



Miami-Dade County Office of Community Advocacy

Location – Stephen P. Clark Center – 111 NW 1st St. Miami, FL 33128 – Room 18-03

SEPTEMBER 11, 2025 MEETING

MINUTES

1. Call to Order at 2:19

2. Roll Call

Present

Rev. Dr. Kay Williams-Dawson (2nd Vice-Chair) [Presided the meeting]

Dr. Juan Barek

Harold Foster

Father Elvis Gonzalez

Pastor Conrad Molleda

Pastor Marc Mortensen

Father Patrick O'Neil

Lieutenant Alex Trinchet

Dr. Kendall Turcios

Rev. Evelio Vilches

Excused

Rabbi MarK Rosenberg (Chair)

Pastor Donald Clarke Jr. (Vice-Chair)

Pastor Stephen Alessi

Rabbi Avrohom Brashevitzky

Phillip Davis Jr.

Rabbi Robyn Fisher

Pastor Eddy Gervais

Rabbi Daniel Hadar

Olga Hernandez

Emmanuel Jimmy Loiseau

Guests

Laura Morilla

3. Invocation

- 2nd Vice-Chair Reverend Williams-Dawson call the meeting to order and asked who among the Members wanted to do the invocation.
- Lieutenant Alex Trinchet volunteered for the invocation and prayed for the family and survivors of the 9/11 victims as well as for Charlie Kirk family. He also prayed for police officers, firefighters and the military who are putting their live at risk to give us freedom which is not free.

4. Opening

- 2nd Vice-Chair Reverend Williams-Dawson then called for reasonable opportunity for the public and acknowledged there was no one physically present in the room from the public.

5. Vote to approve the meeting Agenda

- 2nd Vice-Chair Rev. Williams-Dawson asked for a motion and a second to approve the September 11 2025 meeting agenda
- Father O'Neil made the motion to approve the agenda
- Father Gonzalez seconded the motion
- The Agenda for September 2025 was voted on and approved unanimously.

6. Vote to approve the August 2025 Minutes

- 2nd Vice-Chair Rev. Williams-Dawson asked for a motion to approve the Minutes for the August 14th 2025 meeting
- Father O'Neil made the motion to approve the agenda
- Father Gonzalez seconded the motion
- The Minutes for August 2025 were voted on and approved unanimously.

7. Old Business

MOSAIC DIALOGUE

- 2nd Vice-Chair Rev. Williams-Dawson read the Old Business 1st Topic: "Board Members: Rabbi Robin Fisher & Father Patrick O'Neil, and I participated to the MOSAIC Clergy Dialogue at the FIU Faculty Club on August 20, 2025" and invited Father O'Neil to kindly share his experience at the Dialogue with the Board
- Father O'Neil started by informing that the oldest clergy dialog in the United States is right here in Miami and was called "Miami Coalition of Christian and Jews". He explained that he and members of the Clergy dialogue made extraordinary efforts to welcome Muslims and have them be the primary speaker for all of those 70 some years of the clergy dialog in Miami. He added that they really want to just continue monthly clergy support topics and discuss issues in Miami. It was a great mix of people at the FIU meeting, mainly because FIU has a department of religion, and they brought many people. There were four or five Buddhist monks. There were two or three, four rabbis, but they were all new. He continued and said that they're making an effort to move the meetings around and that the clergy dialog was 70 years old now. Father O'Neil said that his concern is that the people at the meeting might never come back again. He also has concern about the venue of the meeting especially at FIU which wasn't convenient for participants especially that they couldn't find any golf carts to accommodate them.

PHONE RECORDED PRAYER FOR MAYOR CAVA SENT TO HER OFFICE BY PROGRAM DIRECTOR ALEX JOSPITRE

- 2nd Vice-Chair Rev. Williams-Dawson read the Old Business 2nd topic : "At the end of our August meeting, Pastor Alessi sent, on behalf of the Interfaith Advisory Board, a kind prayer

to Mayor Levine Kava in which he asked our Lord to give her the wisdom of Solomon to help her manage the budget of this County that is affecting so many people, her employees, but both members and neighbors in this community..." and asked Program Director Alex Jospitre if the Mayor received it.

- Program Director Alex Jospitre confirmed that he sent it to Michelle Johnson but didn't get an answer. He strongly believes that she received it since he made sure he also sent her a text to let her know about his sent email with the recorded prayer as attachment.
- Pastor Mortensen asked I knew how the budget was coming
- Director Morilla took the floor and explained that even at the first budget meeting, they had managed to close the gap. And she added that between the first budget meeting and the second one that was supposed to come the following week, the mayor was fiercely meeting with the different commissioners to address the concerns that were raised at the first meeting. She then said that she strongly believes that everything's going to be taken care of as they were getting close to closing the gap around 4:30 in the morning during the first meeting. Then Director Morilla added that she believed that 65% to 70% of the initially removed funds were restored to CBOs. Not all, but most of the funds were restored to them according to her and she believes that between the first budget meeting a second one even more funds could be restored.

8. New Business

'RENT IS TOO DAMN HIGH.' INTERFAITH GROUP DEMANDS ACTION FROM MIAMI-DADE LEADERS

- 2nd Vice-Chair Rev. Williams-Dawson read the New Business 1st topic: "One of Miami-Dade most politically engaged Interfaith groups held their annual assembly to press elected leaders to make housing more affordable and reduce evictions in the County" and asked if any Board Members had an opinion on the topic.
- Since no Board Member reacted, Program Director Alex Jospitre explained that the housing proposals were drawn up by People Acting for Community Together, or PACT, a nonprofit interfaith group made up of some 40 churches, synagogues and mosques in Miami-Dade that advocates for solutions to some of the county's most pressing social issues. Over 800 congregants/voters showed up to Sweet Home Missionary Baptist Church in Cutler Bay to watch elected officials answer questions about their commitment to plans which address the staggering rent prices that have forced locals out of Miami-Dade County. PACT noted a shortage of 90,000 affordable housing units in Dade according to their own research. After hearing testimonies from renters facing impossible housing predicaments, high rent prices and risks of becoming homeless, Miami-Dade County Mayor Daniella Levine Cava agreed to commit \$3 million to an eviction diversion program during the Monday night gathering. The director of public housing and community development also committed to hold meetings with public housing tenants during redevelopment planning.

MIAMI-DADE SLASHED EVICTION AID PROGRAM. FAITH LEADERS PUSH TO RESTORE FUNDING

- 2nd Vice-Chair Rev. Williams-Dawson read the New Business 2nd topic: "In the basement of Miami's oldest mosque, faith leaders — Muslims, Jewish and Christians — along with attorneys and healthcare workers listened as resident Yovanny Martinez discussed the harsh reality of facing an eviction" and asked Program Director Jospitre to continue with the updates.
- Program Director Alex Jospitre explained that Martinez and his grandfather — is one of 90 families facing the same dilemma if they don't move out in 6 months from Palm Lake Mobile Home Park in Gladeview where many of the residents are low-wage workers, immigrant families with young children or elderly and disabled people on a fixed income.

At a vigil, organized by the nonprofit PACT (People Acting for Community Together), faith leaders, attorneys, healthcare workers and community members called out Miami-Dade County elected officials who failed honor their previous commitment to thousands of renters facing evictions.

That commitment came in April at PACT's annual assembly where members press elected officials on issues like affordable housing and reducing evictions throughout the county. At that event, Miami-Dade County Mayor Daniella Levine Cava agreed to commit \$3 million to the eviction diversion program in front of nearly 800 residents at Sweet Home Missionary Baptist Church in Cutler Bay. The current proposed budget allocates only \$ 1 million to the program. According to Rabbi Jessica Jacobs of Temple Beth Shalom there's an imbalance in who receives legal representation in eviction cases; She explained that: "Only 3% of tenants have a lawyer to represent them in their eviction case, compared to 74% of landlords that are represented. The eviction diversion program is an opportunity to change this imbalance.

- Father O'Neil explained that this has become a critical issue. He explained that when he was on the Dade County Homeless Trust Board for over 30 years, they were overwhelmed by now enormous emerging redefinition of who the homeless really are. More and more families, more and more mom and dads who had a combined income of 150 170,000 dollars up until a year or two ago just lost it all with the deletion jobs by the federal government and other unforeseen circumstances. It's overwhelming.
- Program Director Jospitre agreed and gave the following example: in the palm Lake mobile home park in Glee view, you have about 90 families that they ask. To move within six months or to just face eviction; And these people, they were young, children, elderly, disabled people, and they only fix and comes up, doesn't really help. So they want them out within six months, or they're going to get evicted, and they don't have the means to get lawyers to be represented. So that's the situation, right now; So this program would have helped them, in a way, but unfortunately, they only are looking at 1 million compared to 3 million promised.
- Pastor Mortensen added that this situation is happening in a lot of mobile parks like Sweetwater. He believes it could be developers wanting to put big apartments or hundreds of homes there and they're just throwing them out.
- Father O'Neil added that everybody comes to Miami because we're the most successful Homeless Trust program in the entire United States, and we're getting less and less funding for our success. And he said that these are issues that are linked to what we want to do in clergy leadership, you need to know what's going on.
- Dr Juan Barek asked Father O'Neil if it is true that the city of Miami is not permitting any churches or ministry to go into the area to provide any support to the homeless by giving out food
- Father O'Neil answered that they had so many complaints and several lawsuits because food might have been spoiled and people got sick, or people were just looking for away to make easy fast money.
- Dr. Barek suggested that they approach city hall to explain the interdiction because Evangelical Hispanic Association has been getting lots of letters from pastors saying that the city is not allowing them to go into the homeless and provide assistance and maybe send a message from this board about it because there's a great need in this area right now. He continued and proposed the Board to reach out to the Evangelical Hispanic Association of which the Ministry is composed of 250 Hispanic churches from 27 evangelical denominations.
- Pastor Molleda explained his Church also could no longer supply food to people in need
- Dr. Barek continued and said he sent a letter to the Office of the Mayor through Mrs. Johnson about it and reiterated that the Hispanic ministry is willing to work not only with the Board but also with the Mayor.

- 2nd Vice-Chair Rev. Williams-Dawson thanked and congratulated Dr. Barek for his intervention and appointment as President of the Evangelical Hispanic Association. 'SHUT IT DOWN'. EVERY SUNDAY, THEY COME TO PRAY OUTSIDE ALLIGATOR ALCATRAZ
- 2nd Vice-Chair Rev. Williams-Dawson then read the 3rd topic of the New Business : "On a Sunday evening just outside of Alligator Alcatraz, over 200 people — most of them reverends, rabbis, pastors and people of assorted faiths — chanted in unison, Shut it down and This is a preserve, not a prison".
- Father Gonzalez said that they were going to go back again the following Sunday to see what's going on
- Father O'Neil added that despite not being a lawyer, he couldn't see the facility reopening and complained about a colossal waste of 400 million dollars.
- Father Gonzalez replied he's praying for that but he will have to wait for the following Sunday to see.

ALLIGATOR ALCATRAZ'S DIFFERENT STATUS FORM AUGUST TO SEPTEMBER 2025

- 2nd Vice-Chair Rev. Williams-Dawson then asked Program Director Alex Jospitre if he could share his input the 4th and last topic of New Business.
- Program Director Jospitre said that From August to September, Alligator Alcatraz went: From a 2-week restraining order, issued by Judge Kathleen Williams for violation of the National Environment Policy Act, to temporarily stop further expansion construction while detainees are still in the facility

To a preliminary injunction by the same Judge blocking DHS and ICE from continuing increasing operations. Under the order, ICE can't move any new detainees into the facility, and in 60 days the government must remove all temporary fencing, generators, lighting, and other infrastructure installed "once the population attrition allows for safe implementation."

To now, remaining open after a federal Appeals Court paused the judge's order to wind down operations while the appeal plays out

He continued and explained that Many speakers denounced what they view as inhumane treatment of the people behind the gates of what used to be an isolated airstrip near the Big Cypress National Preserve.

The hour-long weekly vigils have brought out faith leaders and followers from all parts of South and Central Florida to offer prayers for detainees and speak out against Florida's decision to construct the camp in the middle of the Everglades.

For many, their hope is to grow opposition against not only Alligator Alcatraz but immigration policies they believe violate the tenets of their faiths, whether it be Christian, Jewish, Muslim or something else deeply spiritual.

"We must seek solutions... We must fight for full rights for immigrants," said Nick Carey, political coordinator for Faith in Florida, a coalition of over 900 congregations throughout Florida.

9. Ongoing Business / Follow up

PROPOSITION OF STATEMENT FROM THE INTERFAITH ADVISORY BOARD CONCERNING THE PARTIAL DEMOLITION OF THE FIRST BRICKELL FIRST MIAMI PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

- 2nd Vice-Chair William-Dawson reintroduced this topic
- Program Director Alex Jospitre explained that it was entered by Father O'Neil, if not mistaking, during our May board meeting, but other Board Members wanted to have some more information about it. Since Father O'Neil was present for this meeting, he thought he would be wise to invite him to share his thoughts about this old item.

- Father O'Neil said that his concern was that the dollar and business were going to overwhelm the religious and historical significance of the Church. He believed that they lost control of serving the community and hoped that at least something would be left to remind people of the history of the church while understanding that the property is very valuable: "but it's just very sad."
Father O'Neil then explained that he is no longer requesting any action from the Board especially that he found out that at the end it was the church's own decision.
 - Program Director Jospitre confirmed that it was an initiative of the Church itself which would still exist but on a smaller surface. They're not closing the entire church is just part of it, so they can have these towers built; So it's a decision of the church itself which called the developers to come in due to their internal financial crisis.
 - Pastor Mortensen agreed with Father O'Neil when it comes to the dollar overwhelming the congregation.
 - Dr. Barek asked if the Board could at least voice its opinion even though it's an internal decision
 - Program Director replied that there was an appeal from a committee "Brickell Stronger Together" which submitted a formal appeal to contest what they say is the unjust declassification of the Church's historic designation; but it was rejected by the City Commission.
 - Pastor Mortensen added that it out of hands of the Board since it was the Leadership of the Church that decided so in order to keep the place open.
 - Program Director Jospitre explained that the Church itself is planning to demolish a portion of its historic site, including the educational building and parking lot to make way for a condo tower project. It seems like the Church has been working to amend its historic designation to exclude these areas, allowing for the development. The proposed 80-story tower is being built by these 2 companies: "13th Floor Investment" and "Key International", and the Church expect to use the proceeds from the sale to build more church space and maintain the original sanctuary.
- PRESENTATION OF PROTOCOL DOCUMENT REGARDING EVENTUAL ICE RAIDS IN CHURCHES
- 2nd Vice-Chair William-Dawson reintroduced this last topic and asked the Program Director if he received an email from Pastor Loiseau about it
 - Program Director replied that the email has not been sent to him and that the Board should skip this item till the next meeting.

10. Special Business / Hot Topics

CBOs AFFECTED BY BUDGET CUT (\$16 MILLION) [INTRODUCED BY FATHER GONZALEZ]:

- 2nd Vice Chair Pastor William-Dawson read the item and informed that it was already discussed earlier.
- Program Director Jospitre agreed and added that, as explained by Director Morilla, Mayor Cava announced an updated budget proposal that use newly identified and recovered funds to restore some programming services, including partial restoration of community based organization funding; So they had to wait for the next board meeting.

11. Announcement

MEMBER UPDATES : WELCOM BACK TO DR. JUAN BAREK

- 2nd Vice-Chair William-Dawson welcomed back Dr. Juan Barek the initial Chair of the Interfaith Advisory Board
- Dr. Barek thanked the 2nd Vice Chair and added it was a privilege to be the first Chairman of the IAB. He remembered how he was able to convince Chairman Bobo and Mayor Pepe Diaz to create and Interfaith Board and when he received the phone call confirming the creation

of the Board. He said it was a blessing and hope the Board will continue to exist and positively impact the Community when he's gone.

- Pastor Aless said that it's because he is now involved with the National Day of Prayer
NEW INSTAGRAM AND X (former twitter) ACCOUNTS FOR THE INTERFAITH ADVISORY BOARD
- Program Director Alex Jospitre reminded that the Board has an X and Instagram accounts which the Board Members could use to for announcements.
OUR CHAIR HAS BEEN CHOSEN TO LEAD THE NEWLY FORMED EXECUTION MANAGEMENT TEAM AT THE MIAMI-DADE SHERIFF'S OFFICE (MDSO)
- Program Director Alex Jospitre explained that he added this item again hoping that Chair Rosenberg would be present to speak a bit about it. But since he couldn't make it, he suggested that the item be skipped again.
MIAMI-DADE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE OVERSIGHT BOARD FILM SCREENING (OCTOBER 8, 9) IN OBSERVANCE OF NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH
- Program Director Alex Jospitre reminded that the event was presented during our last meeting by Program Director Regalado and offered to send a reminder again to the Board.
- Director Morilla added that Teo Noboa, former Program Director of the Interfaith Advisory Board was accepted by the Sheriff Department and will start with the academy on September 29 2025.
- Dr. Turcios said that he was emotional about the assassination of Charlie Kirk: "there's a lot of things that that Charlie Kirk said, that I that I don't agree with, and at the same time, being somebody Who you know had a testimony of being a Christian, to be to be murdered for his ideas, it should be deeply disturbing to all of us. I personally have friends from all different backgrounds, and I really value that I'm enriched by all of my relationships with people from the left, people from the right, people in the LGBTQ community, atheists." He continued and quoted Marting Luther King Junior that the Church must be reminded that it's not the master or the servant of the State but rather the conscience of the state. If the Church does not recapture its prophetic zeal, it will become an irrelevant social club without moral or spiritual authority.
- Dr. Barek took the opportunity to thank the Mayor who sent a tweet with similar thoughts that reads: "no matter how many, how different we can be, the violence can never make us disrespectful. And so I agree we can be different, and we need to respect each other." Dr Barek continued: "And so I feel the same way, and we need to come together and respect each other no matter how different we are. And this is what is dividing us too much. And so I think that the only hope for this country is the church. And so the church needs to come together. And this is the beauty of this board, that even though we're different from different theological backgrounds, we can come together, and we can respect each other and do good for this community"
- Pastor Molleda added that as a board, we have to support unity. Our Constitution calls about unity. We stand divided, we fall. And never has he seen this country so divided on different sectors, from the religious to the moral to every center. So he thinks as leaders, we have to try to say that to our people to pray because we can agree to disagree peacefully without taking action on people, people's lives just because they think differently.
- 2nd Vice-Chair William-Dawson added one cannot say things that unethical to who you say you serve. She believes that you have to be who you say you are.
- Pastor Mortensen said he was in Washington DC meeting with some congressmen and senators, and it was interesting that he stepped in on an educational committee meeting dealing with antisemitism. He believes we need to pray against the hatred that we have to others.

12. Adjournment

- 2nd Vice-Chair William-Dawson asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting
- Moved by Dr. Turcios
- Seconded by Dr. Barek
- Adjournment voted and approved unanimously.