



City of Coral Gables
CITY COMMISSION MEETING
December 8, 2015

ITEM TITLE:

Discussion regarding Board of Architects' Best Practices Manual.

DEPARTMENT HEAD RECOMMENDATION:

Discussion. No action is requested from the City Commission.

BACKGROUND:

On October 16, 2015, the Planning and Zoning Division hosted a Board of Architects workshop to address certain issues of process and procedure.

Workshop participants included appointed Board of Architects members, Development Services and Historical Resources staff, and applicant stakeholders.

During the workshop, some of the issues discussed were:

- The need to better communicate the building permit process to applicants.
- The need to better communicate the City's goals and vision in terms of aesthetics, for the benefit of both applicants and Board of Architects members.
- The need to have accessible guidance for applicants as to the Board of Architects' preferred design criteria for common applications such as roofing, windows, and fences, in a format that can be placed on the City website and distributed in hard copy.

At the conclusion of the workshop, participants agreed that an effective way to address the issues discussed would be to create a Best Practices Manual for the Board of Architects.

In contrast to the more common Design Guidelines format, a Best Practices Manual is not overly prescriptive. Instead, a Best Practices Manual provides clear guidance on the aesthetic goals and vision of the City of Coral Gables, and provides useful reference material for applicants, staff and Board of Architects members, while still allowing City Staff and Board members to apply their professional judgment to applications on a case-by-case basis.

The Best Practices Manual introduction summarizes the intent:

Coral Gables is a city founded to be memorable, and the past 90 years have fulfilled George Merrick's original intent. At first, the city was imagined as a collection of well-defined neighborhoods and districts, inspired by the architecture of Spain and the Mediterranean, in terms of aesthetics and form. Moreover, landscape was reinvented to expand Merrick's concept. In time, the initial idea inspired architects and builders to create a community renowned for its beauty and quality of life. Today, every new building aspires to contribute to this timeless tradition of excellence.

This booklet collects early drawings and texts that illustrate the best practices of town planning, urban design and architecture used to build Coral Gables. The drawings document a proud history of design, but also exemplify a living tradition of architecture of place and context. The content of this booklet should be used as a source of ideas, in the manner that the architects of the early 20th century used picture books as references for design. That was the way Coral Gables was first built.

Coral Gables is the product of thoughtful research. Books published in the 1910's and 20's set a high standard for architecture, and Walter de Garmo, Phineas Paist, the architects at Shultz and Weaver and others used them to learn about harmony, proportion and detailing. Now, the work of the early designers of Coral Gables is readily available to guide the present and future of the City. The following best practices should serve as the starting point for a permanent standard of outstanding design and vision.

A preliminary draft of the Best Practices Manual is attached as Exhibit A for Commission review and discussion. This is a first step in the review process. Staff will continue to refine the document in response to further staff, Board of Architects, and stakeholder review.

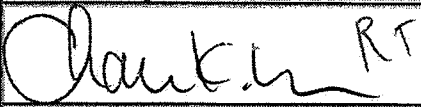

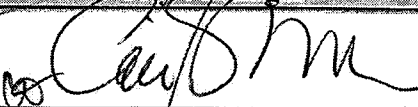
BOARD ACTION(S):

Date	Comments (if any)
	N/A

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION(S):

Date	Form of Notification
	N/A

APPROVED BY:

Asst. Department Director	City Attorney	City Manager
		

EXHIBIT(S):

- A. Preliminary Draft Board of Architects Best Practices Manual