

**COMMUNITY RELATIONS BOARD
MEETING MINUTES FROM
THURSDAY, JUNE 19, 2008**

Board Members Present

Barbara Bisno, Chair
Lyse Cuellar
Marjorie Weber
Anthony Jennings
Patricia Maldonado
Milton Pizarro

Board Members Absent

Joyce Sanz-Perez
Mary Coombs, Secretary
Roudy Thomas, Vice Chair
Haydee Wheeler
Teresa Zorrilla-Clark

I. Welcome and Call to Order

Barbara Bisno, Chair, convened the meeting at approximately 6:05P.M.

II. Roll Call

Barbara Bisno did roll call of all Board members since Office of Community Relations Staff was not present due to the Conference of Mayors.

III. Items to be approved by the Board

A. Approving the minutes of February, April, and May 2008 Board meetings

The approval of the February and April minutes were deferred to the July Board meeting. This decision was made due to the fact that the majority of the Board members that attended the February and April meetings were not present to review the minutes prior to them being approved.

Lyse Cuellar moved, seconded by Anthony Jennings, that:

The Board approve the minutes for the May 15, 2008 Board meeting

The motion passed by the following vote:

Aye: Barbara Bisno, Lyse Cuellar, Marjorie Weber, Anthony Jennings, Patricia Maldonado, and Milton Pizarro

Nay: None

IV. Committee Reports

A. Programs & Community Outreach Committee

I. Foreclosure Prevention

Marjorie Weber briefed new Board members on how the Community Relations Board has been involved in foreclosure prevention, including foreclosure clinics, train-the-trainer workshops, etc. Ms. Weber explained how the workshops operate and what they consist of, and also explained other works the Community Relations Board has been a part of with respect to foreclosure prevention.

II. ADL Educational Workshops, MCCJ, & Grants

Barbara Bisno informed new Board members that the Community Relations Board had been looking into implementing a program in order to diminish tension in regard to ethnic, racial, sexual preference, religion, and/or other differences in schools. Mrs. Bisno informed new Board members that the CRB has teamed up with ADL (Anti-Defamation League) in order to implement some of their workshops at two schools in the City of Miami, sponsored by the Community Relations Board. Mrs. Bisno went on to explain how ADL operates the workshops at the schools.

Contact has also been made with the Miami Coalition of Christians and Jews (MCCJ). They operate similar workshops to that of ADL at schools; however the main difference is that the MCCJ trains the students to form a panel. This panel of students would then identify their school's issues and moves on to further discuss and identify solutions.

Barbara Bisno also explained that, because the workshops are so expensive, members of the Board (Haydee Wheeler and Barbara Bisno) have spoken with the City of Miami Grants Administration to try to obtain a grant for such workshops at the schools. There is a meeting scheduled for July 9, 2008 with ADL, City of Miami Grants Administration, and the CRB to discuss the potential of a grant. Barbara Bisno mentioned that she would like to invite the MCCJ to this meeting.

III. MLK Day of Service

This past January, the CRB joined Service for Peace for a MLK Day of Service. There is a meeting scheduled for June 27, 2008 that Mary Coombs and Barbara Bisno will be attending on behalf of the CRB to learn of the projects that are being proposed for next year's MLK Day of Service. The findings will be discussed at the next Programs and Community Outreach Committee meeting, then at the next Board meeting.

B. Law Enforcement Committee

I. Meeting dates & Times

Barbara Bisno will confirm the date and time for the Law Enforcement Committee meetings with Ada Rojas.

C. Nominating Committee

I. Nominations

The Community Relations Board only has two vacancies under Commissioner Angel Gonzalez at this point in time. Lyse Cuellar mentioned she had already spoken with Commissioner Gonzalez in regard to new appointments and the response from the Commissioner was that new appointments will be made.

V. Old Business

A. Community Relations Board Retreat

The Community Relations Board retreat has been held at different hotels in past years, however this year it is going to be held at Simpson Park on Saturday, September 27, 2008. The retreat is an opportunity for Board members to talk about the mission of the CRB and discuss what projects the CRB should participate in the future.

B. Immigration/Haitian Project

Marjorie Weber reported that last year, the County CRB put together a group that traveled to Washington, D.C. to approach congressmen, legislators, etc. to address immigration issues. Again this year, the County CRB gathered a small group, included were Barbara Bisno and Marjorie Weber. This group traveled to Washington, D.C. once more, but this time they addressed the issue of Haitian TPS and the Jubilee Act. The group attempted to get congressmen to approve TPS for Haitians, which will in turn benefit and protect the Haitians in our community. They also focused on the Jubilee Act. This Act requests that debts owed by Haiti be forgiven so that additional funding can be provided to economic improvement in Haiti. Because of high debts, Haiti cannot raise capital to change the social structure of the country.

Barbara Bisno and Marjorie Weber represented not only the CRB, but also the Anglo population. Along with them were many African Americans, Haitian Americans, and Latinos, who together formed a coalition. They visited many different congressional offices to try to get attention from congressmen, but their efforts were unsuccessful.

Back in Miami, a Summit meeting was scheduled between local activists. The meeting focused on the short-term (food & living standards in Haiti) and long-term (overall improvement in Haiti's economy) problems in Haiti. As a temporary solution, a container being filled with food, clothes, school supplies, etc. is being shipped to Haiti in June. A second container will be shipped in September.

VI. New Business

A. CRB 2008-2009 Budget

Barbara Bisno presented the proposed budget cuts to the Board. The Community Relations Board was asked to reduce their budget by \$23, 699. The proposed cuts made to the Operating Budget totaled \$10,316. Mrs. Bisno explained that the difference may have to be taken from the Office of Community Relations staff members' salaries, by possibly reclassifying a position and reducing the salary.

Mrs. Bisno explained that she met with the City Manager and Gilbert Cabrera in regard to the budget. Mrs. Bisno explained to them that most Community Relations projects are done with lots of donations from partnering groups. She also mentioned that a large percentage of the CRB budget is being spent on special assignments from the City Manager, i.e. Goodwill Ambassadors events.

B. Citizen Police Academy

The Citizen Police Academy has asked the CRB to do a small presentation at one of their classes. The Citizen Police Academy is a way for citizens to become familiar with police department, see how it is structured, and how it operates. Additional information as to how to sign up will be provided at the July board meeting.

C. Committee Assignments & Responsibilities

I. Programs & Community Outreach Committee

The Programs & Community Outreach Committee meetings, from now on, will be held on the fourth Wednesday of every month at 12pm.

II. Law Enforcement Committee

The Law Enforcement Committee will meet in the evenings. The day of the week has not yet been determined.

D. CRB Calendar 2008-2009

The Community Relations Board has scheduled two ADL workshops at local schools during the month of September. In addition to that, next January the CRB will also participate in the MLK Day of Service.

At the July Board meeting, the CRB will discuss what additional projects the CRB would like to participate in and start working on the planning of the events. For example, the UNA Film Festival usually takes place in October. If the CRB is interested in participating, communications need to start with Temple Israel and UNA.

E. August CRB Meeting- Consider Canceling

Anthony Jennings moved, seconded by Lyse Cuellar, that:

The Board cancels the August CRB Meeting

The motion passed by the following vote:

Aye: Barbara Bisno, Lyse Cuellar, Marjorie Weber, Anthony Jennings, Patricia Maldonado, and Milton Pizarro

Nay: None

The Ethics training will be available on the regularly scheduled meeting date (August 21, 2008 at 6pm) for Board members that would like to attend, instead of attending during the day.

F. September CRB Meeting- Training

The Board retreat is scheduled for the fourth Saturday of September, and the regularly scheduled Board meeting would be the week prior. Therefore it was suggested that the September Board meeting be cancelled, and to hold the ethics training during the Board retreat. OCR staff will contact the Ethics Commission to inquire if the ethics training can be held at the retreat. This will be further discussed at the July Board meeting.

VII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:30PM