and ask for a 'rate per item' estimate. This item will be revisited at the next Programs and Outreach Committee meeting once the corrections have been made.

V. New Business

A. ELECTIONS FOR THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Because not all Board members were present, the elections was postponed to the next Board meeting. Teresa Zorrilla-Clark suggested that in the e-mail reminding Board members of the Board Meeting, included should be a statement letting members know that elections will take place and encouraging them to attend the meeting.

B. OCR/CRB PLAN IN RESPONSE TO THE DEATH OF CUBAN LEADER CASTRO

The plan pertaining to a response from the Office of Community Relations and the Community Relations Board, in the event of Cuban leader Fidel Castro's death, is out of date since the plan involves the use of the Orange Stadium, which is being disassembled. Barbara Bisno asked Board members to think of ideas that can replace the current plan so that these ideas can be discussed at the next Board meeting.

Amy Carswell suggested using a similar plan to that of the Miami-Dade Community Relations Board. Ms. Carswell will forward her plan to the Community Relations Coordinator so that the Board can review it at the next Board meeting.

C. WYNWOOD RESIDENTS HOLD A TOWN HALL MEETING ON LACK OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Barbara Bisno also asked Board members to think about Wynwood, an affordable housing project, and whether or not this is a project that the Community Relations Board will want to participate in. This subject will also be revisited at the next Board meeting.

V. Coordinator Report

The Coordinator Report was given to each Board member for them to review.

V. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:02PM