

CLERK'S SUMMARY AND OFFICIAL MINUTES

COMMUNITY RELATIONS BOARD

November 20, 2024

The Community Relations Board (CRB) convened its monthly meeting at the Stephen P. Clark Government Center, 111 N.W. First Street, Miami, Florida on November 20, 2024 at 2:10 p.m.

The following CRB members were present: Chairman Rene Diaz, Ms. Egglis Cepero, Ms. Juliette Fabien, Mr. Eddy Gervais, Ms. Marie Jean-Pharuns, Ms. Yuleisy Mena, Ms. Jenni Person, Mr. Joseph R. Salzverg, Mr. Joshua A. Sayles, and Ms. Marjorie York.

Mr. Gabriel Paez and Ms. Gizelle M Ortiz-Velazquez were absent.

In addition to the CRB members, the following staff members were present:

- Ms. Shirley Plantin, Program Officer, Community Relations Board
- Ms. Diana Hernandez, Deputy Clerk, Clerk of the Board

Chairman Diaz called the meeting to order at 2:10 p.m.

PUBLIC HEARING

Chairman Rene Diaz opened the public hearing.

Ms. Marjorie York, Community Relations Board (CRB) member, spoke about ambulances donated by the City of Miami Beach to Israel.

Seeing no one else appearing wishing to speak, Chairman Diaz closed the public hearing.

APPROVE CURRENT MEETING AGENDA

Mr. Joshua Sayles moved to approve today's (11/20) meeting agenda, as presented. Vice Chairman Eddy Gervais seconded the motion, and upon being put to a vote, passed by a vote of 10-0 (Mr. Gabriel Paez and Ms. Gizelle M Ortiz-Velazquez were absent).

CRB COMMITTEE MEETINGS AND DATES

Ms. Shirley Plantin, Program Officer, Office of Community Advocacy, explained that the Community Relations Board (CRB) held elections every two years for the executive committee. She advised that the CRB could either select new candidates at that today's (11/20) meeting or renew the existing memberships for one more term. Ms. Plantin noted that there would not be another election until 2026 unless the CRB decided otherwise.

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Discussion ensued among the CRB members regarding retaining the current memberships.

Hearing no further questions or comments, the motion for CRB members to retain their current membership, passed unanimously.

Ms. Plantin stated the CRB agreed to host the Criminal Justice & Law Enforcement (CJLE) meeting for the first Wednesday of December 2024 and it would be hosted by the Bal Harbour Police Department.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Update: New Sheriff-Elect Rosie Cordero-Stutz

Ms. Shirley Plantin spoke about Miami-Dade County's Sheriff-Elect Rosie Cordero-Stutz, a former police officer who had been appointed to the CRB during Freddy Ramirez's tenure as Miami-Dade Police Department Director. She noted Sheriff-Elect Cordero-Stutz was familiar with the Criminal Justice & Law Enforcement (CJLE) meetings and the Community Relations Board's work.

Mr. Eddy Gervais inquired if the CRB would be the mediator between the Mayor's Office and the Miami-Dade Sheriff's Office (Sheriff's Office).

Ms. Plantin clarified that this was not the CRB's role and explained that the board focused on the community, which lacked awareness of the Sheriff's Office jurisdiction.

Mr. Joseph Salzverg noted that the transition from the Miami-Dade Police Department to the Sheriff's Office would present logistical concerns, but the CRB's role was to support the community without political involvement. He emphasized that the CRB must strengthen its commitment to the community by addressing concerns and mitigating conflicts.

Mr. Gervais discussed his experience with different denominations and expressed interest in developing diplomatic skills as a CRB member.

Ms. Plantin indicated that despite the transition, the CRB reported directly to both the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) and the Office of the Mayor, remaining under the Office of the Chair's purview. She noted that the 1963 ordinance authorized the Miami-Dade CRB to intervene in community discord or infractions countywide. The CRB collaborated with local law enforcement to advance its goal of supporting the community.

Chairman Rene Diaz stated that the CRB adhered to County policy regardless of changes in government structure.

Chairman Diaz suggested reviewing the County Ordinance and inviting the Sheriff-Elect to a CRB meeting. He expressed concern that operating under state purview could result in the

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removal of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) efforts that promoted representation and involvement of diverse individuals.

Chairman Diaz stated that County ordinances could be amended and the CRB must ensure its participation was considered.

Ms. Plantin advised against pursuing activities outside the CRB's scope. She noted that the Sheriff's Office transition would be prolonged and would not impact CRB operations as rapidly as anticipated.

Discussion ensued among the CRB members about DEI, highlighting the lack of inclusivity in the system and the concerns it raised for the community.

Mr. Salzverg mentioned that diversity evolved naturally with population changes and immigration, noting that the County did not face diversity problems.

Ms. Juliette Fabien commented it was more about proper representation in the government than diversity.

Mr. Joshua Sayles noted that Miami-Dade County was significantly more diverse than other areas. He remarked that every community deserved equal representation and opportunities to achieve the American dream. He also noted that the Jewish community was largely excluded from diversity, equity, and inclusion environments.

Ms. Marie Jean-Pharuns discussed the importance of focusing on diversity as it existed and how it affected the community.

Mr. Sayles highlighted various ways in which the CRB could get involved and support the community by supporting the DEI concept.

Ms. Plantin pointed out the significance of these discussions in order to fulfill its purpose in the community.

Chairman Diaz commented about women's inequity in the workforce.

Mr. Salzverg clarified that equity solutions arose from market forces, not the government. He stated efforts had been made to enhance equity, such as improving access to education, offering affordable housing, and providing various free healthcare services.

Chairman Diaz highlighted the State of Florida's plan to disband the Independent Civilian Panel and voiced his concerns about maintaining integrity in governmental bodies.

Ms. Plantin indicated that the CRB planned to discuss this issue with the Sheriff-Elect. She emphasized the importance of addressing inadequate representation of individuals before the government and noted that DEI approaches varied in effectiveness across different populations.

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Ms. Susan Khoury, a member of the public, stated that the Sheriff-Elect showed a preference for establishing an advisory board instead of an independent review panel and suggested the CRB approach the Sheriff-Elect about establishing an advisory board.

Ms. Yuleisy Mena indicated that there were numerous inquiries to address, and categorizing individuals into boxes was not always precise. She noted there was a difference between intention and implementation.

Mr. Salzverg concurred with Ms. Mena's remarks and highlighted the challenges with implementing DEI.

Mr. Gervais stated Miami-Dade County was the most diverse county in the state and commented on the importance of working on equity and inclusion.

2. Update: Safety on the Water Ways

Ms. Shirley Plantin discussed the October 31, 2024 disturbances in County waterways, particularly conflicts between ships and jet skis that required law enforcement intervention. She informed the CRB that related legislation appeared on the October 2024 Criminal Justice & Law Enforcement (CJLE) Committee agenda. Ms. Plantin reminded the CRB of its mission to mitigate potential violations during the holidays.

DISCUSSIONS AND DETERMINATIONS

1. Executive Committee Elections-Action Items

Ms. Shirley Plantin commented on a County employee who received a threatening text message during the final days of early voting and noted election-related incidents in County schools.

2. Civil Discourse and Racial Tensions Post Elections

Ms. Plantin reported that the final weekend of early voting generated controversy due to civil discourse and racial tensions. She advised that she received calls from numerous individuals who had received racist text messages and stressed that substantial work remained in handling threatening messages and phone calls after the election.

Mr. Joshua Sayles inquired whether people filed reports with law enforcement regarding these incidents.

Ms. Plantin responded that the volume of cases submitted to law enforcement remained unclear.

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Mr. Sayles highlighted the necessity of filing reports to allow police to track communications and apprehend perpetrators.

Mr. Joseph Salzverg explained the creation process for these communications and observed that the automated messages focused on particular demographic groups. He remarked that these messages required significant financial investment, costing thousands of dollars.

Mr. Sayles argued that minimizing media coverage of these incidents was crucial since offenders desired public attention.

3. 9-year-old shot and killed in Florida City

Ms. Shirley Plantin recalled the tragic shooting death of a nine-year-old child in Florida City on November 17, 2024. She observed that when minors became victims of gun violence, it profoundly affected the community and heightened concerns about government inaction in preventing such tragedies. She indicated this matter would appear on the upcoming Criminal Justice Law Enforcement (CJLE) Committee agenda.

4. Safety During Holiday Shopping Season "Operation Grinch"

Ms. Plantin described the Miami-Dade Police Department's "Operation Grinch," which deployed undercover officers and increased police presence. She noted the CRB would monitor situations during the holiday season due to school breaks and recommended the public exercise caution while visiting shopping centers.

5. Rolling Loud

Ms. Shirley Plantin described Rolling Loud Miami as a major hip-hop festival that assembled leading artists to display their talents, potentially increasing conflicts due to high-profile performers. Ms. Plantin reported that event promoters requested enhanced security and surveillance for the festival.

HOTPOTS

1. Gun Violence

Chairman Rene Diaz stated there had been a previous discussion regarding gun violence.

Ms. Shirley Plantin requested the Board consider noticing meetings from 2:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. instead of until 4:00 p.m. to address concerns from members and the public regarding the late ending time.

Hearing no further questions or comments, the motion to adjourn meetings at 3:30 p.m. passed unanimously.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. Marjorie York announced that the swearing-in ceremony for Miami-Dade County Mayor Daniella Levine Cava would be held at 6 p.m. in the Stephen P. Clark Government Center's lobby.

Mr. Joshua Sayles announced the Nova Music Festival exhibition opening on December 19, 2024 and running through February 2025. He extended invitations to CRB members, community partners, and law enforcement to attend the event.

Ms. Shirley Plantin announced that Mr. Chris Mitchell, liaison between the CRB and the City of Miami Beach, was retiring and requested a proclamation be prepared in his honor.

Hearing no further questions or comments, the motion to prepare a proclamation in Mr. Mitchell’s honor, passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Community Relations Board (CRB), the meeting adjourned at 3:17 p.m.