

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY
INTERFAITH
A D V I S O R Y B O A R D

Miami-Dade County Office of Community Advocacy

Interfaith Advisory Board February Meeting Minutes

Thursday, June 12th, 2025 - Time – 2pm – 4pm

Location – Stephen P. Clark Center – 111 NW 1st St. Miami, FL 33128 – Room 18-04

Minutes

1. Call to Order at 2:16

2. Roll Call

Present

Rabbi Mark Rosenberg (Chair)
Rev. Dr. Kay Williams-Dawson (2nd Vice-Chair)
Rabbi Avrohom Brashevitzky
Rabbi Robyn Fisher
Emmanuel Jimmy Loiseau
Pastor Conrad Molleda
Pastor Marc Mortensen
Father Patrick O’Neil
Rev. Evelio Vilches

Excused

Pastor Donald Clarke Jr. (Vice-Chair)
Pastor Stephen Alessi
Phillip Davis Jr.
Harold Foster
Pastor Eddy Gervais
Father Elvis Gonzalez
Rabbi Daniel Hadar
Olga Hernandez
Lieutenant Alex Trinchet
Dr. Kendall Turcios

Guests

Michael (Mike) Teichberg (Guest speaker)
Dariel Gomez (Guest speaker)
Oscar Ospina

Jenni Parson
Edryse Meus
Shirley Plantin
Griselle Marino

3. Opening invocation

- The Chair then invited a Board Member to volunteer for the invocation.
Rev. Dr. Kay Williams-Dawson (2nd Vice-Chair) volunteered for the invocation inviting God into the session and blessing safe travel for those on their way.

4. Opening

- Chair-Rabbi Rosenberg noted the lack of quorum and informed the Board Members present that for such reason they can't vote on the new agenda and will skip to our guest speakers starting with Deputy Director Mike Teichberg from American Jewish Committee AJC.

5. Guest speaker Michael (Mike) Teichberg

- Mr. Teichberg from the American Jewish Committee (AJC) begins his remarks by addressing the recent tragic loss of two Israeli diplomats in Washington on May 21st, DC, and the impact on the Jewish community. He explained that their loss is a devastating reminder of the urgency of our work to combat all forms of hate. This attack has left the Jewish Community reeling especially after a second terrorist attack in Boulder Colorado where eight people were injured after Molotov Cocktails were thrown at a peaceful rally for the 53 hostages still being held in Gaza.

Then, Mr. Teichberg provided an overview of AJC's work, including combating anti-Semitism, strengthening interfaith relations, and promoting Israel. He discussed AJC's focus on combating anti-Semitism, strengthening Latino-Jewish, Black-Jewish, and Asian-Jewish relations, and enhancing interfaith cooperation.

He highlighted upcoming opportunities for partnership, including the 60th anniversary of Nostra Aetate, a landmark declaration by Pope Paul VI on Catholic-Jewish. Talking about opportunities for partnership, Mr. Teichberg invited the board to partner with AJC in various capacities, including name and logo placement, spreading the word, and attending events like the 60th anniversary of Nostra Aetate, a landmark declaration by Pope Paul VI on Catholic-Jewish, and the Community Leadership Luncheon, AJC's biggest interfaith event of the year, typically held in November.

He spotlighted key local partnerships in interfaith relations, including collaborations with Mosaic Miami, evangelical partners, and the Clergy Coalition of Northwest, and highlighted the contributions of Dr. Nathan Katz and his wife, Ellen Goldberg, to South Florida's interfaith and academic landscape, before concluding by informing that AJC met with SCN, the Secure Community Network, to discuss security protocols and response to threats.

- Rabbi Fisher asked Mr. Teichberg in what capacity the IAB could participated with AJC as partners for the Nostra Aetate?
- Mr. Teichberg indicated that once AJC and its local partners are done with the site visit at St. Thomas University to construct the planning process and come up with the marketing material, they will approach Jewish and Christian organizations to sign on as supporting partners of the organization, have their logos included or use other opportunities to be part of the program.

- Father O'Neil asked who is AJC main point of contact at St. Thomas University to make sure Mr. Teichberg was on the right track since he (Father O'Neil) has been president of the University for 10 years?
- Mr. Teichberg replied Father Capon and said he would be glad to loop Father O'Neil in.
- After complimenting Mr. Teichberg for his presentation, Rabbi Fisher asked the pulse of anti-Semitism in Miami-Dade County and the local threat level.
- He explained that while Miami-Dade has a strong Jewish community, there are still threats from white supremacist and Nazi organizations and emphasized the importance of best practices in security, such as not listing event venues until RSVPs are confirmed. He added that AJC hosts invite-only events to ensure security and encourage partnerships with other organizations for co-sponsored events. He also affirmed that the Jewish Community is very strong and fortunate here in Florida compared with other parts in the country despite skinheads and neo nazi organizations moving their headquarters in the US during the pandemic. He said they are constantly monitoring security.
- Father O'Neil considers the situation in the US very grave when it comes to hate groups and expressed concern about the increased need for security in the Jewish community and the impact on community events.
- Mike Teichberg shared that AJC commissioned an annual survey on anti-Semitism and is working on more geographically focused data.
- Rabbi Fisher shares personal experiences of living in fear and the impact of national incidents on local Jewish communities which must live on heightened alert physically, emotionally, verbally... .

6. Reasonable Opportunity for Public to Be Heard (1st Guest)

- Chair-Rabbi Rosenberg apologized for skipping that part earlier and indicated he will give the reasonable opportunity for the Public to be heard before giving the floor to the second speaker.
- Mr. Oscar Ospina introduced himself to the Board as a volunteer for a non-profit organization promoting civic engagement. Mr. Ospina explained that he was able to join some of the virtual sessions to learn what the IAB is doing and what initiatives are being taken. He stressed that having a proper representation of the Faith Community is very important. He then mentioned a very insightful webinar he was able to attend to for a few months about protecting places of worship and wanted to bring up that, from his follow up with the Department of State Office of Communications which organized the webinar, he found out that such specific office was defunded. He ended his intervention by congratulating the Board Members for volunteering to make a better Miami-Dade for all.

7. Guest speaker Dariel Gomez

- Chair Rosenberg introduced Mr. Dario Gomez from the ACLU of Florida to discuss immigration law and enforcement.
- Gomez introduced himself as the ACLU Florida Miami-Dade organizer and the leader organizer on immigrant justice work across the State and provided an overview of the ACLU's work on immigration, including legal challenges to anti-immigrant bills: SB2c and Sb4c in Florida which have a number of detrimental effects on the immigrant community. He spoke of the ongoing litigation against particularly SB4c which criminalizes undocumented immigrants in Florida and supersedes immigration laws while immigration is a civil matter and not a criminal one. He discussed the abuses in detention facilities in

- Florida; ACLU is now suing DHS on behalf of an individual who was illegally detained in Baker County detention center and was physically abused. At a policy level, Mr. Gomez explained the ACLU's efforts to fight the expansion of 287(g) agreements between local law enforcement and ICE which he believes will increase racial profiling and false arrests in Florida even of American Citizens like in the case of Juan Carlos Gomez who was arrested by the local county sheriff under the 287(g) agreement. And he said that such agreements are even taking place with university police departments which are unprecedented in the country. He also highlighted the Know Your Rights resources particularly for faith communities, but also for local organizations and community groups, universities. He spoke about the check list prepared by ACLU for Faith Leaders and Communities to prepare in the eventuality ICE raids their locations, so they know what their rights are. Given that one of the first actions of the current administration was to rescind the sensitive location policy. He added that they're not telling people what to do or not, they are just informing them of public information what their rights are under the law. He also highlighted the Raise Rapid Response Network with a free toll-free hotline put in place by ACLU and a coalition of different immigrants' rights advocacy organizations to help individuals who have concerns that their rights might be violated during immigration enforcement and then made himself available for questions.
- Father Patrick O'Neil said he feels overwhelmed by all that is happening concerning the current immigration crisis and thanked Mr. Gomez for his presentation. Father O'Neil also asked if Mr. Gomez had any observation on a CNN poll of over one hundred thousand people where 71% of them said they don't like the way immigration is being enforced.
 - Mr. Gomez responded by confirming that there are a lot of concerns regarding constitutional violations and pointed out that DHS recently shut down their CRRC Department which was tasked to receive civil rights and civil liberty complaints. He also added that the actual government has been unresponsive to calls to end those constitutional violations which only create fear everywhere, especially in Miami-Dade.

8. Reasonable Opportunity for the Public to Be Heard (2nd Guest)

- Chair-Rabbi Rosenberg went back to the public to allow the 2nd guest to have her reasonable opportunity to talk given that she was skipped earlier.
- Mrs. Jenny Parson introduced herself to the Board as the Community Relations Manager for the Greater Miami Jewish Federation's Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC). She explained that JCRC is really interested in forming relations with all IAB Members as well as partnering and doing projects together. She thanked the county all municipalities that provided support and security for the weekly march called 'Fun For Their Lives' for the hostages that are still in Gaza.

9. Approval of April and May meeting minutes

- Chair-Rabbi Rosenberg reminded that the Board cannot vote on this item due to lack of quorum

10. Old Business

- The Chair said the support for Commissioner Kevin Cabrera was already voted out. He said that the Miami-Dade Community Action talks about senior services by Michelle Johnson was already circulated.

- The Chair said that about the 2025 Interfaith Breakfast Of Hope the Board had no clarity on whether its Members were invited on the house or if they had to pay; Rabbi Fisher said she represented the IAB and did have to pay.
- The Chair also brought up the item concerning the Granada's Worship Concert and allowed Pastor Vilches to tell the Board how successful it was.
- Chair Rosenberg also brought up the Free Health Wellness Fair and allowed Pastor Loiseau to describe the huge success of such a community event to the Board as well and pointed out that he was delighted that the Interfaith Program Director, Alex Jospitre, represented the IAB.

11. New Business

- About the first item regarding the deadly attack in Washington on two Israeli Embassy Jewish Staffers, the Chair it reiterates the fact that hate is still out there. He added that just as he recently testified, if people continue to be allowed to spew hate speech online, it's going to spill into the street and it's going to lead to violence. He also added that anybody agreeing with him should put a lot of effort to stop hate speech because hate speech, in his opinion, is not free speech. He also mentioned that Floridians were lucky to live in the only state in the US that passed the HB269 law which makes it a felony to target people because of their faith, ethnicity, their garments...
Vice Chair Williams-Dawson asked the Chair how else Board Members could support the Jewish Community more; and Chair Rosenberg explained that they could do so by spreading the word about HB269 and also how unacceptable hate speeches are.
Rabbi Fisher stressed that all IAB Members have areas of influence where their voices can be used to speak out against hate speeches.
Chair Rosenberg agreed with Rabbi Fisher by reminding that the holocaust didn't start in 1941 but in 1933 when antisemitism started to be normalized and nobody said anything. Chair Rosenberg also mentioned the IAB note drafted by Program Director Alex Jospitre which was never allowed by the Office of the Chair to be published about the Washington attack, and questions about why the board meeting is on Facebook live if the Board is not allowed to voice their position on paper.
- Concerning the item "the fear of additional attacks on the Jewish Community", the Chair explained that the fear is now different after the Washington attack because it showed that congregations could have the best security in place for their places of worship while the perpetrators can simply wait by the corner for when the event is done to commit their crimes, just like the assassin did in Washington.
- Concerning the fear of retaliation in the muslim community, the Chair said that just like after October 7, law enforcement presence was considerably increased because everybody has to feel safe.
- The Shavuot holiday, which is a holiday when the 10 commandments were given, is very important for Jewish and security increased all over and no incident was reported.
- The yearly 40-day fasting and prayer event at Tabernacle of Glory church, according to Pastor Loiseau, will end with a big conference for which he will send personal invites to all IAB Members once there is a confirmed date.

12. Ongoing Business / Follow up

- The Chair skipped the first item concerning the demolition of the Brickell First Presbyterian Church because the Board cannot vote due to lack of quorum.
- About the WhatsApp IAB group chat missing phone number, Program Director Alex Jospitre indicated that he obtained the last missing phone number.

- Concerning the Real ID updates Chair Rosenberg painted the appointment service as worse than before. And to add to this issue, he said he received reports of the Real ID system jamming and some Real ID being unreadable at the airport. So the Chair advised people traveling to bring a second form of ID at the airport just in case. But he's hopeful it will get better soon.
- Chair Rosenberg then reminded Board Members to complete and send their 2025 Financial Disclosure Form by July 1st as required.
- Then Shirley Plantin, Director of the CRB Program intervened to warn against a scam involving DMV contacting people by text message about their license is about to be suspended because of an unpaid balance, however when someone clicks on the link included in the text, the person unknowingly gives the scammers access to any bank cards, accounts or apps linked to the person's phone.
- Regarding the protocol document regarding eventual ICE raids in churches, Pastor Loiseau wasn't able to make his presentation as planned because the document in question wasn't ready.

13. Special Business / Hot Topics

- Chair Rosenberg read the item regarding the Supreme Court decision to uphold rollback of TPS for Venezuelans now, and later on, for Haitians so IAB Members can share their opinions on it and, especially, on how the IAB can help families that will be separated from their loved ones.
The Chair continued and explained that, immigration being a very sensitive topic nowadays, he wouldn't want the IAB meeting to be used as a therapy session which is why the focus should be on how Members can help.
- Rabbi Fisher spoke about the national organization called Religious Action Center (RAC) which is focused on social justice issues in the US and which will kick off in June a campaign focused on Interfaith relationships
- Rabbi Rosenberg then explained that, then with it comes to immigration, people cannot choose which is or isn't a crime when immigrants brake immigration laws. So, for him, the best way to help people in such situation, is to advise them to get a lawyer, go to their hearing which will allow a judge to have a better idea of that person's case. Then he added that even though there is the 287g agreement, no local law enforcement had been deputized yet because the process to do so has not even started yet in most cases.
- Pastor Loiseau, on family members being separated, advised Members to tell their congregators to have a plan in case of deportation or detention, including power of attorney and other legal documents and prepare for potential scenarios, such as managing assets and childcare on their behalf if they were to be deported or detained. He also mentioned Pro Bono organizations like FLIC that provide immigration-related services and support for free.
- Guest Jenny Parson mentioned Catholic Legal Services which can also help.
- Dr. Plantin intervened and reminded the IAB that in order for Faith Leaders to preserve their 501(c)3 status, they should avoid having their places of worship engage in conversations that could be deemed inappropriate in regard to their status, and instead, host events through these partnerships and allow experts to have the said conversations.

14. Announcement

- Concerning the item "Member updates", Program Director Alex Jospitre indicated that the IAB didn't have a new Member yet but was in the process of doing so with Dr. Juan Barek who was the very first Chair of the Interfaith Advisory Board.
- Pastor Loiseau indicated he already spoke earlier on the Supernatural Conference

- Pastor Vilches invited everyone to come to the Woman's Brunch at Granada Church on June 14, 2025.
- Chair Rosenberg brought up the July and August meetings mentioned earlier by Father O'Neil who pointed out that a lot of people will be travelling in the summer which compelled the Board to skip them last year.
- Program Director Alex Jospitre suggested leaving it open so, when we get close to the July meeting date, a decision can be made by the Chair in the eventuality that quorum cannot be met.
- Rabbi Avrohom Brashevitzky commended and congratulated Program Director Alex Jospitre for taking over previous Director Teo Noboa's responsibilities with such professionalism like he's been in this new role his whole life.
- Chair-Rabby Rosenberg also thanked Program Director Alex Jospitre for his hard work and thanked all IAB Members for their time and everything that they do.

1. Adjournment

- Chair-Rabbi Mark Rosenberg made the motion to have the meeting adjourned
- Moved by Rev. Dr. Kay Williams-Dawson (2nd Vice-Chair)
- Seconded by Pastor Jimmy Loiseau
- Adjournment approved unanimously.