

**CITY OF MIAMI COMMUNITY RELATIONS BOARD
MINUTES FROM THURSDAY, JULY 16, 2009**

Board Members Present

Barbara Bisno, Chair
Mary Coombs, Secretary
Marlene Casar-Sanchez
Patricia Maldonado
Carlos Morales
Haydee Wheeler

Board Members Absent

Lyse Cuellar-Vidal
Anthony Jennings, Vice Chair
Schiller Jerome
Andres Lemos
Amada Vargas
Marjorie Weber
Teresa Zorrilla-Clark
Crystal Curry, Student Member
Dylan Giordano, Student Member

Guests Present

Jose Rodriguez

Staff Present

Ada Rojas, Community Relations Coordinator
Natasha Colebrook-Williams, Community Relations Outreach Specialist
Yarenis DeFalco, Administrative Aide II

I. Welcome and Call to Order

Barbara Bisno, Chair, convened the meeting at approximately 6:10P.M.

II. Roll Call

Ada Rojas did roll call of all Board members.

III. Items to be approved by the Board

A. Approval of minutes for the June Board meeting

Patricia Maldonado moved, seconded by Carlos Morales, that:

The Board approve the minutes of the June 18, 2009 meeting

The motion was passed by the following vote:

Aye: Barbara Bisno, Mary Coombs, Marlene Casar-Sanchez, Patricia Maldonado, Carlos Morales, and Haydee Wheeler

Nay: None

IV. Committee Reports

A. Programs & Community Outreach Committee

Liberty City Library

On Saturday, July 11, 2009, CRB members and OCR staff participated in the setup and opening of a new library in Liberty Square Community Center. The CRB donated a children's section that included two children's bookshelves filled with books, an area rug, and beanbag chairs.

Hispanic Heritage Event

Negotiations for the Hispanic heritage event are moving along. Natasha Colebrook-Williams is working with the Tower Theatre to secure a contract. In addition, a DVD of the proposed documentary, *Last Night in Cuba*, has been requested from the Institute for Cuban and Cuban American Studies. Mary Coombs reached out to Bacardi, Inc. requesting that they co-sponsor the reception, and will follow-up on the request. A pending item is the music, which if not secured will not be a problem, given the noise levels in the lobby of the theatre when there is a crowd.

Barbara Bisno stated that the expense to secure the Tower Theatre, \$327.00 to operate the building (the rental fee was waived), was going to come out of the 2008-2009 fiscal year budget. However, Pete Hernandez, the City Manager, sent out a memorandum on Thursday, July 16, 2009 freezing all purchases/expenses. Therefore, Ms. Bisno suggested that the CRB sign an agreement to be liable, but not issue payment this fiscal year.

Additional monies for this project include promotional items and refreshments. The Director of the Tower Theatre suggested that the CRB work with neighboring restaurants to provide the refreshments. Haydee Wheeler recommended that, since there is a purchasing freeze, the local restaurants set-up concessions and sell food items at a nominal cost. Nonetheless, since the liquor is being donated, OCR staff will look into soliciting additional sponsors. Carlos Morales offered to contact the Kiwanis Club, of which he is a member, to request that they consider sponsoring the food for this event.

Ada Rojas stated that she will write a memo to the City Manager asking that he approve the expenditures associated with this event, and express how it will positively impact the City and its residents.

CRB Traveling Film Program

WLRN will supply the CRB with the films that will be shown at the schools. As of now, the proposed locations for the project are the Art Design Institute, Miami-Dade College Wolfson Campus, Miami-Dade College Interamerican Campus, and Carrie P. Meek Entrepreneurial Education Center (MEEC), which is also part of Miami-Dade College. Miami-Dade College will secure dates once they know the name of the documentary so that they can tie it in with their Hispanic heritage month festivities. In addition, the CRB would like to propose to Judge Adrien that, as part of one of his B.A.M. meetings, the CRB showcase one of the documentaries and follow it with a discussion. The Carrie P. Meek Center has not yet been secured. Therefore, if Judge Adrien agrees, the project will not include the Meek Center.

Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs approved a grant toward this project. Office of Community Relations staff is working on some revisions to the agreement and setting up the account with the City's Finance Department.

Hate Comes Home

The Hate Comes Home workshop will take place at Miami Edison Senior High on Wednesday, September 23rd, 2009. Payment for this workshop has already been routed to the Finance Department.

In addition, the CRB is working with Miami Senior High School in order to schedule a Hate Comes Home workshop at their facility. Although there is a purchasing/spending freeze, the CRB will move forward on this project since the funds to sponsor the Miami Senior High workshop will most likely come out of the next fiscal year's budget.

ADL Miller Program

The CRB was working with the City's Parks & Recreation Department's childcare centers in order to provide them with ADL's Miller Early Childhood Educator workshop, which was being provided free of charge by ADL. However, Natasha Colebrook-Williams received an e-mail and a phone call from Philene Harte-Weiner from ADL, stating that she had received an e-mail from Christine Long, the Childcare Administrator for the Parks Department, withdrawing from the agreement. In her e-mail, Ms. Long stated that she was concerned about the financial hardship it would be to the City.

Ms. Harte-Weiner is trying to work with the Parks & Recreation Department to make adjustments to the size of the workshops, and to reassure them that they will not incur any costs. However, if they do not wish to move forward, the CRB will choose another childcare center within the City of Miami, such as the YWCA, Lincoln Marti, etc.

Immigration Reform

In preparation for a future trip to Washington, D.C., Miami-Dade County is having a meeting to discuss the items that they would like to lobby for. This first meeting is a planning meeting for a summit that will take place in late August or early September. Barbara Bisno proposed that the CRB co-sponsor the summit. The CRB would be able to contribute by publicizing the meeting to groups or by securing commitments of participation from individuals who are committed and knowledgeable on immigration practices.

Patricia Maldonado moved, seconded by Mary Coombs, that:

The Board would co-sponsor the summit, so long as the commitment does not require financial expenditures on behalf of the CRB

The motion was passed by the following vote:

Aye: Barbara Bisno, Mary Coombs, Marlene Casar-Sanchez, Patricia Maldonado, Carlos Morales, and Haydee Wheeler

Nay: None

HSC Neighborhood Leadership Project – Townpark Village in Overtown

The Townpark Village organization is moving forward with their ribbon cutting ceremony for their lighting project. The CRB had previously committed to providing the refreshments for this ceremony. However, in light of the spending freeze, the CRB may need to withdraw from their commitment. Haydee Wheeler suggested that a memo be drafted to the City Manager, which should include all of the projects the CRB had committed to, including Townpark Village, and ask that he consider granting permission to use funds toward those commitments.

B. Law Enforcement Committee

The Law Enforcement Committee does not meet until Tuesday, July 21, 2009. However, one item that was brought up is the 26th Annual National Night Out. Office of Community Relations staff will be present at this event, and Board members are also encouraged to attend.

C. Nominating Committee

Nominating slates were submitted to Commissioner Sanchez. Appointments are expected to be made during the September commission meeting.

In addition, any present CRB member who would like to be part of the Nominating Committee was asked to contact Ada Rojas. The Nominating Committee will meet in October to draft a nominating slate for executive officers of the CRB. The slate would then be voted on at either the November Board meeting or January Board meeting, since most likely there will not be a December meeting.

V. Coordinator Report

Budget Hearings

Ada Rojas stated that the City of Miami Budget Hearings were scheduled for September 10th and 24th, 2009. However, the hearings may take place during the month of August instead.

Job Basis Leave

Job Basis Leave (JBL) was previously granted, at the discretion of the department's director, to salaried employees that worked over 40 hours weekly, including weekends and/or holidays. However, JBL is no longer available; therefore, any additional time that is worked in excess of 40 hours will not be compensated. This includes the staff of the Office of Community Relations.

Budget

Patricia Maldonado inquired about the status of the proposed budget for the next fiscal year. Ada Rojas responded that a meeting was scheduled with the City Manager and department directors for Friday, July 24th, but that she was not sure what impact that meeting would have on the OCR. Ms. Rojas said that she has not yet heard from Michael Boudreaux as to any reductions and/or additions to the CRB budget.

Mary Coombs inquired if there was a budget that could be used to advocate for with the Mayor and Commissioners. Haydee Wheeler suggested using the proposed budget, which was drafted by OCR staff and CRB members and included the reduction of two proposed scenarios: a 10% reduction and a 15% reduction.

Barbara Bisno asked that Jenny De Falco e-mail the budget that was proposed to all CRB members and encouraged all board members to meet with their appointing commissioner or Mayor to lobby against any cuts.

Patricia Maldonado recommended that the Chair, Barbara Bisno, create a memo setting out the past accomplishments and future planned activities that Board members could use when meeting with their appointing commissioners.

VII. New Business

Staff Board Retreat

The Board Retreat Committee held a conference call on Thursday, July 16, 2009. During the conference call, members suggested that at the next committee meeting, each committee should brainstorm about the projects they would like to do during the next fiscal year. The projects would then be discussed during the September Board Retreat.

In addition, there will not be an ethics training at the 2009 retreat. Board members who have not taken the training can individually arrange to attend one of the already scheduled dates with the Ethics Commission or, if they wish, the OCR will seek to have a training scheduled for them during the normal Board meeting time and date in September.

VIII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:40P.M.