

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY
INTERFAITH
ADVISORY BOARD

Miami-Dade County Office of Community Advocacy

Interfaith Advisory Board February Meeting Minutes

Thursday, April 10th, 2025 - Time – 2pm – 4pm

Location – Stephen P. Clark Center – 111 NW 1st St. Miami, FL 33128 – Room 18-4

Minutes

1. Call to Order at 2:09pm

2. Roll Call

Present

Pastor Donald Clarke - 2nd Vice Chairman

Father Patrick O'Neil

Pastor Marc Mortensen

Phillip Davis Jr

Olga Hernandez

Pastor Conrad Molleda

Father Elvis Gonzalez

Rev. Dr. Kay Williams-Dawson

Emmanuel Jimmy Loiseau

Harold Foster

Excused

Pastor Stephen Alessi

Rabbi Mark Rosenberg - Chairman

Rabbi Robyn Fisher

Rabbi Avrohom Brashevitzky

Pastor Eddy Gervais

Dr. Kendall Turcios

Rabbi Daniel Hadar

Rev. Evelio Vilches

3. Opening invocation

- Invocation given by Father Elvis Gonzalez

4. Reasonable Opportunity for Public to Be Heard

- Mr. Claude Saint Gerard introduced himself

- Mrs. Michelle Johnson

- Mrs. Johnson announced that the Miami-Dade County Community Action will be talking about our Senior Services and wanted to make sure she included all IAB Members for the upcoming events. Because there are areas in our Community that are underserved when it comes to senior services, she wanted to see how IAB Members could assist to better serve these areas and make sure that seniors are aware of services available.
- Mrs. Johnson also enlightened the Board about the Civic Academy initiative, which is a four-week workshop to find out who your Representative is, and it's all about being engaged civically. UM university came up with the curriculum while Miami-Dade partners facilitate it. It really helps the Community to get information about service departments that take care for example of water issues... and how it members can advocate.

5. New Board Member Welcome

- Harold Foster introduced himself to the board, he mentioned that he currently works for Senator Rene Garcia of district 13. Mr. Foster also provided his previous work with community engagement and interfaith work within Miami-Dade County.

6. Approval of Agenda

- Moved by Pastor Kay Dowson.
- Second by Olga Hernandez.
- No discussion: approved unanimously.

7. Approval of February Minutes

- Moved by Olga Hernandez.
- Second by Pastor Kay Dawson.
- Approved unanimously.

8. Interfaith Advisory Board special election for Vice Chairperson

- The IAB discussed the vacant vice chairperson seat on the board left by Claudia Miro. The board discussed its rules and procedures and opened the floor for nomination for vice chair. Pastor Kay Dawson nonmined Pastor Donald Clarke for the position, and no other nominations were made. Pastor Donald Clarke was elected unopposed from 2nd Vice Chair to Vice Chairman of the IAB. This in turn led to a vacancy of the 2nd Vice Chair position. The IAB then opened the floor for nomination in a similar manner where Pastor Donald Clarke nominated Pastor Kay Dawson as 2nd Vice Chair; Since no other nominations were named, Pastor Kay Dawson was elected unopposed as 2nd Vice Chair for the IAB.

9. National Day of Prayer 2025, event with Commissioner Gonzalez (Faith and Family Day)

- The IAB discussed their participation with Commissioner Gonzalez at his faith and family day event on Saturday, May 3rd, 2025. The board approved that the ten (10) remaining IAB \$75.00 gift cards be donated to families in need during the event in question.
- Moved by Father O'Neil.

- Second by Marc Mortensen.
- Approved unanimously.

10. Statement of support to outgoing Commissioner Kevin Cabrera and his Family

- The IAB discussed drafting a statement of support to Commissioner Kevin Cabrera to send him and his family our prayers and best wishes as the former Commissioner has been appointed US Ambassador to Panama.
- Moved by Father O'Neil.
- Second by Marc Mortensen.

11. Announcements

- All IAB members were reminded to submit their completed financial disclosure form if they haven't already done so.
- Pastor Modella brought up the news about the First Presbyterian Church property that was sold in Brickell and is supposed to go down and replaced by a high rise according to developers' plans. He said that's concerning no matter what faith or religion we are, given the spiritual and historical value of this house of worship where a lot of souls passed through, and wanted to know if the Board could produce some recommendations.
 - Teo who was glad Pastor Modella brought it up suggested that the Board could offer the Members' thoughts and concern in the form of a statement which would not necessary be a disagreement.
 - Griselle Moreno, Communication Director for the Office of Community Advocacy, added that such a statement would have to be forwarded to the BCC Chair's Office for approval to avoid situations where statements could be deemed controversial
- Pastor Loiseau brought up the last meeting discussions on immigration and Teo gave a summary of such discussions in question and where they were left of.
 - Pastor Loiseau expressed his concern for Ice agents potentially coming into houses of worship given that most Board Members have immigrants in their congregation and wanted to know if the Board has any position on that and what can be said or done.
 - Father Gonzalez explained that the position of the Catholic Church is that Ice agents are not allowed to come in and that they have not recorded any such issues.
 - Pastor Loiseau pointed out the confusion created by this situation explaining that, at the beginning it was clearly a no when it comes to Ice agents going into places of worship, but now it's more like at the discretion of the field agents. He added that his church is now working with lawyers to establish a protocol in the eventuality Ice agents come in his church because, at the same time they don't want to break the law as a church, they also want their peers to be educated about the laws and their rights.
 - Teo continued saying that he knows that a lot of Board Members are doing something similar and promised to share Pastor Loiseau's information and concern to the whole Board and mentioned that Pastor Alessi has a podcast in which he recently brought immigration lawyers to talk on legal information when it comes to places of worship.
 - Pastor & Vice Chair Clarke suggested to bring in a lawyer to one of our future meetings to enlighten the Board on this issue and eventually more.
- Teo reminded the IAB Members present in the meeting to share any events they have coming up with him so he can post them on the Office of Community Advocacy newsletter as an additional resource to get the word out.

12. Adjournment

- Moved by Conrad Molleda.
- Second by Donald Clarke.
- Approved unanimously.