

CLERK'S SUMMARY AND OFFICIAL MINUTES
COMMUNITY RELATIONS BOARD
October 16, 2024

The Community Relations Board (CRB) convened its monthly meeting on October 16, 2024, at 2:06 p.m., in the Stephen P. Clark Government Center, 111 NW First Street, 18th Floor, Room 18-4, Miami, Florida.

CRB Members Present: First Vice Chair Eddy Gervais, Ms. Egglis Cepero, Ms. Marie Jean-Pharuns, Ms. Jenni Person, Mr. Joseph Salzverg, Mr. Joshua Sayles, and Ms. Marjorie York.

CRB Members Absent: Chairman Rene Diaz, Ms. Juliette Fabien, Mr. Ervens Ford, Mr. Benjamin Greenberg, Mr. Gabriel Paez, Ms. Gizelle Ortiz-Velasquez, and Ms. Yuleisy Mena

Staff Members Present: Ms. Griselle Marino, Communications and Media Director of the Office of Community Advocacy (OCA), Ms. Shirley Plantin, OCA's Program Officer, and Ms. Flora Garcia, Commission Reporter, Clerk of the Board (COB), Miami-Dade County Clerk of Court and Comptroller.

❖ **WELCOME – Rene Diaz, Board Chair – *Presented***

First Vice Chair Eddie Gervais called the meeting to order at 2:06 p.m. and chaired the meeting on behalf of Chairman Rene Diaz. He welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked the Board members for their attendance.

❖ **PUBLIC HEARING – *Presented***

First Vice Chairman Eddie Gervais opened the public hearing and provided two (2) minutes to each speaker. The following person appeared before the Community Relations Board (CRB) to speak:

1. Mr. Elijah John Bowdre, Chairman of the Miami-Dade Digital Commission, regarding digital technology education

Seeing no other persons appear wishing to speak, First Vice Chair Gervais closed the public hearing.

❖ **APPROVE CURRENT MEETING AGENDA – *Presented***

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Ms. Jenni Person moved that the CRB Board approve today's (10/16) agenda as presented. Ms. Marie Jean-Pharuns seconded the motion; and upon being put to a vote, the motion passed by a vote of 7-0 (Chairman Rene Diaz, Ms. Juliette Fabien, Mr. Ervens Ford, Mr. Benjamin Greenberg, Mr. Gabriel Paez, Ms. Gizelle Ortiz-Velasquez, and Ms. Yuleisy Mena were absent).

❖ **CRB COMMITTEE MEETINGS AND DATES - *Presented***

1. CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT, WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2024-TBD

Ms. Shirley Plantin, Program Officer, Office of Community Advocacy, invited the members of the Community Relations Board (CRB) to attend the upcoming Criminal Justice and Law Enforcement (CJLE) meeting scheduled for October 30, 2024.

❖ **OLD BUSINESS:**

1. UPDATE: DISRUPTIVE MEETING ATTENDEES - *Presented*

Ms. Shirley Plantin, Program Officer, Office of Community Advocacy, provided an update regarding disruptive conduct among meeting participants. She reported that there had been physical altercations and unacceptable behavior at several meeting venues involving attendees and candidates, which necessitated the removal of certain individuals. Ms. Plantin noted that these incidents required significant monitoring and intervention from law enforcement. She identified Caleb Center, Hialeah, and North Miami as areas of particular concern needing much scrutiny and police presence. Additionally, she emphasized that the behavior exhibited by individuals at the Miami Gardens and Hialeah locations was unacceptable and called for a discussion on safety measures.

Discussion ensued among the Community Relations Board (CRB) members regarding the disruptive incidents that occurred at the Hialeah locations.

Mr. Joseph Salzverg, a member of the Community Relations Board (CRB), explained the motives for the incidents demonstrating the residents' anger in those areas. He pointed out that the absence of candidates at the polling sites would

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create a more relaxed atmosphere during the next election, and the act of voting would have a calming effect on people.

Mr. Salzverg shared his experiences from the last election, highlighting the critical need to prevent any shootings at polling sites since such events would dominate headlines worldwide. He strongly recommended reviewing the best prevention measures to implement before the November 2024 general election.

Ms. Plantin expressed her concerns about the significant presence of law enforcement at the Miami Gardens precinct, noting that they were also involved in traffic control activities.

Ms. Plantin clarified that the County and precinct clerks managed the precincts, and it was the responsibility of the precinct clerks to contact the County for assistance. She emphasized that the clerks working at the elections did not receive adequate communication training, which affected the entire County. Ms. Plantin also highlighted that the Community Review Board (CRB) played a crucial role in the November 2024 election, noting the election may be particularly challenging due to the Sheriff's Office race.

Discussion ensued among the CRB members regarding the need to monitor closely the precincts during the November 2024 election, particularly the hotspots.

2. UPDATE: SHERIFF'S RACE - *Presented*

Ms. Shirley Plantin, Program Officer, Office of Community Advocacy, reported that the Sheriff's Office race was ongoing. She pointed out that the Community Relations Board (CRB) had a policy against promoting or endorsing candidates. She stressed CRB would continue to collaborate and work with the Sheriff's Office.

3. UPDATE: PRECINCT MONITORING FOR PRIMARIES IN AUGUST - *Presented*

Note: See report for related Agenda Item 1, Update: Disruptive Meeting Attendees, under Old Business.

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❖ DISCUSSIONS AND DETERMINATIONS

1. SAFETY ON THE WATERWAYS - *Presented*

Ms. Shirley Plantin, Program Officer, Office of Community Advocacy, reported the most recent meeting was in July 2024. She pointed out that certain areas were experiencing a rise in motorized watercraft use, specifically Miami Beach, Surfside, and North Miami Beach during the summer. She advised that unlicensed operators heavily trafficked the waterways and noted there were safety concerns regarding unlicensed yacht operators. She pointed out that jet skis heavily congested the waterways and endangered other watercraft by frequently outpacing them, and rental companies were not holding their customers accountable for their behavior.

Ms. Plantin commented that visitors required information about waterway regulations. She pointed out that the City of Miami and County used marine patrols to manage and control waterway traffic by having the patrols issue citations to make vessel owners accountable.

2. CIVIL DISCOURSE DURING ELECTIONS - *Presented*

Note: See report for related Agenda Item 1, Update: Disruptive Meeting Attendees, under Old Business.

3. PRESENTATIONS FOR THE MIAMI-DADE CHIEF OF POLICE – *Presented*

Ms. Shirley Plantin, Program Officer for the Office of Community Advocacy, gave a brief summary on the meeting between the Miami-Dade Chief of Police and Community Relations Board (CRB) at the July 2024 Police Benevolent Association meeting.

4. COMMENTS RE: HAITIANS IN SPRINGFIELD, OHIO – *Presented*

Ms. Shirley Plantin, Program Officer, Office of Community Advocacy, presented an overview of an incident involving Haitians in Springfield, Ohio, and highlighted the presence of the Zoe Pound Haitian Gang in South Florida and the expansion of its activities. She pointed out that there had been incidents within the areas of Little

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Haiti, Liberty City, Palm Beach County, and Broward County linked to the Zoe Pound Gang, and these issues had cultural and intergenerational connections.

Additionally, Ms. Plantin discussed concerns from educators regarding bullying in schools and shared stories of events that occurred within the school environment.

Ms. Plantin commented that the gang-related issues affected the County as a whole and not just the Haitian community. She pointed out prominent Black leaders cautioned against letting the situation mirror the same experiences of the 1980s and 1990s.

Discussion ensued among the CRB members regarding the organizations contacted to address this issue and contacting the Jewish Federation to request their assistance.

First Vice Chair Eddy Gervais, a member of the Community Relations Board (CRB), commented on his youth experiences with gang-related problems while growing up.

First Vice Chair Eddy Gervais, a member of the Community Relations Board (CRB), thanked all individuals contributing to maintaining the peace.

Ms. Marie Jean-Pharuns discussed with CRB members past activities of the Zoe Pound Haitian Gang.

5. 1-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF THE OCTOBER 7TH ATTACK – *Presented*

Mr. Joshua Sayles, a member of the Community Relations Board (CRB), provided an update on the challenges Israel faced in the Gaza Envelope region following the attack on October 7, 2023, and assistance provided by the Jewish Federation. He described this event as the most significant massacre in Jewish history and noted that the incident's first anniversary had already passed. Mr. Sayles stated that the ongoing conflict in the Gaza region negatively affected Israel and the entire Jewish community. He emphasized that the incident placed Israel and every member of the Jewish community nationwide on high alert. He noted that the largest synagogues were aiding about 1,700 victims, but the high numbers forced them to turn people away.

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Mr. Sayles expressed his gratitude for being part of the South Florida community and for the support extended to the Jewish community after the October 7 attack.

Ms. Marjorie York, a member of the Community Relations Board (CRB), expressed concern about the large number of families affected by the recent attack.

Ms. Shirley Plantin, Program Officer, Office of Community Advocacy, stated that the CRB would address the issues with the Jewish community and the City of North Miami Beach. She summarized the incidents that occurred, emphasizing the importance of using law enforcement officers with an understanding of cultural norms beyond just security and safety measures.

In a closing statement, Mr. Sayles highlighted that the States of Lebanon and Israel currently had no territorial conflicts. He added that the only perceived solution by the opposing side to resolve territorial disputes in the Gaza region conflict was the destruction of Israel. Additionally, he dismissed concerns that Israel was being aggressive toward the Lebanese government, stating that Israel's sole interest in the region was to target an aggressive group operating within Lebanese territory.

**6. 'THE DISCUSSION' SERIES-IMPROVING POLICE-COMMUNITY RELATIONS –
*Presented***

Ms. Shirley Plantin, Program Officer, Office of Community Advocacy, provided an overview of ongoing efforts to improve police-community relations. She emphasized the importance of creating a strong message to disseminate accurate information through social media and other channels to foster better relationships. Ms. Plantin also highlighted the importance of seeking help from other entities, like CRB to communicate with communicate.

7. MIAMI-DADE MASS MIGRATION PLAN – *Presented*

Ms. Shirley Plantin, Program Officer, Office of Community Advocacy, advised that, in early May 2024, the Miami-Dade Emergency Management Department provided a copy of the County Mayor's proposed plan to develop a mass migration strategy. She advised that the Mayor's plan proposed to involve CRB in its implementation; and that proposal needed review by the CRB members and the Board of County Commissioners Chairman, particularly the potential budget-related issues.

❖ HOTSPOTS

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1. JEWISH HIGH HOLIDAYS – *Presented*

Mr. Joshua Sayles, a member of the Community Relations Board (CRB), mentioned that the upcoming Jewish holiday, Yom Kippur, would fall on October 27, 2024, with synagogues expected to reach full capacity. He suggested seeking advice and input from the rabbis regarding this matter. Additionally, he stated his intent to compile a list of upcoming Jewish holidays and expressed concern about potential protests on college campuses through "walk-out" events.

Ms. Shirley Plantin, Program Officer, Office of Community Advocacy, confirmed that she would also work on compiling a list of upcoming Jewish holidays and expressed her worries about possible protests on college campuses through "walk-out" events.

Discussion ensued regarding the number of persons expected to attend the "walk out" rallies.

Ms. Plantin asked Mr. Sayles to provide a list of important Jewish events and holidays for the remainder of the year to address and coordinate safety-related issues.

2. NATIONAL ELECTIONS – *Presented*

Ms. Shirley Plantin, Program Officer, Office of Community Advocacy, stated that she would continue to monitor voting hotspots and other events throughout the holidays.

❖ ANNOUNCEMENTS – *Presented*

First Vice Chair Eddy Gervais announced the next CRB meeting was set for November 20, 2024, at 6:00 p.m.

Ms. Shirley Plantin, Program Officer, Office of Community Advocacy, announced that the next CRB Criminal Justice and Law Enforcement Committee meeting was set for October 23, 2024, and the information for CRB's last meeting in December 2024 would be forth coming.

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Ms. Marjorie York announced that the City of Miami Beach scheduled its Veterans Day Parade for November 11, 2024, but the flyers were not yet ready.

A former Board member introduced three Miami-Dade College Wolfson Campus students, who attended today's (10/16) CRB meeting.

❖ ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business to come before the Community Relations Board (CRB), the meeting adjourned at 3:09 p.m.