

**CITY OF MIAMI COMMUNITY RELATIONS BOARD
MINUTES FROM THURSDAY, JUNE 18, 2009**

Board Members Present

Barbara Bisno, Chair
Mary Coombs, Secretary
Schiller Jerome
Andres Lemos
Patricia Maldonado
Carlos Morales
Marjorie Weber
Dylan Giordano, Student Member

Board Members Absent

Lyse Cuellar-Vidal
Anthony Jennings, Vice Chair
Marlene Casar-Sanchez
Amada Vargas
Haydee Wheeler
Teresa Zorrilla-Clark
Crystal Curry, Student Member

Guests Present

Amy Carswell

Staff Present

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 6:05P.M.

II. Roll Call

Natasha Colebrook-Williams did roll call of all Board members.

III. Items to be approved by the Board

- A. Approval of minutes for the April Board meeting

Marjorie Weber moved, seconded by Schiller Jerome, that:

The Board approve the minutes of the May 21, 2009 meeting

The motion was passed by the following vote:

Aye: Barbara Bisno, Mary Coombs, Schiller Jerome, Andres Lemos, Patricia Maldonado, Carlos Morales, and Marjorie Weber

Nay: None

IV. Committee Reports

A. Law Enforcement Committee

Location of LE Committee

During the last Law Enforcement Committee meeting, the location of the meetings was discussed and Board members talked about the possibility of changing the meeting location to either housing projects and/or street corners. By changing the location to such a public setting, members of the community would be more aware of the meetings and would be more likely to attend.

Hot Spot Cards

Major Brown stated that the Hot Spot cards are very successful and that already there have been six arrests due to people turning in the cards. However, there is an issue with the 3-7 days it takes between an individual turning in a card and police receiving it, which delays the law enforcement. This is something that the Chair of the Hot Spot campaign will be reviewing.

Deputy Chief Fernandez also suggested altering the cards to include an anonymous phone number to call in tips directly to the Miami Police Department. This would be especially beneficial if it is an urgent matter. Another suggestion was to have the option of text messaging tips, which draws less attention to the individual reporting the criminal activity.

Barbara Bisno asked Schiller Jerome and Andres Lemos to attend the Hot Spot Committee meetings when possible.

Student Employment

William Porro, from the City's Economic Initiatives' Office, spoke at the LE Committee meeting about City of Miami summer employment opportunities that have been made available to young adults between 15 and 23 years old. The program is geared toward individuals who are underprivileged (i.e. low income, familial problems, etc.).

BTW Student Survey

Students from Booker T. Washington did a community survey of Overtown residents. One of the issues they inquired about was curfews. Most residents felt that if a curfew were enforced by parents, crime would be reduced. However, because many of the children come from single-family homes or have parents who work in the evenings, supervising

children at home during late hours is a challenge. In response to this problem, members of the Board suggested reaching out to community centers and parks about the possibility of either changing or extending the hours of operation during the summer months into the evening to see if this would provide an alternative to hanging out on the streets. It was requested that the law enforcement committee develop a proposal to be presented to the appropriate City of Miami officials.

B. Programs & Community Outreach Committee

Hate Comes Home

Board members Marjorie Weber and Barbara Bisno, and OCR staff Jenny De Falco, met with the administration of Miami Edison Senior High and proposed the “Hate Comes Home” workshop. Miami Edison has consented to the workshop, which will take place off campus on September 23, 2009. The CRB and the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) will co-sponsor the workshop.

Elevate Miami

Elevate Miami, an initiative of the City’s IT department, is providing computers at several City of Miami Parks. Comcast has agreed to provide free internet at these locations. This initiative is geared toward youths and senior citizens and focuses on making them more computer literate. The program is in the process of being extended to other locations such as local churches and community centers.

Elevate Miami asked the CRB to help raise awareness of the program. They also asked help in finding computer-literate students to serve as mentors for users of the computers, especially senior citizens. Student member Dylan Giordano suggested publicizing the program at MAST Academy, and member Mary Coombs suggested reaching out to other Miami-Dade County Public Schools, in order to recruit additional volunteers for the program.

Liberty Square Library

The Liberty Square Community Center book donation will take place on Saturday, July 11, 2009. The CRB is donating book shelves, a rug and books for pre-K to third graders dealing with issues of tolerance and diversity. Each book donated by the CRB will have a book plate indicating it was donated by the CRB. In addition, members can also privately donate additional books.

2010 MLK Day of Service

Board members received an e-mail invitation for the 2010 MLK Day of Service, which will take place on Saturday, January 16, 2010 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the historic Virginia Key Beach Park in collaboration with the University of Miami Hope Center. Board members were asked to save the date and to RSVP with OCR staff.

Hispanic Heritage Month

The Tower Theatre has been reserved for the CRB's Hispanic Heritage event, which is scheduled for Wednesday, October 21, 2009. The Institute for Cuban and Cuban American Studies at the University of Miami is donating the use of an art exhibit for the event. In addition, Mary Coombs is reaching out to Bacardi, Inc. to see if it will co-sponsor the reception. Other elements of the program that are being worked on are live entertainment and the selection of a documentary film that focuses on Hispanic heritage.

Neighborhood Leadership Project

The Neighborhood Leadership Project (NLP) for the street light installation in Townpark Village is at a halt. The community raised \$5,000 toward the project and was going to have \$5,000 donated by LISC. However, LISC is no longer providing these funds. CRB members were encouraged to reach out to any organization they believe can assist by providing funds. Amy Carswell, administrative staff from the Miami-Dade County CRB, requested the contact information for the lead person at the Human Services Coalition to see whether or not the county could be of assistance.

C. Nominating Committee

Commissioner Angel Gonzalez appointed Dr. Amada Vargas to the Board during the June 11th Commission meeting. In addition, Commissioner Regalado re-appointed Lyse Cuellar-Vidal; her appointment was approved by a 4/5 vote of the Commission.

Some CRB members, including the current Chair, will not be on the Board next year because of term limits. The Chair urged that the Nominating Committee present its slate in time for the November Board meeting, which will allow the new leadership time for a smooth transition. Board members were asked to contact Natasha Colebrook-Williams if they were interested in joining the Nominating Committee.

V. New Business

2009 Board Retreat

A new Board Retreat Committee was formed to include Patricia Maldonado as Chair of the committee, and Barbara Bisno, Schiller Jerome, and Andres Lemos as the committee members. The retreat will take place in September.

August Board Meeting

The Board discussed whether or not to meet during the month of August 2009, which resulted in the following vote:

Mary Coombs moved, seconded by Marjorie Weber, that:

Unless there is an emergency, the Board should not hold a meeting during the month of August.

The motion was passed by the following vote:

Aye: Barbara Bisno, Mary Coombs, Andres Lemos, Patricia Maldonado, Carlos Morales, and Marjorie Weber

Nay: None

Budget Meetings

Barbara Bisno and Haydee Wheeler, along with the staff of the OCR, met with the Budget Department on June 2nd, 2009. During the meeting, it was suggested that the OCR not reduce or reallocate any current funds, but instead to request additional funds as felt necessary. Therefore, \$10,000 in additional funds was requested for Operating Supplies.

GWA Recognition Dinner

On Wednesday, June 17th, the Office of Community Relations held a recognition dinner for the Goodwill Ambassadors. Several Board members attended. During the evening's presentation, several Commissioners and City officials said how pleased and impressed they were with the work of the Community Relations Board.

Immigration Summit

Amy Carswell stated that a planning meeting for an immigration summit is in the works. Both the meeting to plan the summit and the summit will probably take place in July.

Round Table Discussion

A round table discussion is being organized by the Miami-Dade County CRB to discuss the issues of disabled individuals. The meeting is also an opportunity to educate individuals on the issues and priorities of disabled citizens.

VII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 pm.