



Miami-Dade County
Commission on Disability Issues (CODI)
Stephen P. Clark Center (SPCC)
111 N.W. 1st Street, Miami, Florida 33128
18th Floor, Conference Room 18-4

Date:	Tuesday, June 24, 2025
Time:	10:30 AM – 1 PM
Call to Order Time:	10:45 AM
Meeting Adjourned:	1:00 PM

Opening and Attendance: Attendance recorded. Call to Order. Copies of documents were distributed.

District 1 Oliver G. Gilbert, III	Damian Gregory	P
PDistrict 2 Marliene Bastien	Vacant	
District 3 Keon Hardemon	Marilyn Orozco	P
District 4 Micky Steinberg	Vacant	
District 5 Eileen Higgins	Eddie Sierra Vice Chairman	P
District 6 Kevin M. Cabrera	Vacant	
District 7 Raquel A. Regalado	Rabbi Yossi Harlig	A
District 8 Danielle Cohen Higgins	Vacant	
District 9 Kionne L. McGhee	Vacant	
District 10 Anthony Rodriguez	Natalia Wong	P
District 11 Roberto J. Gonzalez	Katherine Magnoli Chairman	P
District 12 Juan Carlos Bermudez	Maria Mercedes Villar	P
District 13 René Garcia	Vacant	
Miami-Dade County Staff	Jody Cox, PIOD, ADA Projects Administrator Michael Moran, PIOD, ADA Senior Officer Marie-Chantal Darius, PIOD, ADA Coordination Specialist Jarice Rodriguez, DTPW, Principal Planner	

<p>Members of the Public</p>	<p>Jennifer Shipley, MDPLS, Library Operation Manager Joyce Galbut, CAHSD and DSAIL Ageda Pena, Corrections Deidre McPhee, Corrections</p> <p>Lili Portmann, CILSF, CODI applicant Lesly Quintanilla Lopez, CODI applicant Anthony Gonzalez, Sunrise Group Willie Lucas, National Federation of the Blind (NFB) Theo Karantsalis, former CODI member John C. Williams Joel Llanes</p>
<p>1. Call to Order and Roll Call</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting called to order at 10:45 AM with 6 CODI members present. Quorum was achieved. 	
<p>2. Approval of Minutes and Agenda: No motion was made and no vote was taken to approve the agenda. There were no minutes to be approved.</p>	
<p>3. Public Comments (Two minutes per person): N/A</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Theo Karantsalis resigned from CODI but will return in July. He will be testing Tampa transit system for accessibility tomorrow. He will attend the Coral Gables Advisory Board on Disability Affairs. He will present for NAMI at high schools for suicide prevention. He wants the disabled seating signs re-posted on Metro Rail trains. 	
<p>4. New Business</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Nathaniel Surrancy was unable to attend and provide an update about elevators and accessibility. Jody Cox spoke about the ADA 35th anniversary celebration and CODI’s involvement. Friday, July 25 we are celebrating the ADA at SPCC Lobby. We were awarded grant funds which we used to purchase an ADA stage ramp and hands-free microphone system. The Lighthouse for the Blind band will perform, as will singer Alfred Cardenas. Several people with disabilities will speak about inclusion and what the ADA has brought to their lives. We would like CODI members to invite their Commissioners and to attend as well. Jennifer Shipley (MDPLS, Library Operations Manager) did a presentation about Library services and the Connections program, including books in Braille and audio formats (available from the MDPLS database.) New technology allows the duplication of books, including best sellers on audio with no waiting list or limitation on the number of copies sent out. The Talking Books program is 100 percent free of charge. Persons who are eligible are persons with visual disabilities and those unable to physically hold a book. 	

Audio books can be accessed via smart phones, tablets, and PCs. Some Library patrons find audio books help with sleep. The Braille talking books library App provides access to many titles, including 70 magazines and 100 newspapers. Braille books for children ages 3-10 are also available. The Library website is MDPLS.org. Talking books can be found under “services.” Also, all DVDs, audio books and large print books can be postal mailed to and from the Libraries free of charge.

- d. Kat Magnoli shared concerns about funding cuts to various disability agencies. We need to see what we can do to help Mailman Center. Damian said he has been working with the Mailman Center for 9 years. He contributes to the community by working with them. CODI should get involved in advocacy. Many services we depend on for quality of life are being threatened. Disability health issues can be devastating. Kat said CODI should write a letter about the importance of agencies.

Eddie Sierra commented that we complain about budget cuts and government spending. We need to make the County and cities more responsible and support those disability agencies. We need to make our local elected officials responsible for funding.

- Chairperson Magnoli said that CODI is on the chopping block, so we need to improve the disability community without complaining. State of Florida does not see the need for CODI board. Mercedes Villar stated that we don’t spend money and don’t know why CODI is being chopped.
- Jody Cox said that yes, the County budget is under strict review. By ordinance, all County commissions and boards are reviewed every two years, so CODI is not being singled out. This is termed “sunset review.” There is funding in the ADA Office operational budget for staffing. A portion of the office’s staffing provides administrative support to CODI. Therefore, CODI’s sunset review package will show whether CODI is operating effectively and efficiently. What were CODI’s accomplishment over the last two years? Also, it’s important to keep in mind that CODI is a County board and its mission is focused on the County. Perhaps Text-to-911 was its biggest County accomplishment. However, keep in mind that the Sheriff’s Office and Information Technology Department played significant roles. Commissioners need to know that CODI members are accomplishing things. But unless his/her CODI appointee is staying in touch with them, he/she is unlikely to be informed about CODI’s accomplishments.
- Mr. Sierra said CODI did most of the work on Text to 911. I drove two hours to get here and we need to accomplish more. What is happening with our money? Ms. Villar said that we have trouble getting anything done due to bureaucracy. STS has issues that have not been fixed for years. CODI members need to be proactive and help by talking to commissioners. Each CODI member should make more efforts to communicate with their commissioners and the staff about the meeting topics and CODI meeting agendas.

5. Old Business:

a. Gas Pumps - Sandra Reus from Sunshine Gas Distributors spoke about ADA Accessibility at gas stations. Ms. Reus said we have lots of gas stations – over 150 – throughout South Florida. Over the past 12 years, we have been trying to resolve disability access issues. One

problem concerns the construction of gas stations. The existing ones are often very small and lack access to bathrooms, etc. Some gas stations would simply be too expensive to renovate and remove. Chairperson Magnoli said that the big concern is when disabled drivers cannot get assistance with pumping gas.

- Ms. Reus said that an intercom could help customers to contact for help, but the system fails easily because the technology was not ideal. Gas pumps are supposed to have stickers with phone numbers to contact station staff for help. But if only one employee is on duty, they cannot leave the station unattended. Her best advice is to patronize large stations with multiple employees. But the time lag of employees coming to help customers is too long. We do have spot checkers and people who try to check if services work. Damian Gregory asked if there is anything CODI or the County can do. Chairperson Magnoli asked if gas station staff receive disability etiquette training.
- Ms. Reus admitted that employees can be apathetic. Ten percent of gas stations are now shutdown late at night due to lack of available staff. Staffing was reduced by COVID and remains that way. She said that customer service training is provided every few years but only for station managers. Manager must ensure that staff are fully trained. Unfortunately, staff such as cashiers have high rate of turnover. She said that Sunshine gas does have an app which could be tweaked to do this. Mr. Sierra said that he cannot call gas station phone numbers because he's deaf. Many companies and staff won't answer disability relay call. An app is better than phone call.
- Ms. Cox suggested that CODI make a 15-minute video about issues for people with disabilities. The video could be used for training gas station staff.

b. Text to 911 - 1-minute video [Text-to-911 is NOW available countywide!](#)

- CODI members watched the video.
- Mr. Gregory and Mr. Sierra spoke about the challenges faced by people with disabilities during an emergency building evacuation. Chairperson Magnoli said CODI should invite Miami Dade Fire Rescue to attend a meeting to discuss emergency evacuation in high rise buildings.
- **Chantal Darius** discussed Med waiver. Also, CODI's sunset review report is due. CODI members need to provide her with a list of achievements over the last two years.

Next Scheduled Meeting and Adjournment:

- The meeting was adjourned at 1:00 PM.
- Next meeting: Tuesday, July 22, 2025: 10:30am-1pm, SPCC 18-4