



Miami-Dade County Office of Community Advocacy

Location – Stephen P. Clark Center – 111 NW 1st St. Miami, FL 33128 – Room 10-11

MAY 8TH, 2025 MEETING

MINUTES

1. Call to Order at 2:15

2. Roll Call

Present

Rabbi Mark Rosenberg (Chair)
Rev. Dr. Kay Williams-Dawson (2nd Vice-Chair)
Rabbi Avrohom Brashevitzky
Phillip Davis Jr
Rabbi Robyn Fisher
Harold Foster
Pastor Eddy Gervais
Emmanuel Jimmy Loiseau
Pastor Conrad Molleda
Pastor Marc Mortensen
Lieutenant Alex Trinchet
Rev. Evelio Vilches

Excused

Pastor Donald Clarke Jr. (Vice-Chair)
Pastor Stephen Alessi
Father Elvis Gonzalez
Rabbi Daniel Hadar
Olga Hernandez
Father Patrick O'Neil
Dr. Kendall Turcios

3. Opening

- As additional Board Members were expected to arrive a bit late in order to have quorum, Chair-Rabbi Rosenberg invited the Board Members present to start working on items on the agenda that did not require a vote

4. Reasonable Opportunity for Public to Be Heard

- Chair-Rabbi Rosenberg opened the floor to the public but there was nobody from the public physically present in the room.

5. New IAB Member Welcome

- Fire Rescue Lieutenant Alex Trinchet introduced himself to the Board :
He said he works as a public servant in two Fire Departments and was in the military. He has been a Chaplain for the Fire Department for about fifteen years. He didn't become a Pastor but due to the needs of the Fire Department, he went clinical and became a licensed mental Counselor. He said that he kind of wore both hats : the clinical and the spiritual one under three different Mayors. He has been attending to the Advisory Boards meetings whenever he could as a guest thanks to the actual Mayor. He thanked publicly the IAB Members for everything they do.
During the tragic event at Surfside, He was the first one to show up around an hour into the incident. When he looked at the side of the building, he said his "emergency prayer : help send me everybody" and he said all IAB Members were his answered prayer. He finished by saying he was grateful for all the Board Members welcoming him.

6. New Business

- Chair-Rabbi Rosenberg indicated he won't be able to attend the May 30 2025 Interfaith Breakfast of Hope hosted by the Miami Dade Democratic Party because of prior travel plans, but encouraged Board Members who can make it to participate and support.
- After Program Director Nicolas Alex Jospitre informed the Chair of another invitation to Granada's Worship Concert on Friday May 23rd, 2025, the Chair invited Pastor Vilches, who serves as one of the Assistant Pastors to Granada Church, to say a few words about it. Pastor Vilches extended the invitation to all Board Members as it is open to the Community. He advised getting there early if Board Members are interested in tasting their menu during the welcome hour.
- Pastor Marc Mortensen went back on the May 30, 2025 Interfaith Breakfast of Hope to enquire about if there is any cost associated with the IAB Members participation. After the Chair said he didn't know if IAB Members' participation was complementary, Program Director Jospitre offered to contact Teo or the organizers to see if there is any special accommodation for the IAB Members.

7. Old Business

- The Chair opened the floor for Board Members who attended the National Day of Prayer meeting with the Mayor on May 1st, 2025.
- Pastor Vilches said it was a great opportunity to see the Mayor's initiative to rally and welcome representatives from the Interfaith Community to join, and also to see people from different faiths united for the common goal of bringing unity to the community. He indicated that Mr. Foster, Lieutenant Trinchet and Pastor Mortensen were also present and added the National Day of Prayer meeting with the Mayor was on its 3rd year, to answer Mr. Foster's question on the matter.

- Program Director Jospitre indicated that it was an initiative from Michelle Johnson from the office of the Mayor which turned out to be a great event with representatives of different faiths praying for the world, the United States, for the County and especially for the Mayor.
- Lieutenant Alex Trinchet indicated that he asked the Mayor her authorization to have everybody pray for her and asked a rabbi to do so, which was very meaningful especially that the Mayor is very supportive...
- Pastor Vilches added that it was well organized in a way that different issues and topics could be addressed by different representatives from the community who could pray over different areas.
- Chair-Rabbi Rosenberg explained he couldn't make it because he was testifying at antisemitism case
- Program Director Jospitre indicated to the Chair that the Board had quorum with the arrival of Rabbi Avrohom Brashevitzky, which he acknowledged .
- The Chair opened the floor then for the National Day of Prayer event with Commissioner Gonzalez : Inaugural Faith & Family Festival on May 3rd, 2025.
- Pastor Molleda who was present indicated that it was very community oriented and went well except that it rained in the middle of the day. He also wished there were more rabbis present, but the Chair thanks the lack of Rabbi was maybe due the fact that the event was on Saturday.
- Lieutenant Trinchet indicated that Teo was present and reminded that he was tasked, following a Board vote, to give out gift cards to families in need. He confirmed that he connected Teo with Rolly and the right person to help with the distribution in question. He added that the families that received those cards were very appreciative of them because some of them would not have been able to eat the contents of the free cans of food that were given away because of dietary restrictions.

8. Opening invocation

- The Chair then invited the board to go back to the beginning of the agenda so a Board Member could volunteer for the invocation.
- Pastor Mortensen volunteered for the invocation.

9. Approval of Agenda

- The Chair made a motion to approve the agenda
- Moved by Pastor Eddy Gervais
- Second by Rev. Dr. Kay Williams-Dawson (2nd Vice-Chair)
- Approved unanimously without discussion.

10. Approval of April Minutes

- Program Director Jospitre indicated that the April meeting minutes were unfortunately incomplete due to the sudden transition of former Program Director Teo Noboa to his new responsibilities.
- Program Director Nicolas Alex Jospitre indicated to the Chair that the minutes for the April and May meetings will then be presented together during the June meeting, which the Chair approved.

11. Announcements

- About the 2025 Financial Disclosure due July 1st, the Chair advised all Board Members to get it from the new Program Director, if they haven't received it yet, so they can print it, fill it out, manually sign it, and return it by email to ensure that they get a receipt or a confirmation email back. He expressed concerns about returning the form by regular mail as he recalled Board Members being terminated in the past simply because their completed and signed forms were lost in the mail.
- The Chair brought up the past election of a new Vice Chair and new Second Vice-Chair due to a vacancy caused by Claudia Miro's resignation since she was running for office.
- Director Laura Morilla intervened to explain that Mrs. Miro who wishes to be back on the Board will have to get reappointed by her District Commissioner which doesn't involve the Board at this time.
- Program Director Jospitre explained that the item about the past election was included in the agenda mostly to inform Board Members who were absent in the past meeting of the election results.
- The Chair then opened the floor to Board Members who would like to discuss any topics not included in the agenda
- Mrs. Shirley Plantin raised the issues associated with the lack information of the public concerning the "Real ID" which is now required to travel domestically if not using a valid passport. Mrs. Shirley believes that worship places could really help with educating the Community.
- The Chair stressed that the growing level of difficulty to get an appointment with the Department of Motor and Vehicle especially that this entity is no longer under the State but with the County under the authority of the Tax Collector Fernandez who has been trying his best to address these issues. The Chair also offered to help Board Members who have VIP or elderly individual who are struggling to get an appointment for the next three months. He said he's ready to use his connections for important matters. He gave an example of somebody who was going to have his driver license suspended by June 18 if he doesn't redo his eye exam by then; the person redid his eye exam but couldn't get an appointment to follow up on it before the due date. He also gave an example of somebody who needed to travel domestically but didn't have a passport nor the Real ID to do so.
The Chair also spoke about **Enhanced Driver License** which is the equivalent to the Real ID in New York and some other states and which allows them to travel also to Canada and Mexico. He stressed that Enhanced Driver License is a step up from the Real ID which is good enough.
- Lieutenant Trinchet introduced another topic regarding mental health and medical; He continued and explained that he saw online a lot of children with autism and spectrum, as well as a lot of suicides and wanted to know if as a Board we'd like to address these issues. He promised to assist if any congregation needs to address these issues and offered to bring flyers for medical assistance as well as CPR as the Fire Department launched a major initiative to teach CPR which he said could be used for Board Members's congregations if interested.

12. Immigration

- Chair-Rabbi Rosenberg proposed the Board to spend the next 20 minutes on Immigration since he believes it is on everybody's mind and opened the floor for discussions starting with

the fact that there are a lot of horror stories and people are very frustrated especially with the confusing information.

He continued and said that he tries to help and to make a lot of noise when events happen otherwise people will say it's all talk and that it didn't really happen.

He also stressed that to be very careful with complaints from families who present their relatives being picked up as victims with zero criminal record as opposed to these relatives being arrested for a crime they committed which the family sometime didn't want to disclose in the first place. So he advised faith leaders to ask people a lot of questions because it's important for them to know what they are really dealing with.

He reminded incarcerated people have rights too and that social freedom has been a challenge which many Jewish people are not able to enjoy in many states like Florida, Tennessee, Texas, New York, New Jersey... . He then regretted not to have done what he deems to be the most important thing to do : to document everything he heard; For instance, he suggested to have people send emails about everything they expose on the phone. And he continued by saying that usually spoken stories will change in an email, not that because people are lying but because they're emotional, because it's their husband, wife, mother, father, sister, employer, neighbor... that was taken away with the possibility of being deported.

The Chair also mentioned paperwork like detention document that can be found online and can help find an inmate and know where that inmate is being detained. He said that he used these documents to advocate for people who have been picked up by mistake or simply shouldn't have because there's a difference between someone entering the country illegally and someone already living here illegally, like those who have been in the country for 10 years or more, those who are married and have children in the country, those who have benefited from their spouses petitions but do not have twenty thousand dollars to pay attorneys to speed up their cases... .

The Chair also brought up how a working justice system is supposed to treat somebody who gets caught for a misdemeanor as opposed to the ICE integration system which is overwhelmed and doesn't offer any due process.

Chair-Rabbi Rosenberg continued and said he's not going to speak to the agreement or disagreement about the whole immigration laws, because it would be pointless. He admitted that there's nothing he could do about it, but said people could focus on working with the local HSR and send them emails. He repeated for those who think that the emails don't work that they actually do especially when there's no response.

- Pastor Conrad Molleda asked how a faith-based Board like the IAB can help in this situation?
- Chair-Rabbi Rosenberg answered that a faith-based community can help with a letter to let people know that we're here and vetted.
- Mr. Harold Foster asked if people picked up by ICE can get out for their hearing when there's no bail?
- The Chair said as opposed to other Departments that must take you in front of a Judge, ICE has the authority to make those decisions because they can detain you for being in the country illegally.
- Pastor Mortensen asked the Chair if he has recorded an instance where ICE made such decisions, and the Chair answered negatively.

- The Chair mentioned that it's also difficult to see a judge nowadays because they are seriously backed up in the system, so instead of seeing a judge in a few days it could now take up to a month or two.
- Lieutenant Trinchet said that what he sees now is the fear of being picked up and gave an example about being deported mostly because of lack of information
- The Chair answered that, unfortunately, there's not much that they can offer to people in such situation because the worst thing to do would be to tell them what is not going to happen and have them rely on your information. The Chair also brought up the fact that ICE sometimes doesn't pick up a detainee from police custody as required, and, as a consequence, the detainee is often let go.
- Pastor Gervais intervened to say that the other factor is not so much a person going through the system but more of the information that's being dispersed, and it's affecting church attendance because at one time church was a safe place that ICE would not enter, but now it seems otherwise, and that's affecting attendance which in turn affects the offering and hurts the church overall. And he explained that school attendance is being affected as well because the children realize their parents are immigrants, and are finding out that while they were born in the US, they could still be deported as three congressmen publicly announced that American citizens could be deported.

Pastor Gervais said Pastor Loiseau has been dealing with these issues especially that his congregation has been affected up and down by them, but, according to him, Pastor Loiseau and his people have done a wonderful job trying to make sure they get the correct information to their parishioners. He added it's not so much people that are illegal or getting arrested, but the information that's affecting the attendance of the people by creating emotional instability.

- Pastor Loiseau intervened to explain that in his community there are organizations of lawyers who will take on immigrants cases to help out, and he said they will work with all communities that are affected by this situation. So for him, the important thing is to partner and create good relationships with these organizations that can come in and educate people on what the law is and says, and what people's rights are.

Pastor Loiseau said that his church is now working on a document to help churches in general know what to do if an ICE agent come to their worship places because there need to be a protocol in place for such events. He added that his church is not working against ICE but the church won't be working against its parishioners either. He said this document offers important informative topics like the difference between a judiciary warrant and a regular one used to go after someone, and it also explains the limited access ICE agents have if they don't have a search warrant.

Pastor Loiseau also mentioned that some police officers have been deputized and can work now as ICE agents. He then believes that everybody needs to take this situation seriously and start thinking also about protocols for schools for instance. Because people need to know what is the stance of the county, of schools..., if ICE agents decide to go inside a school.

- Doctor Shirley Plantin took the floor to point out the difference between being detained and being deported and, also, to share the concern of parents when it comes to public places like parks being eventually subject to ICE raids. She also mentioned that Coral Gables, Doral and Hialeah police departments have signed with the sheriff office to deputize officers; She

- added that, despite having the proper documentation, these officers still haven't received the mandatory training yet; meaning that they don't know what they will be doing yet.
- Rabbi Fisher indicated that her congregation also partnered with 2 organizations to collect food and bring it down to Homestead to the migrant farmers as well as collected clothing and items that she thought would be a necessity. But, she added that they don't have the capacity and means for the distribution and the perishable goods just get ruined.
 - Pastor Molleda asked if in a future Board meeting, somebody could be invited to advise IAB Members legally because there are a lot of immigration laws that Members are not aware of. He also asked how can faith-based Communities, synagogues, churches..., help these people in needs?
 - Rev. Dr. Kay Williams-Dawson (2nd Vice-Chair) asked if the any Board Member knew of actual cases where ICE has gone into a church, synagogue, mosque, or any Worship places... To which the Chair answered negatively. She continued and said the police officers who attend her church will not allow anybody to come and disrupt their worship.
 - The Chair then added that no sheriff deputies or police officers have been officially deputized yet in the state of Florida as they are still at the very first step of a long process.
 - Rev. Dr. Kay Williams-Dawson (2nd Vice-Chair) asked if someone arrested under immigration laws will be detained forever arbitrarily in the eventuality that he doesn't have a receiving country where he can be deported.
 - The Chair answered that, in such cases, ICE will usually conduct a credible fear assessment to see if the person is lying or not. If the person is not lying, he will be kept, and it will be up to ICE to decide about his future taking into account if he's a criminal or just someone who overstayed his visa.
 - Rabbi Fisher thinks that one of the key things that all Members could be focusing on in their places of worship or places of influence is education, and she added that she knows the ACLU will come out and provide all the information needed on immigration
 - Pastor Loiseau spoke about the ambiguity in received information and said that his people do not want to be reactionary, but instead, be prepared. So that's the reason why they took the initiative to create some kind of protocol.
 - The Chair reiterated that people shouldn't wait until problems happen to make the right steps and advised people to not hangout or travel with people they don't know. People should try to get pro-bono lawyers to advise them on what to do or not, and this way a judge could be more inclined to show leniency to an immigration case.
 - Program Director Jospitre confirmed what the Chair said with his experience as a professional interpreter in courts when it comes to Judges always giving time to immigrants to look for pro-bono lawyers.

13. Adjournment

- Chair-Rabbi Mark Rosenberg made the motion to have the meeting adjourned
- Moved by Pastor Gervais
- Second by Rev. Dr. Kay Williams-Dawson (2nd Vice-Chair)
- Approved unanimously without discussion.
- Pastor Vilches added a last remark to ask the Board to help him congratulate the new Interfaith Advisory Board Program Director Nicolas Alex Jospitre who is replacing Teo Noboa