



CORAL GABLES MERRICK HOUSE GOVERNING BOARD MEETING
Meeting Minutes of January 9, 2023, 8:30 a.m.
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, 2nd Floor, Coral Gables, Florida 33134

*Historical Resources &
Cultural Arts*

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MEMBERS	F 22	M 22	A 22	M 22	J 22	J 22	A 22	S 22	O 22	N 22	D 22	J 23	APPOINTED BY
Ana Lam	P	P	#	P	N	N	P	P	P	P	N	E	Mayor Vince Lago
Barbara Reese	P	P	P	P	O	O	E	P	E	E	O	P	Vice-Mayor Michael Mena
Bonnie Seipp	E	P	P	P	M	M	P	E	P	P	M	E	Commissioner Rhonda Anderson
Carmen Cason	P	P	P	A	E	E	E	P	P	P	E	P	Commissioner Jorge L. Fors, Jr.
Mary Beth Burke	P	P	P	P	E	E	P	E	P	P	E	E	Commissioner Kirk R. Menendez
Alexis Ehrenhaft	E	P	P	E	T	T	E	P	E	E	T	P	City Manager Peter Iglesias
Joanne Meagher	P	P	P	P	N	N	P	P	P	P	N	P	Board-as-a-Whole

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

STAFF: Warren Adams, Historic Preservation Officer; Kara Kautz, Assistant Historic Preservation Officer; Gay Bondurant, Docent Coordinator.

RECORDING SECRETARY/PREPARATION OF MINUTES: Nancy Kay Lyons, Administrative Assistant

CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order by Chair Meagher at 8:40 a.m. and attendance was stated for the record.

APPROVAL OF ABSENCES:

A motion was made by Ms. Ehrenhaft and seconded by Ms. Reese to approve the absence of Ms. Burke, Ms. Seipp and Ms. Lam.

The motion was unanimously approved.

OPENING STATEMENT:

Chair Meagher said that in the last couple of weeks, she has thought about the connections between George Merrick, his team, and the people in the community who have continued to work very hard to rescue and preserve places. While at Sallye Jude’s funeral, she was ever more aware of that. The Miami Herald called her the “patron saint” of historic preservation and all that relates to the environment. In the weeks before she died at age 96, she lent her name to the effort to designate The Garden of our Lord across from the Coral Gables Woman’s Club. Robert Fitch Smith is the same architect who designed Sallye’s former home, Java Head, as well as the Doc Thomas House, now home to the Tropical Audubon Society. Fitch Smith graduated from the University of Miami in 1930, was its first Dean of Architecture, and was known by Merrick. There are several connections to George Merrick in the Garden. When the Merrick’s first arrived here they were unable to get to their land because the entire area was under quarantine due to the yellow fever epidemic of the early 1900s. There is a plaque in the garden for the nurse who died in the quest to find which mosquito was responsible for yellow fever. There is also a plaque which states; “This is in memory of George Merrick for bringing the best in Spanish art, architecture, and culture to the New World especially Florida. He was decorated by the King of Spain for his view of the future, his love of the artistic and his development of Coral Gables, The City Beautiful. He will always be acclaimed by an appreciative citizenry.”

Chair Meagher notified the board that the Historic Preservation Board will be reviewing the historic designation The Garden of our Lord. She is planning to speak at the meeting and offered to share more information with board members.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A motion was made by Ms. Cason and seconded by Ms. Ehrenhaft to approve the minutes of November 14, 2022, with corrections.

The motion was unanimously approved.

HOUSE REPORT:

1. **Coral Gables Merrick House Report for December 2022:** Ms. Bondurant read the Coral Gables Merrick House Report for December 2022 (attached).
2. **Merrick House Matters Newsletter:** The 2nd Issue of the Merrick House Matters was sent out to everyone the last week in December. Ms. Bondurant said it gives a good record of what is going on at the Merrick House. The title "Merrick House Matters: refers not only to matters involving the Merrick House but also that the Merrick House matters.
3. **Donation by Gay Bondurant:** Ms. Bondurant made the \$300 donation to the Merrick House from her merchandise sales.
5. **Docent Shortage:** January will be a short month. Ms. Bondurant said there were currently 9 docents including herself. She estimated at least 15 docents are needed. Chair Meagher said she will call her friend Patricia Hyland who said she will be coming on board in January or February. There is also a gentleman at the museum that Ms. Bondurant is hoping to recruit. She told the board they still need to build their core of docents and asked if they knew of anyone that was interested. Ms. Bondurant said the DAR will meet again at the house this Tuesday, so she would attend the meeting to try to recruit people. Ms. Ehrenhaft asked if it could be put in the Gables Insider. Ms. Bondurant said she would check with Ms. Kautz and Martha Pantin.
6. **Docent Bruce Ehrenhaft:** Chair Meagher commended Bruce Ehrenhaft, Alexis Ehrenhaft's husband, as being one of the most helpful docents and is always willing to do anything whether asked of him or not. Both Ms. Bondurant and Chair Meagher agreed that he was an amazing docent, and they were happy to have him.
7. **Christmas Tree Removal:** Chair Meagher said they removed the Christmas tree while the house was closed. Mr. Ehrenhaft carefully removed all the ornaments and laid them out for storage.
8. **Telephone for Merrick House:** Mr. Adams said that a request was made to the IT department to get a cell phone until the phone lines are fixed, he will follow up.
9. **Roof Leak:** Ms. Kautz received a quote to address the roof leak in the sunroom for approximately \$27,000 which she will forward to Public Works. The work will be done in three parts: diverting water away from the chimney, drying and sealing the coral on the chimney, and interior repairs. Ms. Kautz will ask the conservators to come and make sure the ceiling plaster is sound.
10. **Other Issues:** The leak in the little office was addressed by Public Works who cleaned the scupper. The sunroom wall is showing signs of water intrusion. Ms. Kautz will bring up to Public Works again.
11. **Venetian Plaster:** Quote has been received and they are waiting on funding
12. **Coral Wall:** The coral wall repair has been completed.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. **DAR (Daughters of the American Revolution):** Met at the Merrick House on December 6, 2022. The \$500 security deposit was waived. They paid \$50 in rental, reflected in Ms. Bondurant's report.
2. **Maintenance Schedule:** Chair Meagher requested Ms. Kautz to come up with a date for a meeting and invite Public Works to get work done, create goodwill, and get to know the people involved.
3. **Website:** Chair Meagher will be working with IT to make the site more engaging and dynamic. Ms. Kautz requested that requests need to go through Staff.
4. **Museum Board:** The Merrick House hosted the Museum Board on November 17, 2022.
5. **Garden Club Décor:** Chair Meagher thanked Ms. Ehrenhaft for coordinating the effort. Everything looked beautiful.
6. **Christmas decorations:** Chair Meagher and Ms. Cason will label everything when it is put away at the end of January.
7. **Open House Notes:** Ms. Reese sold a lot of merchandise; Chair Meagher sent the Symphonettes a thank you letter; Over 300 people RSVP'd on Eventbrite; The City requested that next year's event not be on the same day as the Junior Orange Bowl parade; Santa Claus arrived on time; Everyone enjoyed the handbells and carolers; Ms. Kautz suggested purchasing a fake Christmas tree for the house and will research.

8. **Coral Wall Ribbon Cutting:** Went great. Mayor was a bit late which worked in their favor. Ms. Ehrenhaft suggested that proper attire should be required for events.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. **“100 Voices” Lectures:**
 - a) **January:** There will be no event in January.
 - b) **February:** The Joint event with the Historic Preservation Association of Coral Gables will be held on Sunday, February 12, 2023.
 - c) **March:** No event.
 - d) **April:** The suggested speaker is Dolly McIntyre.
 - e) **May:** On May 1, Chair Meagher suggested the speaker should be Monk Terry, husband of docent Kitty Terry. His great grandmother Julia Ward Howe started Mother’s Day and penned the Battle Hymn of the Republic. This will be the last one for the season.
2. **Garden Tea:**
 - a) **Date:** Tentatively scheduled for March 19, 2023.
 - b) **Point Person:** Ms. Burke has agreed to be the point person.
 - c) **Theme:** The suggested theme is cooking and china. They could possibly show examples of china styles through the decades. Chair Meagher suggested having a designer come in and do a demonstration table of how to mix and match the different styles, showing how to use old china paired with new china to make a beautiful tablescape.
 - d) **Ticket Costs:** Last year tickets were \$45 which only covered the food. This will be discussed at the February meeting.
 - e) **Advance Ticket Sales:** Limiting entry to advance ticket sales might allow better planning for the number of attendees.
 - f) **Food:** The food boxes were a problem last time and a sit-down tea might elevate the event.
3. **Dishwasher:** Either purchase a new one or repair the existing one hooked up. Ms. Kautz would investigate and report back to the Board.
4. **Purchase of new antique vanity set:** The existing one is rusted and looks awful. Miami Twice has a similar set, not as large, in green celluloid for \$150. It was suggested to archive the existing set and display the new set.

A motion was made by Ms. Reese and seconded by Ms. Cason to approve the purchase of a new antique vanity set using Merrick House Funds.

The motion was unanimously approved.

DISCUSSION ITEMS: None

CITY COMMISSION ITEMS: None

ITEMS FROM THE SECRETARY:

1. **Thank you card from Ms. Worm:** Ms. Worm sent a very nice thank you card for the flowers.
2. **Rental Request from the St. Lucia Consulate:** They are having a flag raising ceremony for their Independence Celebration on Wednesday, February 22, 2023. The ceremony will be from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., but they will be there for set-up and take down as well. They have done this before.

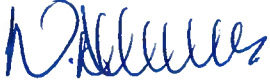
A motion was made by Ms. Ehrenhaft and seconded by Ms. Reese to approve the rental of the Merrick House grounds by the St. Lucia Consulate for their flag raising ceremony on Wednesday, February 22, 2023.

The motion was unanimously approved.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:37 am.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "W. Adams", written in a cursive style.

Warren Adams
Historic Preservation Officer