

CORAL GABLES HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD
Wednesday, September 20, 2023, Meeting, 4:00 p.m.
Coral Gables City Hall, City Commission Chamber
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, Florida 33134

MEMBERS	O 22	N 22	D 22	J 23	F 23	M 23	A 23	M 23	J 23	J 23	A 23	S 23	APPOINTED BY
Cesar Garcia-Pons (Vice-Chair)	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	City Manager Peter Iglesias
Margaret (Peggy) Rolando	E	#	P	P	P	E	P	A	P	P	E	E	Commissioner Melissa Castro
Dona Spain	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	Commissioner Rhonda Anderson
Michael J. Maxwell	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	Commission Kirk R. Menendez
Bruce Ehrenhaft	E	P	P	P	E	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	Commission-As-A-Whole
Brett Gillis	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	E	P	P	P	Commissioner Ariel Fernandez
Michelle Cuervo-Dunaj	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	P	P	P	Mayor Vince Lago
Alejandro Silva	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	P	Board-As-A-Whole
Xavier Durana	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	E	Commission-As-A-Whole

LEGEND: A = Absent; P = Present; E = Excused; * = New Member; ^ = Resigned Member; - = No Meeting; # = Late meeting arrival

STAFF: Anna Pernas, Historic Preservation Officer, Kara Kautz, Assistant Historic Preservation Officer, Stephanie Throckmorton, Deputy City Attorney, Elizabeth Guin, Historic Preservation Coordinator.

RECORDING SECRETARY/PREPARATION OF MINUTES: Yvelisse Bonilla, Administrative Assistant

Secretary Anna Pernas called the meeting to order at 4:07 PM and stated in the absence of the chairperson and vice chair we will proceed to elect a chair.

Mr. Gillis made a motion to appoint Mr. Maxwell as Chairperson for this meeting. Ms. Dunaj seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Mr. Maxwell read for the record the statement regarding the purpose of the board and lobbyist registration and disclosure.

Attendance was stated for the record. In attendance were Ms. Michelle Dunaj, Mr. Brett Gillis, Mr. Michael Maxwell, Mr. Bruce Ehrenhaft and Mr. Alejandro Silva.

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Approval of the meeting minutes for the meeting on August 16, 2023, with amendments.

Mr. Gillis made a motion to approve the minutes of August 16, 2023, with amendments discussed. Ms. Dunaj seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

II. NOTICE REGARDING EX-PARTE COMMUNICATIONS:

Chairperson Maxwell read a statement regarding notice of ex-parte communications. Board members who had ex-parte communication of contact regarding cases being heard were instructed to disclose such communication or contact.

Mr. Gillis conducted a survey a few years ago that looked at the properties in this district. Properties in this district included 124/126 Mendoza Avenue. This does not impact on his ability to be impartial.

Mr. Maxwell worked on a digital scan of 290 Aragon Avenue. This does not impact on his ability to be impartial.

III. ANNOUNCEMENT OR DEFERRAL OF AN AGENDA ITEM:

No deferrals

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA:

Secretary Anna Pernas stated that Public Works officials would like to present updates on a city project at the intersection of Granada Avenue and Coral Way.

IV. SWEARING IN OF THE PUBLIC:

The court reporter administered the oath to audience members who planned to testify during the meeting.

V. CITY PROJECTS UPDATE:

Intersection of Granada Avenue & Coral Way: Presented by Ms. Melissa De Zayas, Public Works Engineer, and Mr. Hermes Diaz, Public Works Director

Presenting improvements to the intersection of Coral Way and Granada Avenue. Miami Dade County came to the City of Coral Gables and asked to harden the signal light at this location. The scope of the project is signal hardening, pedestrian safety, drainage improvements and landscaping beautification.

Coral Way is a county road. No figures on how many people get hurt based on the current layout. No street rendering with proposed plan. Board had concerns with the proposed sidewalk layout, plantings, and materials. The proposal feels disconnected from the historic context.

Public Comment - Peter Kiliddjian, 1108 Obispo Avenue – Currently sits on the Board of Architects. Recommends hiring an architect to show the relationship between the monuments and the landscaped areas in the drawing. Sees a mix of different sidewalk geometries and sizes, how do they relate to the monuments that exist on the corner? Requests a clearer depiction of what is being proposed.

Public Comment – Karelia Martinez Carbonell - Agrees with prior speaker regarding the presentation lacking a historical component. Important that it shows the priority being the historical monuments. This should have been better presented with a historical component. She recommends that silver should be the default on the streetlights of Coral Gables. Projects that have to do with historic landmarks should go through the HPB before they proceed any further.

Public Works will work with Staff to address some of the issues discussed and integrate them to the final plans. Public Works plans to present the proposal to the City Commission in November 2023.

VI. LOCAL HISTORIC DESIGNATIONS:

1. **CASE FILE LHD 2023-005:** Consideration of the local historic designation of the property at **124 & 126 Mendoza Avenue**, legally described as Lots 5 & 6, Block 39, Coral Gables Douglas Section, according to the Plat thereof, as recorded in Plat Book 25, at Page 69, of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County, Florida.

Ms. Elizabeth Guin read the Staff report accompanying the on-screen presentation.

Kenneth Garcia – Condo board president and owner of a unit spoke on behalf of the owner and is in support of the proposed designation for all the reasons outlined by Staff.

Ms. Pernas stated she received five letters of support of the local historic designation for 124 & 126 Mendoza Avenue.

Ms. Spain made a motion to approve the local historic designation of the property at 124 and 126 Mendoza Avenue based on their historic, cultural, and architectural significance. Mr. Ehrenhaft seconded the motion.

The motion passed (Ayes: 6, Nays: 0).

VI. TRANSFER OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS (SENDING SITE):

1. **CASE FILE TDR 2023-001:** Consideration of the Transfer of Development Rights for the property at **290 Aragon Avenue**, a Local Historic Landmark, legally described as Lots 1 & 2, Block 37, Coral Gables Section “K,” according to the Plat thereof, as recorded in Plat Book 8, at Page 33, of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County, Florida. The application requests approval of a maintenance plan, authorization for the transfer of the unused development rights, and the issuance of Certificates of Transfer. The Historic Preservation Board reviews the maintenance/preservation plan, pursuant to Section 14-204.4 of the Zoning Code. The Receiving Site (290 Valencia Avenue) was previously approved by the Historic Preservation Board (Case File TDR 2022-001) on February 22, 2022.

Ms. Pernas read the Staff report accompanying the on-screen presentation.

Nina Caruso, Director of Historic Preservation Services at RJ Heisenbottle Architects – Discussed the existing conditions of various architectural and structural building components. Components discussed: wall structure, exterior wall surface coating, roof surface covering, roof flashing, roof drainage system, windows, metal fire escape, balcony, corner guards, HVAC, plumbing, electrical, foundation.

John Lonardo, Owners Real Estate Rep – has represented the last five owners of this property. The new owner is eager to take advantage of the historic preservation incentives and make improvements to the building.

A motion was made by Ms. Dunaj to approve the maintenance preservation plan for the property at 290 Aragon Avenue for the reasons stated and based on staff recommendations. Mr. Silva seconded the motion.

The motion passed (Ayes: 6, Nays: 0).

VIII. BOARD ITEMS / CITY COMMISSION / CITY PROJECTS UPDATE:

1. Ms. Pernas stated that one board member must be at the City Commission meeting on September 26, 2023 to speak on behalf of the resolution. The board members were asked to nominate someone to attend the City Commission meeting on September 26, 2023, at 9:00AM.

A motion was made to nominate Mr. Maxwell to attend the City Commission meeting scheduled for September 26, 2023, at 9:00 AM to speak on behalf of the Historic Preservation Board resolution voted on August 16, 2023, re City Hall windows.

2. Ms. Pernas provided board members with the 2023 Annual Report for this board. Board members agreed with Chairman Maxwell signing the Annual report.

A motion was made by Ms. Spain and seconded by Ms. Dunaj to approve the 2023 Annual Report.

The motion passed (Ayes: 6, Nays: 0).

Annual Report Notes:

- a. In 2022-2023, 20 properties were added to the Coral Gables Register of Historic Places
- b. 35 Special Certificates of Appropriateness were reviewed by the Historic Preservation Board.
- c. 130 Standard Certificate of Appropriateness were processed by the Historic Resources staff.
- d. Staff processed one application for the Historic Preservation Ad Valorem tax incentive program.
- e. Staff process five applications for TDR
- f. Historical Resources and Cultural Arts Department staff issued over 100 historic determination letters.
- g. Completed over 300 inspections on historic properties.
- h. Assisted in the rehabilitation and restoration of the Fink Studio project, assisted with replication of the White Way Lights project.
- i. Assisted with the reconstruction of the Merrick House Coral Rock wall project.
- j. Staff planned and coordinated events at the Merrick House to include 100 Voices Oral History series, Proper Garden Tea, and hosted Sundays on the Porch with George.

Mr. Gillis mentioned that the fee for a reissue for the historic determination requests is very low and requires the same amount of work. He is also concerned with the properties that request a re-issue letter before they are 50 years old (i.e., 1000 Ponce De Leon Blvd).

IX. ITEMS FROM THE SECRETARY:

1. Staff reminded board members of the upcoming Biennial Boards and Committees Ethics Training scheduled for September 29, 2023, 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM at Police and Fire Headquarters.
2. Ms. Pernas requests the board to excuse the absences of Mr. Durana, Mr. Garcia-Pons, and Ms. Rolando.

A motion was made by Mr. Gillis and seconded by Mr. Ehrenhaft to excuse the absence of Mr. Garcia-Pons, Mr. Durana and Ms. Rolando from this meeting.

The motion passed (Ayes: 6, Nays: 0)

X. DISCUSSION ITEM:

1. Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) - Mr. Maxwell would like to have further conversations regarding the process and submittal requirements for the Transfer of Development Rights. He expressed concern that when there is a sale of TDR's, we have no policy in our program that allows usage of the money to preserve the property. There should be a change in the code that requires a long-term plan for the property, not just a review of the existing conditions. This would be a recommendation to the Planning and Zoning Board. Ms. Spain is interested in what other municipalities are doing with their TDR's. Once the 2024 meeting dates are confirmed by the City Clerk's Office, Ms. Pernas will provide date options for a special meeting to for a TDR workshop.

XI. OLD BUSINESS:

1. 1100 block of Sevilla Avenue – There is a white house in terrible condition, garage is falling. This house was designated, and Staff has been coordinating with Code Enforcement and Development Services. Ms. Pernas walked through the site last month with the Building Official, Assistant Building Director and the property owner to inspect the condition of the building. The owner is working with an engineer now to get a report of the conditions assessment done to provide the City. This property was deferred several times but was finally designated by this board in October 2021.
2. Window Replacement Throughout the City – Mr. Gillis wants to know how the 1920's windows are replaced with picture windows on the historically significant homes that are not designated. These properties are slipping through the cracks and getting inappropriate fenestrations. Specifically, 1603 Granada Boulevard, 512 Aragon Avenue, 604 Navarre Avenue, and 540 Minorca Avenue. This is changing the face of these streets. Ms. Pernas is at the BOA meetings but only deals with items that are designated properties.

XII. NEW BUSINESS:


1. North Ponce: Mr. Gillis has been in touch with one of the property owners in the North Ponce De Leon Boulevard area: 1620 & 1624 Phoenicia Avenue, 15 & 19 Antilla Street. All but one has a second dwelling unit on the property. There is a loophole, since they were built as a single-family home, they do not qualify to be a TDR sending site. Mr. Gillis would like a Sunshine meeting or workshop to discuss how to get these property owners to qualify for TDR and then have a neighborhood meeting with them, this may be included in the overall TDR Workshop.

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion was made by Mr. Maxwell and seconded by Mr. Ehrenhaft to adjourn the meeting at 7:00 PM. The motion was unanimously approved by voice vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,


Anna Pernas

Historic Resources and Cultural Arts Director