



THE CITY OF MIRAMAR PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

MARCH 24, 2025

6:30 P.M.

The City of Miramar's Parks & Recreation Advisory Board (PRAB) met for its regular meeting on Monday, March 24, 2025, at 6:36 p.m. at the Community Service Building, 2nd floor conference room, 2200 Civic Center Place, Miramar, FL 33025.

- 1. CALL TO ORDER**
- 2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
- 3. ATTENDANCE - BOARD MEMBERS**

The following members of the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board were present:

Lair Hall, Vice Chairperson
Abdool Gani
Carlister Gordon
Nichola Officer
Synthia Parchment-Green
Carlos Ramsay
Sherria Williams

The following members of the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board were absent:

Dr. Yelena Revere, Chairperson (Excused)
Ian Excell (Excused)
Joshua Rhodes (Excused)

A quorum was achieved.

Staff present:

Commissioner Maxwell Chambers
Billy Neal, Director, Parks & Recreation (P&R)
Jacqueline Lovell-Santos, Dept. Coordinator, P&R

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- **February 24, 2025**

Mr. Gani made a motion to approve the minutes of February 24, 2025, as presented, seconded by Ms. Parchment-Green. The motioned passed unanimously.

5. Guest Speaker - Commissioner Maxwell Chambers

COMMISSIONER CHAMBERS: Thank you so much. It's a pleasure to be here, all of you. I want to start off by saying a big thanks to this board, a big, big thanks, because I've been living here a while, but all my years being here, my last ten years, this is the best board that I've ever seen with the most activity, and doing quite a number of things. I think the board laid dormant for quite some time, and it's very hard to get people on the same page to show up, much more to organize, and do things, and you guys are just amazing with the stuff you guys were able to accomplish in such a short time, and make it look like a real, real board, and real involvement in the City of Miramar. I think you guys led by example, and I think this is something to -- all other boards to follow. You know, this is just tremendous, the things that you guys have done for the City of Miramar, Parks, the children, the community, and I guess when you have the right group of people working together -- there is a lot of things to come, and there's stuff you guys can do. Myself, one of the things I'm working on -- and I know you guys are out in the community, you can share that seniors in our city, or going without AC, a lot of them have roof leaks, and we got to identify them, so we can help our seniors. I will be getting \$100,000.00 for the rest of this year to assist them with their AC, and roof leaks, so they can be more comfortable in their home, and take away their stress. So it's much more of the initiative, but this one will be more hands on. It's going to be the General Fund; we want to help them with their paperwork, we want to help them with the contractors, so we can fast track that.

Ms. Parchment-Green asked if Commissioner Chambers would also help with the pipes that are leaking, as there were many people she personally knew that had leaks in their walls.

COMMISSIONER CHAMBERS: That one was addressed to where the City had a \$10,000.00 loan that folks can tap into. If it's seniors that are having leaks -- this is an emergency program that I'm spearheading to assist these emergency situation. Officially, the summer coming up, and folks cannot afford their AC, this would be a grant for seniors, or disabled persons who cannot help themselves. Now we also will have the -- there's a \$10,000.00 program that I put in place for folks to borrow from at one percent; I'm changing that to make it \$15,000.00 at zero percent for five years, and after five years, all \$15,000.00 --

Ms. Parchment-Green wished to know who would qualify for the latter program.

COMMISSIONER CHAMBERS: Anybody that owned a home could qualify.

Vice Chairperson Hall sought clarification on what the funds could be used for.

COMMISSIONER CHAMBERS: Anything you want to do with your home, if you want to pay your taxes -- like somebody who have their house paid off, or their taxes not included in the mortgage, and they want to pay their taxes, if they want to fix the roof, want to do doors, any -- you want to do driveway. Whatever you want to do on your house, because we pay the money directly to whichever contractor that you're using.

Vice Chairperson Hall asked if a resident had to prove hardship.

COMMISSIONER CHAMBERS: No, no. That one you don't have to prove hardship. No. You have to own a home, or apartment that you owned, or condo that you own.

Board members voiced appreciation for the abovementioned programs.

Mr. Gordon appreciated the increase of the loan to \$15,000.00, as in his community there were several issues, and it was really bad. He thought the situation with the water was that the water was not being cleaned properly; now he heard that it had to do with reverse osmosis that caused the pin holes with the copper pipes. He looked at some of the copper pipes, and he thought the pipes the developers used in the communities having a problem was due to the builders using cheap copper pipes, not the L copper that was a thicker copper.

COMMISSIONER CHAMBERS: The City is following all the guidelines when it comes to the water; you can't really mess with the water; you go to jail; all federal guidelines.

Discussion points: question as to the areas in where residents experienced pipe

leaks; River Run, and Sliver Falls were named as communities where residents had problems with PVC pipe leaks; it was said PVC pipes began to fail after 30 years; copper pipe leaks were found in the developments of Various board members added other areas experiencing leaks included: Silver Lakes, and Monarch Lakes; when leaks developed in PVC pipes at Sherman Circle, the City came in and changed sections of the piping to address the issue; question asked if city staff needed help with qualifying seniors for funding to upgrade their AC, roofing, etc., was there a plan to establish a group of volunteers to help seniors through the application process.

COMMISSIONER CHAMBERS: Well, we request the money from the City Manager, and he said, yes, we're going to do the paperwork to put it place, and we're going to advertise it. We're going to reach out to contractors that would work with the City to do the work, and then the City put somebody in place to help them with the paperwork. Because what happened, normal packages are a lot of paperwork, and we got cut that out; they don't have time to go get three estimates; they don't have time to figure out the paperwork. We want to streamline it to make sure it's easy, like a one pager, no more than a two pager, because it's going to be a grant to them, and -- so we just got to get the paperwork done. It's a \$500,000.00 request, but I won't get that until next budget cycle in October, so the 100, we're going to do some people this year with that. It's just that when each person that run into difficulty, report that to us, and, you know, go ahead and try to assist these folks.

Vice Chairperson Hall sought confirmation it was first come/first served, as \$15,000.00 worked out to be \$250.00 a month for five years at zero interest. This was affordable for many people, and it would be a huge help to many in the Miramar community.

COMMISSIONER CHAMBERS: Not everybody will need the \$15,000.00; some take five, and it's going to be every year, so it will be every year. It's not going to be paid back in your water bill, as some people don't get a water bill. It might be everything is in their condo, so they would be responsible to pay it on their own, right. So folks who get a water bill -- and the thing is if you -- you don't have to pay it in five years, it's just that five-year period would be where you wouldn't pay any interest,. So the payment could be smaller, and then after you pay back a certain amount over five years, the balance that left, that's where the interest would be charged on, but it's just that I'm giving you a five-year window without any interest. You don't want to burden people too much, and some people might not be able to pay that amount, yeah, so if you can afford to pay it off in five years, it's up to you; you make those decisions. All right, so I'm leaving room for accommodating everybody who want to make smaller payment, and then maybe they might get caught with the interest on the end, which is -- the interest is not

bad.

Board members asked if the interest after the five-year period would be about two percent.

COMMISSIONER CHAMBERS: It would be no more than that. I think five years will give you a good -- if it's not working, we can come back and make changes; we're always going to be open for suggestions.

Vice Chairperson Hall mentioned the need to be mindful that seniors used reputable contractors for the work on their homes, not Ygrene, and PACE.

COMMISSIONER CHAMBERS: PACE, and Ygrene professionals were still allowed to do business here,. But I have a resident call me, lady, and she got her solar system put on her roof seven years ago, and she been paying ever since, and it was never hooked up to the FP&L system.

Ms. Parchment-Green mentioned have the same issue with the solar power system, but when her electricity bill did not go down, she called FP&L, and they told her they did not have her hooked up. Everyone she knew had solar power installed, she told them they had to hook the system up with FP&L, as the solar power company told residents in their sales spiel that they would do the hook up to FP&L, but they did not. FP&L told her the hook up with FP&L was the homeowner's responsibility.

Vice Chairperson Hall felt it was the worst program, and many older persons lost their homes, or had problems with it; the board wanted to make sure Miramar residents were well protected, which was the City's main objective.

COMMISSIONER CHAMBERS: We need to share the information; I think stay away from it; stay away from it, because the minute you put it on your roof, your insurance is not going to pay for the roof leak, so you lose your insurance if your roof start to leak. Once you have a leak, they're not going to cover your roof; they'll cover everything else, but they're not going to cover your roof. Once it penetrate -- because they bore, and they go down into that rafter; the insurance sees that, they're not going to pay for your roof. You don't lose your insurance; you're still paying for your insurance. Even if the leak doesn't have anything to do with the solar they put on your roof, that's a way for them to -- not to pay. Let me just finish up real quick. The solar that you get, if there's a hurricane come, and you're out of power for like a day or more, you can't -- it's useless, unless you get the battery, because you can't store the power, so it doesn't make sense to get the solar, and don't get the storage, and it's expensive. And when they tell you that you are going to sell power to FP&L, don't believe that. FPL going

charge you \$2.00 and change kilowatts; and they'll pay you three cents, two cents to buy it back from you.

Ms. Parchment-Green stated she had solar power, and she understood the various drawbacks mentioned, however for the past year her electricity bill was \$42.00. She called FP&L, and they came and hooked up her solar power to theirs about a year and a half ago; since that time, and since then her light bill did not go over \$60.00 in the summer when it used to be \$400.00. So that part worked, but based on the comments at the present meeting, it sounded as though she needed to begin saving for a roof.

Vice Chairperson Hall thanked Commission Chambers, on the board's behalf, for attending the meeting, and he hoped he would come back to update the board. The board believed there were other city events at which they could participate with the members of the Commission, understanding that they were very busy with their various events. He asked Commissioner Chambers to identify one of his annual events he partnered with the Parks Department on, so the board could assist.

COMMISSIONER CHAMBERS: It looks like I do quite a bit, but I do a lot of events; most of my stuff is done -- one I got coming up, Easter, and then we're going start planning for the fashion show, and so forth. The one event that I really want bring back -- we did it once, and it was a big success is Art, Food & Wine Around the Lake, right. My intention was never to do it at night, and we put it to night, but I want to do -- like how we have Coconut Grove Art Festival in the daytime, from like 10:00 to 6:00, so we use the light, and not go into the nighttime. But we also still want to, at some point, do the nighttime one, because a lot of folks liked it; yeah, yeah. But the Miramar Art Festival daytime would be the whole entire lake, and City Hall, so that's something we can work on, and work on that together, and make it happen. It's a daytime event; we're going to mimic Coconut Grove Art Festival; it's going to be Miramar Art Festival, so it's a daytime thing, as we make it happen. Yeah. And then we grow it. That's one of my dreams.

Ms. Officer thanked Commissioner Chambers for doing a great job at the board's food drive.

COMMISSIONER CHAMBERS: Thank you. And the **Link 21:28** Incorporated, the black family events at Shirley Branca last weekend, or the weekend -- yeah, that was another nice giveaway, and one of the things was UM, they brought their cancer screening bus, and they were overrun by men, and women coming to get information, so that was a nice event. That's something you guys can tap into next year when they come.

Ms. Officer expressed the willingness of the board to partner with Commissioner Chambers on his community initiatives; he need only send the event information to Mr. Neal and Ms. Lovell-Santos, and they would relay the information to the board members. Board members had numerous volunteers they could contact to assist at those events.

COMMISSIONER CHAMBERS: I have another clinic out of Miami, and they do food and stuff, so we could partner with them, the one that come over and help me with stuff, so they have all the resources, but we just got to have the day. They bring the food, they bring all -- everything. We will talk outside of the meeting.

Mr. Gordon echoed the board's appreciation for Commissioner Chambers's attendance, and the board's willingness to partner on his community events.

COMMISSIONER CHAMBERS: Right. And any ideas that you guys have, always shoot it. This is a city that's very progressive; my thing this year is moving forward as to whatever we can do to assist our residents more, that's where we want to go.

Mr. Gordon stated he was very near to getting his contractor's license, and he wished to meet with Commissioner Chambers to see how, as a contractor, I can work with the City, and help Miramar seniors in that regard. One of the reasons he was getting into this business was the way he saw contractors rip people off, and Miramar was his city, so in whatever way he can help his city in that regard, he wished to be a part of that.

COMMISSIONER CHAMBERS: We can do better. We can do better. And not just seniors, every homeowners, and others -- even employees get ripped off from Ygrene, and PACE, etc. Yeah, we could do more. We could keep the discussion going. Thank you guys so much. Thank you, Jackie, Billy's super lady.

Commissioner Chambers exited the meeting.

Discussion points: The board should put a number of events on its agenda, so there could be discussion on the board's participation, such as the children's hospital program presented at a previous meeting; the cancer screening from the University of Miami was a beneficial program for the community the board could participate in; the board could work with the senior project mentioned by Commissioner Chambers, helping seniors with their applications, or participate in seminars with the contractors; the board could small with small steps, and since

the funding was only \$100,000.00, this would prepare the board to be of more help when that figure was increased to \$500,000.00; the board's participation in this initiative would keep members aware of what the contractors were doing, as they tended to say one thing, and do another, as Ygrene, and PACE had done; it was like a bait and switch; there were gray areas in the law that allowed such happenings to occur; the fact that Ygrene, and PACE were able to get it approved to put a lien on homeowners' taxes, putting their clients at great disadvantage; not all experiences with Ygrene were negative, as it was important to really listen to what they were saying during their sales pitch; not listening caused many homeowners to miss some important features, such as homeowners needing to call FP&L when their solar power was installed to tell them that they wished to switch their system to solar; other homeowners claimed the solar power company representative told them they would take care of the hookup once the system was installed; it appeared each salesperson was different; it was an education issue for many residents, so it would be beneficial to hold seminars to educate residents on such matters.

6. City Updates: Parks & Recreation Director Billy Neal

Parks & Recreation Director Billy Neal updated the board on the following city events:

- Universal Soul Circus came to Miramar for three weeks of performances; the City made almost \$80,000.00 in parking fees alone; in total, including rentals, the City made \$100,000.00 from the event
- The City's Sip n' Taste event took place during the time the circus was in the City; there were about 800 people in attendance at the amphitheater at Miramar Regional Park
- The Kite Festival took place in the same timeframe as well; it was a very good event; this was Commissioner Barnes's farewell event; about 7,000 people passed through the event; this event grew larger every year; this event was hosted through commissioners' dollars; new commissioners decided whether to take on events hosted by past commissioners, or create their own events, programming, etc.
- Commissioner Chambers held a fundraising event in the western portion of Regional Park by the amphitheater, so there were three events taking place at the same time
- The next upcoming event was the Eggstravaganza Easter event hosted by Commissioner Chambers; the 2024 event was very larger, as it was held later, so attendees at other cities' events that were held earlier came over to Miramar after; normally about 10,000 people passed through, but in 2024 this number rose to about 30,000
- DroneArt Show: April 4th and 5th, 2025, at the Miramar Regional Park;

there would be a live orchestra; the event took place in the dark, so the show would begin about 8:00 p.m.

Discussion points: Staff should contact Commissioner Edwards to see if he was interested in taking over the sponsorship of the annual Kite Festival; staff invited the two new City Commissioners to attend the board's next meeting; the board would have the chance to meet them, and mention whether or not they wished them to reappoint them to the PRAB when the matter was considered by the Commission; regardless of the number of people who registered city events, oftentimes, particularly with the outdoor events, the number was much larger due to the attendance of non-Miramar residents, with attendees come from as far north as Orlando, and as far as south Miami; many attendees who did not live in Miramar said they came out because the City had wonderful park facilities, hosted great events, and giveaways; other cities had more restaurants than Miramar, but the City had great events, and when such vast crowds attended city events, the City benefited economically, buying gas, food, etc. from local businesses; it was important to eat and shop in Miramar first, as many restaurants, etc. were now open in the City; the board's 70th Anniversary T-shirts were being produced.

7. UPCOMING EVENTS – ADVISORY BOARD PARTICIPATION:

- Community Food Drive, Hosted by Commissioner Chambers – Saturday, April 26, 2025 (Lakeshore Park)
- Summer Camp Events
 - Colgate Bright Smiles/Bright Futures - Thursday, July 24th - YEC Hosted by Commissioner Yvette Colbourne
 - Nicklaus Children's Hospital - Health Fair - Thursday, July 31st (proposed date) - YEC Hosted by Commissioner Yvette Colbourne
 - Back To School Uniform & School Supplies Monday, August 5th - YEC

Discussion points: All board members present indicated they would be attending the April 26 food drive; flyers for the events were provided to the board; for the current fiscal year, any event funding associated with Commission Barnes would carry on as usual, as he already provided Parks with the promised funding; board members should think about which member of the Commission they hoped would take on the events once sponsored by Commissioner Barnes, possibly inviting the new members of the Commission to attend, so they saw first hand what the event was about; the invitations could be extended when they both attended the next board meeting; the Health Fair on July 31st date was now set, and Ms. Lovell-Santos would soon be told what screenings would be offered at

the event, and it would include the scoliosis screening, possibly the heart screening, along with others; attendees would register to attend, and the event was open to Miramar residents only; the back to school uniform event would continue to be opened to the younger children, and the school supplies/backpacks would be opened to the summer school attendees only, as it was not clear if the board could afford to distribute the backpacks and supplies to all Miramar children; there was a board consensus to leave the latter event as is; board members should consider some pointed questions to ask the new commissioners when they attended the next board meeting; question as to whether it was possible for staff to send the board's questions prior to the next board meeting, so they could consider their answers; question asked if the board would consider a community garage sale event, possible doing two or three, one in Historic Miramar, and central Miramar, and another further west; this was a good idea staff and the board would discuss further; they could be held at a city facility.

8. ADJOURNMENT:

The next meeting would be Monday, April 28, 2025, at 6:30 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:28 p.m.



Dr. Yelena Revere, Chairperson
YR/cp