OFFICE OF COMMUNITY ADVOCACY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
ASIAN AMERICAN ADVISORY BOARD

Miami-Dade County
Asian American
Advisory Board

MINUTES, Monthly Board Meeting
6:00 P.M., Tuesday, January 13, 2026
Stephen P. Clark Center, 18-3 Conference Room, Miami, FL 33128
Ref: 1-13-2026

Present: Luna Adachi; Hoda Askari; Vinita Chakravarty; Sadrul Fasihi; Eugene Fu; Josephine Gordy; Li Gurau; Taylor Haas; Samira Khan; Smita Kulkarni; Anjana Mishra; Luke Keisuke Nakano; Subbarayan Pochi; Adrianne Aiko Thompson; Stephen Lian Thang; Mehmet Ulutas; Tai Vaz; Nick Vicera; Jim Yu; Preeya Disyanan (ITC)

Excused: Jose Keichi Fuentes; Ellis Keeter

Absent:

Staff: Joshua Ho; Cedric Brazle

Guest: Deputy Sheriff John Leon; Hassim Ali; Naoko Komura; Mieko Avello; Tina Cordon

At 6:15 PM., Ms. Tai Vaz, Immediate Past Chairwoman, called the meeting to order; she welcomed the members and guests.
Ms. Vaz asked the Program Director to verify the quorum. Quorum was established.

MINUTES: Ms. Vaz asked the members to review the Minutes for November 2025 and requested a motion to approve the Minutes. Ms. Taylor Haas moved to approve the November Minutes, Ms. Josephine Gordy seconded, the Board unanimously approved the November Minutes.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:
Mr. Joshua Ho welcomed the Board and the guests to the new year and thanked all for attending AAAB January General Board meeting. He congratulated the board for another year of working tirelessly for our communities and encouraged them to continue the journey for the year 2026. He thanked Ms. Sharon Fine, Past AAAB Chairwoman, for serving on the Asian American Advisory Board – who decided to step down from AAAB due to increased work and family commitment.
Mr. Ho introduced the 2025 -2026 Miami-Dade County Asian American Advisory Board Executive Committee Members and thanked them in advance for their dedication, sacrifice and leadership for our communities:

Mr. Jose Keichi Fuentes, Chairman
Ms. Luna Adachi, 1st Vice Chairwoman
Ms. Josephine Gordy, 2nd Vice Chairwoman
Mr. Ellis Keeter, 3rd Vice Chairman
Ms. Phonethip Tai Vaz, Immediate Past Chairwoman

Additionally, he congratulated Dr. Adrianne Aiko Thompson for being appointed to the Japan American Leadership Delegation.
Congratulations to Mayor Eileen Higgins, City of Miami (Former Miami-Dade County Commissioner, District 5) & newly appointed City Manager James Reyes, Former Miami-Dade County Chief of Public Safety.

Important Updates:
30th Anniversary Gala: County Attorney needs to review the contract first before the BCC Chairman or the Chairman's designee signs the contract. And entire amount of the funds to pay for an event needs to be in place before the contract can be signed. So no more paying the deposit to the hotel/venue and then raising money to pay for the balance due or depending on ticket sales to help pay for the balance due. This is because if the board does not have the money to cover the balance due, then the County is responsible for that balance per the contract.

Effective Monday, August 15th, 2025: Board Member Nominees will no longer be required to submit a notarized Oath of Office as a condition of their appointment; Board members who are currently pending due to the outstanding Oath requirement will be placed on their respective boards; and Financial Disclosure, Sexual Harassment Prevention Training, and Ethics Training will still be required of appointees, pursuant to Sec. 2-11.38, R-355-18, and R-189-05 respectively.

Ordinance relating to advice and County Attorney policy recommendations made by County Advisory Boards; creating section 2-11.39.4 of the Code; requiring approval by Board of County Commissioners of advice and policy recommendations made by County Advisory Boards, task forces and citizens' advisory groups prior to implementation thereof.

Commissioner Natalie Milian Orbis, District 6, Prime Sponsor, Commissioner Danielle Cohen Higgins, District 8, Co-sponsor, the revision of the Attendance Requirements and Provide Removal of Absentee Members (Asian American Advisory Board, Elders Affairs Advisory Board, Hispanic Affairs Advisory Board, and LGBTQIA+ Advisory Board:

> *Notwithstanding any other provision of the Code of Miami-Dade County, a board member shall be automatically removed if, in a given County fiscal year the member is absent from three consecutive meetings or a total of four board meeting, irrespective of the reasons for the absences. If a member fails to comply with such attendance requirements or voluntarily resigns, the member shall forfeit their membership on the board. A member shall be considered absent from a meeting if the member is not physically present for at least 75 percent of the meeting's duration. A member shall also be considered absent from a meeting if the member refrains from voting on any matter for which voting is conducted at the meeting, unless the member is prevented from voting by a conflict of interest. The provisions of the Miami-Dade County Conflict of Interest and Code of Ethics Ordinance, as may be amended, are applicable to this board.*

County Ethics Code would prohibit AAAB board member from seeking a benefit for their own nonprofit or the nonprofits with which there are employed or are a board member. Namely, Section 2-11.1(g) of the County Ethics Code prohibits board members from using their official position to secure special privileges or exemptions for themselves or others. This would mean that board members could not use their board position to donate to their nonprofit, promote an event, or seek any benefit on behalf of a third party. Additionally, Section 2-11.1(m)(2) of the County Ethics Code, prohibits a County board member either directly or through an associate, from appearing before the County board that he/she serves to make a presentation or seek a benefit on behalf of a third party. Thus, a board member directly seeking a benefit for a third party whether through themselves or by another member of their organization appearing before the board to seek a benefit would also be prohibited.

He reminded the Board to update their calendar for 2026 AAAB General Board Meetings and stressed having a quorum as it is very important for our communities. He informed the Board that he is currently working on reappointments and appointments to AAAB and the board members' patience is very welcome and appreciated.

2024 Source of Income Statement needs to be completed asap as the deadline July 1, 2025 has passed: Email completed form to: financial.disclosure@miamidade.gov , Nilda.Olmo@miamidade.gov , Franklin.Castro@miamidadeclerk.gov and copy hjoshua@miamiidade.gov. He once again encouraged the Board members to sign up for any of the three Board committees, after careful consideration of time and dedication, to actively engage our communities: Cultural Advancement Committee, Education/Civic Engagement Committee, and Economic Development Committee. Additionally, to inform any events and activities that we may as a board member can support and promote Asian American communities.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS:

SPECIAL PRESENTATION:
Partnering with Miami-Dade Public Library System for Asian Culture Series: Athanasia Fitos, Library Operations Manager, Community Engagement & Gina Menge, Community Engagement Coordinator

- Invitation: 2026 Local Author BOOK FAIR
  - Saturday, January 24, 2026, 11AM – 5PM
  - Main Library, 101 W. Flagler Street

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

CURRENT BUSINESS:

- Congratulations to the following AAAB 2025-2026 Executive Board Members:
  - Chairperson – Mr. Jose Keichi Fuentes
  - 1st Vice Chairperson – Ms. Luna Adachi
  - 2nd Vice Chairperson – Ms. Josephine Gordy
  - 3rd Vice Chairperson – Mr. Ellis Keeter
  - Immediate Past Chairwoman – Ms. Phonethip Tai Vaz

- **Updates from Miami-Dade Sheriff Office – Deputy Sheriff John Leon**
  - Preparing for the following events in Miami-Dade County
    - CFP Championship: Miami vs Indiana (Jan. 19th)
    - Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day (Jan. 19th)
  - Current Events
  - Immigration

- **Asian Culture Series**
  - South Korea
    - Saturday, February 28th, 2PM – 5PM
    - MDPL Coral Gables Regional Library
  - Japan
    - Wednesday, February 25th, 9:30AM-2PM
    - FIU, Modesto Maidique Campus
  - Pakistan
    - MDPL Pinecrest Regional Library

NEW BUSINESS (DISCUSSION ITEMS):

- **AAAB Logo Study –** Taylor Haas proposed a logo study for the Board to reflect different Asian representations. Ms. Vaz requested a motion to approve for the logo study. Dr. Adrianne Thompson moved

to approve the proposal for the logo study, Dr. Li Gurau seconded, the Board unanimously approved for the logo study for Asian American Advisory Board.

- **Name Badges for AAAB Members**
  - Request for Payment of $193.70 from the AAAB Trust Fund to Archie's Awards by Connie for AAAB Name Badges.
  - Ms. Vaz requested a motion to approve the $193.70 from the AAAB Trust Fund to Archie's Awards by Connie for AAAB Name Badges. Ms. Taylor Haas moved to approve the payment, Mr. Mehmet Ulutas seconded, the Board unanimously approved for the payment of $193.70 from the AAAB Trust Fund to Archie's Awards by Connie for AAAB Name Badges
- **Sponsorship Request:** Japan Immersion Day at Florida International University with Japan Language Program, $300
  - Wednesday, February 25th, 9:30AM – 2PM
  - Modesto Maidique Campus (11200 S.W. 8th Street, Miami)
  - This will reflect as part of Asian Culture Series representing Japan
  - Ms. Vaz requested a motion to approve the $300 sponsorship for Japan Immersion Day at FIU from the AAAB Trust Fund. Dr. Adrianne Thompson moved to approve the sponsorship, Mr. Mehmet Ulutas seconded, the Board unanimously approved for $300 sponsorship for Japan Immersion Day at FIU from the AAAB Trust Fund

- **Funding for Asian Culture Series**: The Board deferred to the next meeting with the information of AAAB Trust Fund balance.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

AAAB Executive Committee – Jose Keichi Fuentes, Chairman

AAAB Cultural Advancement Committee – Li Gurau, Chairwoman

- Lunar New Yer Celebration with City of North Miami Beach Library
  - Senator Gwen Margolis Amphitheater; 1601 NE 164th Street, NMB; 1PM – 4PM; Free Event
- 35th Annual Asian Culture Festival, Tropical Park
  - Date Change: TBD
  - Requesting talent representations from additional Asian nations and States with possible funding
- Asian Cultural Series Sub-committee: Chair: Tai Vaz
  - February – South Korea, Japan
  - Pakistan, Iran, Philippines, Myanmar, Taiwan, Türkiye, Cambodia, Bangladesh, Israel, Chinese-Jamaican

AAAB Economic Development Committee – Sharon Fine, Chairwoman

- Report: MDC International Trade Consortium – Preeya Disyanan, ITC Board Member

AAAB Education/Civic Engagement Committee - Tai Vaz, Chairwoman

- Health/Wellness Sub-committee: Chair: Sadrul Fasihi
  - UMC Free Clinic Appreciation Gala: Saturday, April 18th
    - City of North Miami Beach
    - Tickets: $50

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Calendar of Events:

- January 14, Wednesday: Miami Dade College's Miami Film Festival: Screening of Kokuho, Japan's official submission to the Oscars; Miami-Dade College's Koubek Center (2705 SW 3rd Street, Miami); https://miamifilmfestival.com/program/event/kokuho/
- January 15, Thursday: An Interfaith Talk on the Abraham Accords and Peace in the Middle East, featuring a distinguished panel from the NGO Sharaka—representing Israel, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, and Morocco; Miami Dade College – Wolfson Campus; 11AM-1PM; Free Event
- January 17, Saturday: Let's Go To China! From the Great Wall to the Yellow River; University of Miami, Frost School of Music; UM Gusman Convert Hall, 1314 Miller Drive, Coral Gables; Tickets https://urldefense.com/v3/__https://bit.ly/48wJakN__;!!KVu0SnhVq1hAFvslES2Y!IKquExJ6_elAHR8xVqL2gXjpjyEYFrppMyDZJYMRX2MUAX3PJwPX1uLbAaxs9J5TFl3nvSWMR-0zGxy6VT7kji_5XAs$ (4 tickets $30 with our Family Bundle)
- January 24, Saturday: 2026 Local Author Book Fair, Celebrating & Supporting Our Literacy Community; Main Library, 101 West Flagler Street, Downtown Miami; 11AM-5PM; Free Event
- January 25, Sunday: Chinese Cultural Association Annual Fish Fry and Picnic; Tropical Park; Pavilion 1; $20PP; Sold Out
- January 28, Wednesday: State of the County Address, Mayor Daniella Levine Cava; Florida Memorial University's; Lou Rawls Center for Performing Arts; 15800 NW 42nd Avenue; Miami Gardens, 6PM -8PM; RSVP https://feedback.miamidade.gov/jfe/form/SV_77KrIteEFE7mi1g?EmailAddress=hjoshua@miamidade.gov
- January 31, Saturday: COSMOS Annual Community Appreciation Dinner; Hilton Miami Airport-5101 Blue Lagoon Road, Miami; 5:30PM; For Information – Shabbir Motorwala 305-283-2261 shmotorwala@gmail.com
- January 31, Saturday: Gift of Sight – Creating Bright Futures – Inaugural Fundraising Gala Night; Illuminate Venue, 5100 N Nob Hill Road, Sunrise; $150 Individual / $250 Couple; www.giftofeyesight.org
- February 7, Saturday: Lunar New Yer Celebration with City of North Miami Beach Library; Senator Gwen Margolis Amphitheater; 1601 NE 164th Street, NMB; 1PM – 4PM; Free Event
- February 7, Saturday: Overseas Chinese Spring Festival Gala; Julius Littman Performing Arts Theater, 17011 NE 19th Avenue, North Miami Beach; 6:30PM -10PM
- February 15, Sunday: Lunar New Year Celebration Hosted by the Chinese Association of Science, Education and Culture of South Florida (CASEC); Miramar Cultural Center, 2400 Civic Center Pl, Miramar; 5:30PM -8:30PM; Free Event
- February 20, Friday: University of Miami Lunar New Year Festival; UM Lakeside Patio and Stage; 6PM-10PM; Free Event
- February 21, Saturday: Florida International University Lunar New Year Celebration; FIU Graham University Center; 3PM-7PM; Free Event
- February 25, Wednesday: Japan Immersion Day at Florida International University; FIU Modesto Maidique Campus; 9:30AM-2PM; Free Event
- February 28, Saturday: Asian Culture Series – South Korea; MDPL Coral Gables Regional Library; 2PM-5PM; Free Event

- Sundays (Until Mid-March): Sunday Ballroom Dancing "Thai Style" led by Ms. Kai Whitcomb; Thai Temple Miami (Wat Buddharangsi), 15200 SW 240th Street, Homestead; Noon-2PM; Free
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- Sundays: Sunday Thai Kitchen; Thai Temple Miami (Wat Buddharangsi), 15200 SW 240th Street, Homestead; 10:30AM-2PM; Free Admission, Cash or Credit Card for Purchase
- Sundays: ACE Talk Radio Show with Winnie Tang, Josephine Gordy & Joshua Ho on WAVS 1170AM & 107.9 FM, Sunday evening from 9PM – 10PM www.ACE-Talk.com
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Adjournment: At 7:40PM, Dr. Adrianne Thompson moved to adjourn; Dr. Jim Yu seconded; Board unanimously approved to adjourn.

Next Board Meeting: Tuesday, February 10, 2026 at 6PM – SPCC 18-4 Conference Room