

**CITY OF MIAMI COMMUNITY RELATIONS BOARD  
MINUTES FROM THURSDAY, MARCH 19, 2009**

**Board Members Present**

Barbara Bisno, Chair  
Lyse Cuellar  
Anthony Jennings  
Carlos Morales  
Marjorie Weber  
Crystal Curry, CRB Student Member

**Board Members Absent**

Mary Coombs, Secretary  
Patricia Maldonado  
Milton Pizarro  
Marlene Sanchez  
Haydee Wheeler  
Teresa Zorrilla-Clark  
Dylan Gordano, CRB Student Member

**Guests Present**

Danielle King, Booker T. Washington Sr. High  
Chinelo Fleary, Booker T. Washington Sr. High  
Kechi Okpala, Virginia Key Beach Park

**Staff Present**

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

**I. Welcome and Call to Order**

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

**Anthony Jennings moved, seconded by Lyse Cuellar, that:**

*The Board approve the minutes of the January 15, 2009 meeting*

**The motion was passed by the following vote:**

**Aye:** Barbara Bisno, Lyse Cuellar, Anthony Jennings, Carlos Morales, and Marjorie Weber

**Nay:** None

#### **IV. Committee Reports**

##### A. Programs & Community Outreach Committee

###### *Neighborhood Leadership Project*

During the last Programs & Community Outreach Committee meeting, the possibility of partnering with the Human Services Coalition's (HSC) Neighborhood Leadership Project (NLP) was discussed. The NLP works with different communities within the City of Miami on community improvement projects. For example, the Townpark in Overtown is working on a project to improve street lighting.

The commitment of the Board would involve working with Human Services Coalition on different projects as it relates to the community without having to bring each project before the Board. Every project would be discussed at committee level prior to moving forward.

On March 21, the Neighborhood Leadership Project will hold their planning retreat to discuss future projects. Patricia Maldonado will attend on behalf of the Board.

**Marjorie Weber moved, seconded by Carlos Morales, that:**

*The Board partner with the Human Services Coalition on the Neighborhood Leadership Project*

**The motion was passed by the following vote:**

**Aye:** Barbara Bisno, Lyse Cuellar, Anthony Jennings, Carlos Morales, and Marjorie Weber

**Nay:** None

###### *CRB Traveling Film Program Grant*

Through the Programs and Community Outreach committee and with the assistance of the City of Miami Grants Department, a grant proposal was submitted to Miami-Dade County Cultural Affairs Department requesting funding for the CRB Traveling Film Program.

The concept includes the CRB selecting films/documentaries that address community relations issues and showing them at higher learning institutions within the City of Miami. The film will be followed by dialogue including representation by the Board, community activists concerned with issues presented in the film, and at least one person who was artistically involved in the film.

During Black History month, the same approach was taken. Patricia Maldonado made arrangements with Miami-Dade College, Wolfson Campus, to show the documentary *Muhammad Ali: Made in Miami*, which was followed by a discussion, facilitated by Dr. Gaspar Gonzalez, one of the film's producers, Dr. Marvin Dunn, historian, and CRB members.

Regardless of whether funding is received or not, the CRB will move forward with this program. However, if funding is received, it will enable the CRB to provide a stipend for guest speakers.

In addition, WLRN has agreed to be a collaborating partner, and has granted the CRB / Office of Community Relations the right to use documentaries produced by WLRN at no charge and has provided a list of recommended documentaries. The Human Services Coalition was agreed to assist with promoting the events.

Due to the grant requirements, the program would have to be implemented during the month of September; therefore the CRB/OCR should start working on securing the dates at the colleges soon.

Anthony Jennings agreed with work with Patricia Maldonado and Natasha Colebrook-Williams on the CRB Traveling Film Program.

### *Roots in the City Gardens*

Marjorie Weber commented on a meeting that took place at Temple Israel in regard to Dr. Marvin Dunn's organization *Roots in the City*. The meeting focused on getting faith-based groups to sponsor gardens. Ms. Weber was able to get a commitment from the Miami Beach Botanical Garden, who has agreed to participate on all of the events.

Anthony Jennings agreed to donate the use of a lot he owns, located on 9<sup>th</sup> Street and 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, to be used for gardens.

### *Becoming a Man (B.A.M.)*

Anthony Jennings mentioned that the Becoming a Man (B.A.M.) program's kick-off event will take place on Saturday, March 28, 2009 from 10am-12pm at the Joseph Caleb Center. Board members are encouraged to attend the event.

Lyse Cuellar stated that she would inform the judges at the courthouse she works at about the program and perhaps they would be interested in offering B.A.M. as an option for offenders.

#### B. Law Enforcement Committee

Barbara Bisno spoke about the lack of member attendance at the Law Enforcement Committee meetings, which has caused for LE committee meetings to be cancelled. Ms. Bisno emphasized the importance of commitment from CRB members, especially on projects such as the Hot Spot Campaign.

### V. New Business

#### A. Hot Spot Campaign

The Hot Spot cards were implemented to allow residents to report crime anonymously. To better understand the program, Barbara Bisno and Ada Rojas met with Barbara Pruitt, who heads the Hot Spot campaign, to learn how the Hot Spot program works. Through the meeting it became evident that there were no records of the outcome of the cards, due to the fact that PULSE, the organization that receives them, is underfunded and understaffed. A future meeting is being scheduled with Commissioner Spence-Jones, Miami Police, the State Attorney's Office, and residents of the Overtown and Liberty City communities to further discuss how the Hot Spot cards should be handled.

#### B. S.P.I.R.I.T.

Barbara Bisno and Ada Rojas attended a program sponsored by the Department of Justice called S.P.I.R.I.T. The program focuses on high school students coming together to discuss what their problems are and how these problems can be resolved.

Through the workshop the topic of snitching came up. Most students are not willing to snitch because they feel it is not their concern and because of fear. Crystal Curry, CRB student member, agreed that most individuals would not be willing to snitch because they fear they will not remain anonymous, and somehow someone would find out.

Carlos Morales mentioned that although the Hot Spot cards are a great way to report criminal activity, the challenge is in how they are distributed that is not effective. Hot Spot cards can be picked up from neighborhood stores and other locations. The issue that arises is that the person who picks up a card will be labeled as a snitch. If the cards were distributed as a mass mail out, every resident would have the opportunity to fill them out without needing to worry that someone will see them picking up a card. Everyone will have access to them from the privacy of their home.

### C. Newsletter

A draft of the spring newsletter was distributed to Board members. The March of Dimes organization contacted the Office of Community Relations to advertise their March for Babies walk in the CRB newsletter, which has been included in the spring newsletter. Board members asked that March for Babies article be shortened since it is not taking place within the City limits, and to include a piece on B.A.M. and on the FISY Festival that will be taking place in April.

### **VIII. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:25P.M.