Miami Today votes to partner with others to forge an age-friendly community.

By John Bosman

As more and more Baby Boomers reach retirement age and the numbers of the silver-haired crowd, cities across the country are looking to create senior-friendly communities to attract the aging population.

The City of Miami is no exception.

Mayor Tomas Regalado has introduced legislation that would have the city manager to partner with others to make the city an age-friendly community.

Last week, council unanimously approved the measure.

It directs the city manager to work with the Miami-Dade Age-friendly Initiative, the Florida office of AARP (American Association of Retired Persons), and other stakeholders and organizations with the goal of making the City of Miami a member of the AARP Network of Age Friendly Communities and to increase the number of cities and communities that support healthy aging and thereby improve the health, well-being, safety, and quality of life for older Americans.

The organization has noted that making cities and communities age-friendly is one of the most cost-effective policy approaches to responding to demographic aging.

It has developed eight domains of community life that influence the health and quality of life for older people.

- Outdoor spaces and buildings
- Accessibility and availability of safe, clean, community, parks, and other recreational facilities
- Transportation—safe and affordable modes of personal and public transportation
- Complete Streets initiatives, bikeable and walkable streets
- Housing—a wide range of housing options for older residents, older home modification programs, housing that is accessible to transportation and community services
- Social participation—access to leisure and cultural activities; opportunities for older residents to participate in social and civic engagement with their peers and younger people.

Respect and social inclusion—programs to support and promote ethnic and cultural diversity through cultural events and multicultural interactions and dialogue, programs to combat loneliness and isolation among older residents.

The city manager is also expected to produce and post on the Miami Today website information on programs for older workers and employment—promotion of paid work and volunteer opportunities for older residents; opportunities for older residents to engage in formulation of policies relevant to their lives.

Communication and information—communication and information to the use of technology to keep older residents connected to their community and friends and family.

- Community support and health services—access to home care and information on how to promote active aging (physical exercise and healthy habits)

AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that helps people 50+ improve their quality of life.

The organization, founded in 1958, today boasts more than 38 million members.

Gables annexations moving ahead

By Catherine Lacen

With a positive response from voters in Little Gables, an unincorporated neighborhood to its north, Coral Gables is ready to proceed with an annexation effort that has been in play since late 2015, and talked about for longer.

Voters in High Pines, an affluent neighborhood near South Miami, are also considering being annexed but aren’t far along in the process.

The next step in the Little Gables annexation is to direct staff to put a public hearing and draft annexation to be presented to the county commissioners, which makes the ultimate decision.

Craig Len, Coral Gables city attorney, told the city commission Oct. 10.

The office of Rebecca Sosa, county commissioner in whose district Little Gables lies, work with the county’s Elections Department sent out a survey to residents and absentee voters in the neighborhood to gauge support.

The majority — 68% — replied that they were in favor of being part of Coral Gables.

“Following the survey, 24% of the Little Gables voters submitted favorable petitions to the city, surpassing the county’s 20% requirement,” said Naomi Levi Garcia, government affairs manager for Coral Gables. “AASSS support for annexation was a multi-step process.

Little Gables, 205 acres in size, is located outside Southwest Eighth Street between Unincorporated Memorial Park and Hialeah’s Circles Street. High Pines (which includes Ponce Drive) comprises 675 acres and is surrounded by the intersection of Sunset Drive (Southwest 72nd Street) and Red Road (Southwest 75th Avenue). While the population in each neighborhood is about 1,000, Little Gables has 1,624 voter votes while High Pines has 2,382.

Those numbers are important because “they are the only ones able to vote on annexation,” Coral Gables Manager Cathy Ponce commissioner Annette Rivera told the commission.

Surveys have yet to be conducted in High Pines, as the votes there remain in limbo.

City officials have stressed that each area will be considered separately, if High Pines residents opt out, it wouldn’t interfere with the Little Gables annexation.

“It is not a package deal,” Mr. Len said.

Noting that the Little Gables annexation was being discussed when he was in his first major term (1993 to 2001), Mayor Raúl Valdés-Fellows told commissioners “I look forward to welcoming Little Gables, as well as High Pines.”