



**LANDMARKS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING**  
**Meeting Minutes of February 1, 2022, at 9:00 am.**  
**Coral Gables City Hall, City Commission Chamber**  
**405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, Florida 33134**

Historical Resources &  
 Cultural Arts

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STAFF: Warren Adams, Historic Preservation Officer

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

MEMBERS	F 01	APPOINTED BY
Mayor Don Slesnick	P	Mayor Vince Lago
Gay Bondurant	P	Commissioner Kirk R. Menendez
Ramona Busot	P	City Manager Peter Iglesias
Alice Goldhagen	P	Vice-Mayor Michael Mena
Donna Heisenbottle	P	Commissioner Jorge L. Fors, Jr.
Jane Maranos	P	Commissioner Rhonda Anderson

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

**CALL TO ORDER:**

The meeting was called to order at 9:05.

Mr. Adams welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the Landmarks Advisory Board and thanked everyone for volunteering.

**ROLL CALL:**

Ms. Lyons called the roll; all members were present.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

There were no previous minutes as this was the first meeting of the board.

**ANNOUNCEMENT OF DEFERRAL OF AGENDA ITEMS:** None

Mr. Adams asked all the members to introduce themselves and tell a little about themselves, which they did. Mr. Adams introduced himself and gave a brief history of his experience. He said he would have someone from legal present after a couple of meetings, he also introduced Ms. Lyons.

Ms. Maranos asked about the sunshine law, the date of next meeting, and whether it was virtual or in person. Mr. Adams said it was scheduled for May 3, 2022, and all meetings in the city were in person and he would have someone from legal to explain the requirements of the Sunshine Law.

Mayor Slesnick suggested that they should have a meeting before the regularly scheduled meeting and asked Mr. Adams to circulate some dates. Mr. Adams said he would and maybe Tuesday mornings would be available. Mr. Adams suggested that they make a motion under the discussion items. Mayor Slesnick said that while the Sunshine Law was explicit, members should not shy away from social contact or discussing issues not coming before the board.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Board-as-a-whole nomination: Mr. Adams said if anyone on the board had any nominations, they should submit them now, and then those persons could submit an application to the City Clerk's Office. He would provide the board with the information prior to the next meeting so they could move ahead with the voting.

Ms. Maranos nominated Lauren Dowlen who was present in the audience. Mr. Adams requested her to submit an application, which she said she had already done.

Mayor Slesnick nominated **Ajit Asrani**, Mr. Adams said he would reach out to Mr. Asrani to submit an application.

A motion was made by Ms. Maranos and seconded by Ms. Bondurant to close the nominations.  
The motion passed with a collective aye.

## **LANDMARKS ADVISORY BOARD UPDATES**

### Historic Markers

Mr. Adams gave a presentation on the historic markers

1. Frank Button Marker – Alhambra Circle / Majorca Avenue – Condition: damaged  
Ms. Bondurant said it had a long history of being damaged. It was damaged twice in the last year. It was removed and replaced the first time, then had a crack 2/3 of the way and now there was no marker. She assumed that the city had removed it. – Mr. Adams said he would get a progress report. Ms. Bondurant had reported this and was told that one of the Public Works personnel had hit it. Ms. Maranos said that they had lost one at the library for the White Way lights, but it had gotten replaced. She noted that the new markers were not as strong as the old markers.

Mr. Adams requested that if anyone saw damaged markers, they should report them to him, and he would reach out to Public Works. Mr. Adams would request the point person attend these meetings.

2. Coral Gables Sign – North Greenway Drive/Coral Way – Condition: removed  
Mr. Adams showed a poor street view picture from 2007/2008 and read an email from Blanche Brownell about the welcome sign that was at the entrance to North Greenway Drive on the back end of the third hole of the Granada Golf Course directing visitors to the Coral Gables Country Club. It was removed during the construction of the traffic calming at the intersection of Segovia and Coral Way. Ms. Brownell was requesting the marker be put back in its place. She said that no one at City Hall remembered this sign.  
No one on the board remembered the sign. Ms. Maranos thought it was an odd position for the sign as it was not at the entrance to Coral Gables. Mr. Adams said that it might have said “Welcome to Coral Gables Country Club”. Mayor Slesnick said he thought it should say Historic Granada Golf Course. Ms. Bondurant said the signs were out of character with Coral Gables. There was one coming in from Red Road. Mr. Adams said he was letting them know about the inquiry and would do some research.

Mayor Slesnick said he notified the city about the missing sign near the clubhouse near the first tee which had a historical synopsis of the golf course, he could not locate photographs of the sign and no one in the city remembered it. It was city not a state marker. Ms. Bondurant said she remembered it being there but did not know when it had disappeared. Mr. Adams said he would do research and check in the archives. The board members stated that they would like to see the sign put back. Ms. Bondurant said there was some mention of the golf course on the marker in front of the Old County Club and it combined the two.

3. Riding Academy & Show ring – Aragon Avenue/Salzedo Street -Condition: removed.  
There is a replacement in the historic office and a workorder has been created for it.

Ms. Maranos said that she thought this sign had gone missing during Illuminate when a truck had backed into it, however Ms. Bondurant stated that it was missing well before that, she was told by the Director of the Museum that he had seen Public Works Landscaping run into the sign. The marker was ripped off leaving a spur which was dangerous and needed to be removed.

There is also a second sign in the historic office for the MacFarlane Historic District, the MacFarlane Golden Gate, and it needed to be determined where the marker would be placed, while working with the community. Ms. Maranos asked if there could be a ceremony, to which Mr. Adams responded affirmatively. The question was asked as to what was the reason for the damage to the signs? Mr. Adams said that he had heard that it was landscaping vehicles hitting them.

4. South Entrance - Old Cutler Road/SW 57 Avenue –  
Mr. Adams said emails had been forwarded by Commissioner Anderson, from a Norman Seagal, who stated that the entrance to the city is marked by a gravestone with weeds growing out of it. He had been at this since 2013

when the then mayor and city manager were enthusiastic about replacing this marker with something more appropriate. A committee was formed, architectural plans drawn, and funds allocated, but nothing happened. Mr. Adams said he had recently spoken with Hermes Diaz, Public Works Director who said there was a problem with the county which had to be resolved to move forward and promised to request funds in the budget process starting in January 2022 and would push the county to resolve the problem. He said Mr. Diaz had provided his points to the commissioner and the Old Cutler Road entrance project was funded by the City Commission a few years back, a conceptual design was developed and submitted to Miami Dade County for review, both sections of Old Cutler Road and SW 57 Avenue are classified as minor urban arterial roads and a minimum clearance to the monument of 14 feet was required. The existing monument did not meet this requirement, but any new construction would be required to meet current standards. Unfortunately, there is no space at this location to provide said clearance except by constructing a curb. Introducing a raised curb may allow for the reduction of the required clear zone down to 4 feet subject to approval by Miami-Dade County. However, the addition of a curb would result in the interruption of the stormwater runoff, thus necessitating further reconstruction of the intersection and a new drainage system at additional expense. Ultimately the project funding fell victim to our COVID funding shortfall, and as a result the project was pushed back. If the City Manager and the commission agree they could update the current estimate and add this project to next year's budget for consideration. There are also a few additional challenges. The original concept included the installation of pavers at the intersection of Red Road and Old Cutler Road, both of which are county roads. These pavers would disrupt the existing traffic loop requiring signal improvements by adding cameras. The county typically frowns upon the installation of pavers on their right-of-way. Additional approval from Pinecrest's City Commission would be required as the northern half of Old Cutler Road is within their boundaries. None of these challenges are insurmountable, but they will require time and additional expense to address. Currently only conceptual drawings have been produced. Mr. Adams said this was just to let the board know that they had received a request and he would update them whenever something happened. Mayor Slesnick said this was the entrance to the heart of Coral Gables but was no longer the entrance to Coral Gables which extended further south. He did not want to upset the people in the South when they see they are entering Coral Gables.

**CITY COMMISSION ITEMS:** None

**ITEMS FROM THE SECRETARY:** None

**DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

Mr. Adams said he wanted to open it up to the board members regarding any concerns or ideas the board may have including the wording of the ordinance and any future agenda items or projects.

Ms. Bondurant brought up the following items:

1. Marker for Officer Cyril Guest – first fallen officer in Coral Gables - deceased December 25, 1928. His marker is in the place where he deceased. To get to it, one must cross Alhambra Plaza, the marker is also covered with foliage. Ms. Bondurant suggested that it should be moved to the new police and fire station or the new public safety building. Mr. Adams said he questioned the appropriateness of moving the marker. Ms. Bondurant said it would have to be discussed as it could not be seen and was not honoring his service. Mayor Slesnick said it was erected when he was mayor, but that was not probably the exact location where he fell and there might be another more appropriate visible site along Alhambra Plaza that was closer to where he was killed. He stated that he thought that the department already had a memorial for the fallen officers.
2. W. L. Philbrick –marker at the Merrick House –Mr. Philbrick was a person pivotal in saving the Merrick House, his marker is insignificant and in an inauspicious location. She suggested creating a more meaningful plaque or marker and placing it in a more visible and honorable location.
3. Raul Valdes Fauli Sr. archives plaque on a garage building at the Merrick House. The files, documents and memorabilia are no longer housed in that location, they are now located in the Historical Resources Department Archives. Ms. Bondurant wanted the plaque to be removed.
4. More appropriate landscaping should be near the markers to prevent vehicles from running into them. She suggested that they should not put ferns in front as they cover the markers.
5. Marker at the east end of Miracle Mile in front of Denny's is buried in the ferns.
6. Cement street signs and the blue and yellow cement stop signs were designated as historic on November 20, 2019.

Mr. Adams said that he would get updates on these items for the next meeting. He said he did not have a budget to do anything. He would try and get someone from Public Works at the next meeting. Ms. Maranos said that they could get a list together and then discuss them in the order in which they would be addressed.

Ms. Heisenbottle asked if there was a set of guidelines for the markers that should be followed so that there was some continuity regarding erection, wording, and placement. She also thought that they should look at cost effectiveness, including reviewing the placement of the markers so they would not get destroyed by maintenance workers. She asked if there was a criterion for landscaping at the location of the markers. Mr. Adams said there should be a standard that would give appearance, wording, placement. He suggested the board take the lead and create the specifications for new markers. Ms. Maranos asked if the specifications would have to go to the Historic Board or the City Commission for approval. Mr. Adams said it would require review, but they would decide whether it had to go to the board. Any project with a significant cost not already in the budget would probably have to go to the City Commission. FY 2021/2022 budget was already completed, but they could possibly get funding in next year's budget for proposed projects. Ms. Bondurant said some of the street name markers have been missing or misplaced and she had sent a list to Public Works, and nothing had been done. Mr. Adams requested her to send the list to him.

Ms. Marranos stated that she was in favor of meetings every other month. Mr. Adams said that the meeting dates were stated in the ordinance, but they had the option to have special meeting.

A motion was made by Ms. Maranos and seconded by Ms. Bondurant to change the meetings from once a quarter to every other month and have a special meeting in March.

The motion passed with a collective aye.

#### **Whiteway Lights Project:**

Mr. Adams gave an updated on the Whiteway Lights - There are two poles that would be inspected. One was restored and one was recreated. The paint color was recently approved, and the examples of the molds for the bottom of the lights looked good. The question was whether to use proprietary Sternberg fittings for the luminaire at the top of the light or use an existing original and have them recreated. The intent has always been to use the proprietary Sternberg fittings because they are available, have been tested and meet code requirements and they are very similar to the originals albeit a little bit smaller. He had been directed to reach out to the company doing the poles for an estimate to recreate the original fixtures. After several months he got a response from the metal works company stating that they had not estimated the work because it would be incredibly expensive, and it would take a long time. However, if they really wanted it done, they would look into it. They submitted a report from their engineer and the recommendation was to go with the Sternberg fittings as when you recreate a new light fixture it still needed to meet all the current codes. The concerns were as follows:

- A) How they fixtures would hold up in hurricanes, if they were blown off there would be the constant replacing of these very expensive fixtures?
- B) Would they cast enough light on the roadway?
- C) Would the glass meet current requirements?
- D) Water ingress?
- E) Insect or animal ingress?
- F) Overheating?
- G) Tooling costs (metal worker fees) would be extremely high.

The light would have to go through all the required tests to ensure it met all electrical and lighting requirements and it was a lengthy and expensive process. At a meeting with the city manager, it was decided that when they received the two poles, they would put them up temporarily, and put the original on one and the Sternberg proprietary fixture on the other and then determine what direction they would go in.

Ms. Maranos said the ordinance Section 2227 Creation and Purpose states that the board shall be responsible for location and identifying potential new landmarks, entrances and features to the city and acquiring parcels of land for such purpose. She asked if they were going to be looking for empty lots to create new parks? Mr. Adams said it was within their purview to make these suggestions, they would not actually have to go out and scout locations. If they found a vacant parcel up for sale, they could request him to find out if it was something the city was interested in, but they should focus on the existing landmark and markers and possibly the suggestion for new markers, however it allowed them the opportunity to suggest new locations as well.

Mayor Slesnick said he reviewed the original proposed ordinance and spoke to the mayor as he was concerned that this board was too limited in scope. Even though looking at current markers, the condition of markers and historic sites and

monuments was very important, the board should have more scope. Landmarks do not end with markers, street signs and monuments, they may include many built structures. He suggested the board catalog their suggestions for landmark designations, not only these little specific places, but also those structures critical to the city. The National Register of Historic Places requires petitions, applications and hearings that go up to the state and then to the National Register Board, but then on top of that are the landmarks designations. He suggested discussing raising the bar on certain sites to make them landmarks of the city and having a separate designation. The Biltmore hotel was a historic landmark federally, but not locally. He also brought up the Merrick House. He said landmarks fit the description of their name. He was bringing it to the board's attention that the ordinance had been amended to include other things.

**Alhambra Water Tower:**

Mr. Adams said he had visited the site six or seven months ago with the insurance adjusters to assess hurricane damage. Prior to that a water test was done where they soaked the exterior and there was water penetration. He would investigate the current status. Mr. Adams recommended the repairs being done prior to it being repainted. In answer to Ms. Maranos' question, he said he did not know why there were two gates around it.

**Budget:**

Mayor Slesnick suggested that they work with Mr. Adams to develop a budget for the coming year as the commission starts considering budgetary items in July and moves toward a final approval in September to begin the fiscal year October 1st. One of the board's goals should be to build a proposed budget for their projects. Ms. Bondurant has compiled a gallery of historical markers complete with photos which Mr. Adams said he would send to the board. Mayor Slesnick said that Ms. Goldhagen probably had photographs of landmarks which she might be able to share with the board.

**NOMINATIONS:**

A motion was made by Ms. Maranos and seconded by Ms. Busot to nominate Mayor Slesnick as the interim chair. The motion passed with a collective aye.

A motion was made by Mayor Slesnick and seconded by Ms. Bondurant to nominate Ms. Maranos as the interim vice-chair. The motion passed with a collective aye.

Mayor Slesnick suggested that once the last member of the board was initiated that they have a photograph taken of the board and a press release put out.

Mr. Adams said he would share anything he received from the Florida Trust or the state. He said someone from the City Attorney's office would explain the sunshine law, but there was a recognized training required. If the board wanted guests to come and speak at the meetings, they should let him know.

**FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:** None

**OLD BUSINESS:** None

**ADJOURNMENT:**

A motion was made by Ms. Maranos and seconded by Ms. Heisenbottle to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed with a collective aye.

**BOARD FORMALLY RECONVENED:**

Mayor Slesnick thanked everyone for their participation stated that it was not the goal of the board to encroach on the historic preservation board's jurisdiction, but to add to what they do.

Mr. Adams said the ordinance stated that there should be one joint meeting with the historic preservation board. The historic preservation board suggested something around the six-month mark, around September, October, or November.

Mayor Slesnick said he wanted an opinion from the city attorney if they had to take specific comments on specific items as they were not the final vote on many things.

Ms. Lyons stated that there was someone on Zoom who wanted to comment.

Ms. Karelia Carbonell spoke on Zoom – 532 Altara Avenue. She said she was gratified this board was a reality. She thanked everyone for stepping up and serving. She was looking forward to the board being successful. Ms. Carbonell asked Mr. Adams for an update on the gondola building. Mr. Adams said he believed there was an attempt to find some funding from the state, but he had not had any recent updates. The city manager had requested that he provide a list of various options ranging from complete reconstruction using everything possible from the original, or not rebuilding it. He was working on the options. Ms. Carbonell said she always heard about funding and that there was no money, but there was money for other things. The gondola building was put on the endangered list in 2019, there was plenty of time for funding, but now it has collapsed. She had spoken to the city manager and the mayor and she knew that everyone wanted the building to be back, but it was another item for this committee, and it was a priority.

Ms. Maranos asked that it be put on the agenda for the next meeting. Mr. Adams said that they needed to determine what was under the purview of the preservation board and what was under the purview of the Landmarks Advisory Board, but he thought they could make requests or recommendations to the Historic Preservation Board just as they could to the City Commission. Mayor Slesnick thanked Ms. Carbonell and congratulated her on the success of her annual meeting.

**2<sup>nd</sup> ADJOURNMENT:**

A motion was made by Ms. Maranos and seconded by Ms. Heisenbottle to adjourn the meeting  
The motion passed with a collective aye.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:17 am.

Respectfully submitted,



Warren Adams  
Historic Preservation Officer