



City of Doral Special Needs Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, January 31, 2024

6:00 p.m.

Doral Government Center
1st Floor Multipurpose Room
8401 NW 53rd Terrace
Doral, FL 33166

1. Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. Roll Call of Board Members

Vinita Tandon, Chair	Present
Elizabeth Dager, Vice Chair	Present
Caridad Bouza Merida, Secretary	Present
Nayipzi Gutierrez, Board Member	Present
Jorge Van Balen, Board Member	Present
Angelica Pinto, Alternate Member	Present

3. Pledge of Allegiance

4. Public Comments

Public members presented and introduced each other.

Most residents attended for information on the start of the Adult Day Training program.

5. Approval of Minutes

a. August 29, 2023

Motion to approve the minutes of the November 15, 2023 meeting made by the board. By consensus, motion passes unanimously.

6. Discussion Items

a. Update on Adult Training Program

Parents asked about the update on the agenda for the ADT, but there was no information available due to a last-minute change and there was no information given.

Vinita stated that it is disappointing that there was no information. Other parents were vocal in their disappointment at the lack of information.

They had asked in the past for the information, and they were informed that they had approved the provider, and they were waiting on space and funding. One parent spoke to the ADT provider who agreed to begin the program in Doral. The parents are willing to help but they need the city to help.

Vinita suggested that the parents continue to unite and send feedback to the city, attend meetings, and attend the council meetings as well. Emails should be sent to George Vega.

7. Open Discussion

Pedro Curbelo, Koala ABA & Learning Centers, spoke regarding becoming more involved in Doral as a parent of an autistic child and now having a means to help others. His goal is to focus on early intervention.

Board member Caridad introduced a resource fair to bring out providers. Vinita stated that a resource fair was held a few years ago and there was very poor attendance. Koala is also working on a family fun day, but space is an issue but will send out information as soon as possible. Vinita stated that we should keep in mind that attendance is an issue.

One resident stated that they are working with other parents to arrange a play date, but they have to coordinate and pay for the park shelter to organize this play date. Vinita suggested that the group submit a request via email to describe the event to the city for consideration.

Vinita stated that the important thing is to email the city and make the requests so that they can be considered and taken to council meetings.

Residents asked about the timeframe, however, the board advised that a timeframe cannot give a time when a program will start. The importance of recording the requests and the needs of the community so the city is aware of what the residents need, and they can begin to look for a solution.

Resident mentioned that a request was made last year for Autism Awareness, but the city was not prepared. The parents asked if the city of Doral was planning something for Autism Awareness.

Vinita pointed out that the city is doing a lot for the special needs community, and they are limited with staff and space to provide all types of services as the community needs. She stated that all emails will record the needs of the community.

Another resident stated that they understand that what they are requesting can be a lot but there are a lot of big businesses headquartered in Doral and perhaps they may want to help fund some events. Vinita presented it to the mayor and was directed to the Doral Chamber of Commerce where there are a lot of businesses registered with the Chamber.

Vinita re-emphasized that the parents are key in presenting the needs to the city. The board will work with the parents and the city to make progress on the projects.

One parent asked about budget and funding, specifically where residents can get this information. Parents can be volunteers in the programs so funding may be less costly. Parks and Recreation take requests constantly but sometimes there are overlapping activities and may not have space to accommodate some of the events.

Elizabeth stated that this is a good time now to send in the need to the city for their play dates. To be as specific as possible and they can begin putting these events into the calendar of the parks, especially for Doral Central Park which is still under construction.

A resident requested that perhaps the date of the Special Needs Advisory Board Committee meetings be changed due to the fact that most have activities on the same day at 6:00 pm and the parents are unable to attend. Elizabeth stated that we know it is difficult but there are some parents that can attend and represent others if they are at the other activities.

Vinita suggested that the parents come with the emails showing that they have written their requests, and we will try to have someone from the city to be available for the meeting. Bring your emails and Vinita will have a binder to collect the data. If we show the city the data (emails) the city will see how the residents are not getting the responses, they are looking for.

The residents again were voicing their disappointment with Jeorge not being here at the meeting as they felt they wasted their time coming to the meeting. They were advised that the board were not informed that there was no information available on ADT. The residents agreed that they should come to the meetings more often.

Another resident asked about how they can communicate with other parents to make sure that they all get the agenda. The group was reminded that the agenda is on the city's website for all to see and obtain. Due to privacy concerns, we cannot share the information with other parents.

Jorge wanted to make a comment, but we are going about it the wrong way. The advisory board has been here since the city began. The city was smaller, and resources were more abundant. The city is now bigger, the resources are spread out. This board meets only once a quarter. In the past the board met every month, and we cannot meet outside of the meetings. We should look at finding one person, an employee, would be responsible to get the funding for the city programs for the special needs community. Can work continuously to make sure the programs can happen and are funded appropriately. This should be presented to the city.

8. Discussion of Next Meeting Agenda Items
- Adult Training Program

9. Next Meeting: April 2024 at 6:00 p.m.

10. Adjournment


The meeting was adjourned at 7:10 p.m.


Respectfully submitted,


Caridad Bouza Merida, Secretary


Motion to approve the minutes of the January 31, 2024 Special Needs Advisory Board Meeting made by Board Member _____ and seconded by Board Member _____.


Vinita Tandon, Chair
Elizabeth Dager, Vice Chair
Caridad Bouza Merida, Board Member
Nayipzi Gutierrez, Board Member
Jorge Van Balen, Board Member











APPROVED and ADOPTED this 23rd day of April 2024.



Vinita Tandon, Chair