

CORAL GABLES HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD MEETING MINUTES
March 19, 2009, 4:00 p.m.
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, Florida

MEMBERS:	A	M	J	J	J#	A	S	O	N	D	J	F#	F	M	APPOINTED BY:
Dorothy Thomson	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	Mayor Donald D. Slesnick, II
Margaret Rolando*										P	P	+	P	P	Vice Mayor William H. Kerdyk, Jr.
Ernesto Santos	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	P	P	P	A	E	P	Comm. Maria Anderson
Venny Torre*															Comm. Rafael "Ralph" Cabrera, Jr.
Dolly MacIntyre	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	Comm. Wayne "Chip" Withers
Michael Beeman	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	P	P	P	P	^	^	Historic Preservation Board
Joyce Meyers	P	P	P	E	E	P	P	E	P	P	P	A	P	P	City Manager
Lisa Bennett	E	P	P	E	E	P	P	E	E	P	P	A	P	P	City Commission
Shirley Maroon	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	City Commission

Ms. Rolando arrived at 4:15 p.m.

+ Ms. Rolando recused herself from discussion.

STAFF:

Kara Kautz, Historic Preservation Officer
 Betty Perez, Administrative Assistant
 Rodney Carbonell, Historical Resources Department

A = Absent

P = Present

E = Excused

*** = New Member**

^ = Resigned Member

= Special Meeting

GUESTS: Gonzalo Silvera, Glenn H. Pratt, Marshall Bellin, Zeke Guilford, Mort Guilford, Eduardo Llano, Joe Perillo, Sonia Gonzalez, Andrea Lopez, Danny Imbrogno, Mohamed Fahmy, Juan Cappello, Ana Larrain, Kathy Villaverde, William Curtin

RECORDING SECRETARY: Nancy C. Morgan, Coral Gables Services, Inc.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Dolly MacIntyre at 4:06 p.m. A quorum was present.

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT and DISCLOSURE OF CONTEXT:

Ms. MacIntyre read for the record the statement regarding lobbyist registration and disclosure. She then stated that if any members of the board had any ex parte communication or contact regarding any cases being heard, it was necessary to disclose such communication or contact. Board members did not indicate that any such communication occurred.

MINUTES: MEETING OF FEBRUARY 19, 2009:

Ms. Thomson made a motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of February 19, 2009. Ms. Bennett seconded the motion, unanimously approved by voice vote.

DEFERRALS:

444 Ponce de Leon Boulevard; 214 Florida Avenue

PUBLIC SWEARING IN: Nancy Morgan swore in audience members who planned to testify during the meeting.

STANDARD CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS:

CASE FILE COA (ST) 2009-03 An application for issuance of a Standard Certificate of Appropriateness for the Douglas Entrance, located at 800 Douglas Road, legally described as Blocks 1, 2, 3, 4, and Lot K & that part Ponce de Leon Park Cir. & Galiano Ct. & Calabria Ct. closed per Ord. #992, Revised Plat of Douglas Section, according to the Plat thereof, recorded in Plat Book 34, Page 32, of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County, Florida. The applicant requested design approval for installation of impact-resistant doors and windows.

During a photographic presentation, Ms. Kautz oriented the Board to the historic building and structure's details, reviewing property layout and areas included in the application. The history of the Douglas Entrance was described, along with its architectural background and designation on the Local and National Register.

Regarding the application for new doors and windows, Ms. Kautz stated that staff was not comfortable with the proposed impact windows and doors and had concerns that the original appearance and design intention could not be achieved as proposed. Photographs highlighted detailing on original doors and windows, while Ms. Kautz pointed out that the application contained 56 window types and 12 door types. She thereafter requested Board input.

Contractor Joe Perillo displayed a sample of the proposed impact window, discussed its features as well as those of the original windows, and said that moldings would be designed to match existing windows. Mr. Torre and Mr. Perillo then engaged in debate about the design, components and materials of the proposed windows, after which Mr. Torre expressed concern that, as proposed, the windows would not be appropriate for the building. Mohamed Fahmy, a structural engineer, added information about various window systems, design and alternate manufacturers. Current windows are operable casement windows, and those proposed are not operable storefront. Mr. Torre opined that there were better solutions and described the proposed windows as commercial in appearance.

During dialogue with Ms. Rolando, Ms. Kautz reviewed photographs of the original and more modern doors and windows throughout the building. Mr. Santos commented about door proportions, noted that drawings did not match appearance of the original doors or windows, and said there were doors available that would match the original wood doors. Mr. Perillo expressed willingness to make adjustments, and Mr. Santos advised him to explore products of a specific manufacturer.

Ms. Bennett said the Board needed more detailed drawings, and expressed concern that the proposed windows couldn't be opened. Ms. Kautz suggested that the owner decided against casement windows primarily due to cost. Owner's representative Andrea Lopez, building manager for seven years, discussed major problems with termites and water infiltration, said the desire was to have impact windows, to recreate the historical appearance and to salvage the property, adding they had explored options for over a year. She cited security as the reason for inoperable windows.

Ms. Rolando reiterated the need to see revised drawings that accurately reflect windows that will be fabricated and installed together with the hardware. Mr. Torre said the design needed an architect. Mr. Santos stated that the

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Board needed to see operable casement windows, which the owner could later render inoperable so the appearance would remain the same as the original windows.

Ms. MacIntyre invited audience comment. Hearing no requests, Board comments were sought. Mr. Torre again stated that other solutions were available and windows other than commercial units should be explored.

Ms. Bennett made a motion to defer the application to allow the applicant to research options and return next month. Ms. Thomson seconded the motion.

Roll Call: Ayes: Ms. Bennett, Ms. Maroon, Ms. Meyers, Mr. Torre, Mr. Santos, Ms. Rolando, Ms. Thomson, Ms. MacIntyre. Nays: None.

Ms. Kautz recommended that the contractor work with City Architect Carlos Mindreau. Danny Imbrogno, the building's chief engineer, mentioned that the building would be restoration painted after doors and windows were replaced. Mr. Santos suggested that Ms. Kautz advise the applicant that an architect needed to be involved in the project, and should review all conditions of the building.

SPECIAL CERTIFICATES OF APPROPRIATENESS:

CASE FILE COA (SP) 2008-21: An application for issuance of a Special Certificate of Appropriateness for the property located at 320 Miracle Mile, legally described as Lots 15 and 16, Block 1, Coral Gables Crafts Section, according to the Plat thereof, recorded in Plat Book 10, Page 40, of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County, Florida. The applicant requested design approval for construction of additions and alterations. A variance was requested from the Coral Gables Zoning Code Article 5, Section 5-1409 (B) for the minimum required parking.

Mr. Torre recused himself and stated he would submit a completed Form 8B, Memorandum of Voting Conflict for County, Municipal and other Local Public Officers (attached to filed minutes).

As photographs were displayed, Ms. Kautz explained the property's history, alterations and granted variances. Photographs depicted original floor plans and the building as it currently appears. She described the application, stating it triggered a portion of the zoning code regarding additional parking requirements, which (in compliance) would increase to 41 from the provided three. Plans, structural drawings and the second floor layout, both past and proposed, were reviewed as she explained how new construction generated a need for the variance. Staff's concern was that the structural engineer's report didn't clearly indicate the necessity to demolish so much of the building. However, she pointed out that the structural system is unusual and not very conducive to modern usage. Ms. Kautz expressed concern that it might be less expensive for the owners to make the proposed change than to work with the building as it is, which would produce an undesirable precedent. She said the findings of the structural engineer did not substantiate the need to remove historic fabric. As a result, Ms. Kautz stated that staff did not recommend demolishing the existing structure or the requested variance.

Zeke Guilford stated that he and his father, Mort Guilford, were principal owners of the property. He recalled that the Board granted (one year ago) three variances for the property (landscaping, interpretation for parking and number of parking spaces). He said their goal was to work with staff to facilitate rehabilitation of the building, cited Zoning Code Section 14-01(B)4 regarding parking requirements, and reminded the Board they unanimously approved a variance for 18 parking spaces last year.

Using display boards, Mr. Guilford reviewed drawings, stating the only difference from last year's application to this year's occurred when the structural engineer reviewed the building and recommended additional renovations.

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He explained details of the structural challenges and stability of the structure. The plan would bring the building up to today's requirements and enable it to withstand hurricane winds. He concluded that the proposed application was the best and most appropriate way to preserve the historic elements of the building.

Glenn Pratt, project architect, explained the construction of the original building and its effect on roof support, ceiling height limitations and how the structure could be rebuilt to make it structurally sound.

Mr. Guilford added that the building's historic character and the distinctive feature finishes would be preserved. Regarding parking, he said that if the property were vacant, 41 parking spaces wouldn't fit in the space. He spoke about nearby garages, pointing out that few Miracle Mile buildings had parking. He referred to a letter from the BID in support of the variance, and added that he talked with owners to the left and right of the building, who had no objection to the proposal. He concluded that he and his father were willing to restore historic features of the building and encouraged the Board to approve their application.

To Ms. MacIntyre's invitation for audience input, there were no comments. Ms. MacIntyre added that this situation was what historic preservationists termed a "facadesectomy", the last in the line of solutions.

Ms. Kautz described Board procedure in the event of denial and approval of the application and variance. Options regarding structural issues and what could be lost by the project were discussed, after which Ms. Kautz said she was not confident that the historic part of the building wouldn't be destroyed in the process. She expressed confidence in Douglas Wood, an excellent historic structural engineer, but agreed with Ms. MacIntyre that this application would only save the façade of the building.

Ms. Bennett said the parking requirement of 41 spaces was unrealistic, and challenged staff to ensure that the finishes were appropriate and completed correctly. Mr. Santos dialogued with Mr. Pratt about current building materials, original drawings and original materials. They discussed uses of the building in the past, and Mr. Pratt observed that there was nothing in the interior such as special moldings or doors, and again mentioned structural issues with load bearing partitions and the effect on the roof. In response to Mr. Santos' query about shoring the roof rather than removing it, Mr. Guilford expressed willingness to accept that as a condition as long as the structural engineer approved it. Mr. Santos recommended preserving the roof and tower as an important element of the façade. Regarding the interior, he had no concerns if nothing of historic value existed inside.

Drawings of the original building were reviewed as dialogue continued between Board members, Ms. Kautz, Mr. Pratt and Mr. Guilford.

Ms. Maroon made a motion to approve the application as presented as well as the variance. Ms. Bennett seconded the motion.

Roll Call: Ayes: Ms. Bennett, Ms. Maroon, Ms. Meyers, Mr. Santos, Ms. Rolando, Ms. Thomson. Nays: Ms. MacIntyre. Recused: Mr. Torre.

CASE FILE COA (SP) 2007-08 (revised): An application for issuance of a Special Certificate of Appropriateness for the property at 830 Castile Avenue, legally described as Lots 3 and 4, Block 34, Coral Gables Section "B", according to the Plat thereof, recorded in Plat Book 5, at Page 111, of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County, Florida. The applicant requested design approval for the construction of an addition and renovations to the existing structure.

Stating that this case proposal was a misnomer, Ms. Kautz explained that it was a revision to a COA because the design changed from that which was initially approved. The Board's responsibility in this case was to determine its opinion regarding the changes made, which primarily affect the front façade. The most recent changes were approved by the Board of Architects.

Ms. Kautz reviewed the property, its history, the previously approved and new design. She expressed concern about the front, after which she reviewed approved drawings and the impact on the front elevation with the proposed design of a pitched roof rather than a shed roof. She said the architect would speak about the change.

Architect Eduardo Llano described how the project had evolved and explained attempts to maintain as much of the existing house as possible. He used PowerPoint to demonstrate the features of the house and how they were affected by other factors, explaining his rationale for the change in design.

Homeowner Juan Capello addressed the Board, stating he originally intended to cover up an addition built in the past. Termites were discovered and he realized the addition wasn't worth saving. As a result, Mr. Llano created a new design to enhance aesthetics of the house.

Ms. MacIntyre invited audience comments. Hearing no requests, she closed the public hearing.

Mr. Torre clarified elements of the design, and Mr. Santos discussed proportions of a section of the proposed change, stating it appeared disproportional. Mr. Llano and he discussed roof options. Ms. Bennett stated that the flat roof would be more appropriate. Ms. Kautz relayed the number of times that plans were revised to be reviewed by the Board of Architects, stating that a flat roof did not appear anywhere on the house and there seemed to be no compelling argument for a flat roof; however, she sought Board input about the change.

Mr. Santos made a motion to approve the application as presented. Mr. Torre seconded the motion.

Roll Call: Ayes: Ms. Maroon, Ms. Meyers, Mr. Torre, Mr. Santos, Ms. Rolando, Ms. Thomson, Ms. Bennett, Ms. MacIntyre. Nays: None.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Regarding the architect's update regarding the plaque for the Roxcy Bolton property, Ms. Kautz indicated it would be included in the next agenda.

ITEMS FROM THE SECRETARY

2901 Ponce de Leon Boulevard: Ms. Kautz distributed minutes of the joint board meeting held February 4, 2009 with three other boards in consideration of the City's potential purchase of the property. She reviewed the proceedings, adding that the Board was not represented by a quorum, which negated formal action. Ms. Kautz also distributed a packet of proposal information from Assistant City Manager Dona Lubin that included appraisals. She said full appraisals were available for review. The information was presented for Board input and, ultimately, an indication of the Board's thoughts about the proposal.

Dialogue between Board members and Ms. Kautz ensued to clarify various aspects of the proposal and property. Ms. Bennett asked for minutes of the meeting that included the historic designation of the property, which were furnished and reviewed.

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When asked, Ms. Kautz said that staff's viewpoint was that the building was significantly historic and a vital part of the City's history. Ms. Meyers expressed concern that there was no compelling plan for the building's use if the City were to purchase it, which generated a discussion about possible uses. Ms. Maroon pointed out that the building could not be demolished and indicated she didn't support the purchase. Ms. Kautz said the Procurement Code required the Board to have a discussion about the proposal, but it was not necessary to make a recommendation. Ms. Bennett said the building would be safer if owned by the City, and indicated support for acquiring and caring for historic properties. Mr. Santos added that upkeep of City-owned properties was costly.

Ms. Maroon made a motion to disapprove the purchase of 2901 Ponce de Leon Boulevard. Ms. Thomson seconded the motion.

Roll Call: Ayes: Ms. Meyers, Ms. Thomson, Ms. Maroon. Nays: Mr. Torre, Mr. Santos, Ms. Bennett, Ms. MacIntyre. Abstain: Ms. Rolando (her firm represents the developer on another project). **The motion failed.**

Mr. Santos suggested that a recommendation be made to the Commission rather than a formal resolution. After brief discussion, Ms. Thomson suggested revisiting the issue at the next Board meeting after carefully reviewing all the material. Ms. MacIntyre suggested that Board members read and think about the summary minutes, and be prepared to make a statement at the next Board meeting.

Updated Board contact list: Ms. Kautz distributed a current Board list. Regarding a new Board member, she received resumes from three architects and one citizen at large. She contacted AIA about noticing their membership as well. Ms. Bennett mentioned an individual who indicated interest in serving, and Ms. Kautz will contact him. She will provide resumes/biographical information about candidates in advance of the next meeting so the new member may be selected at that time.

MacFarlane Task Force update: Ms. Kautz reported that the 214 Florida Avenue item was deferred and Attorney Laura Russo is working with the owner. Ms. MacIntyre researched grants and found several that might work. She will continue researching grant funding possibilities. Ms. Thomson suggested scheduling a meeting with Leona Cooper, Ms. MacIntyre and herself. Ms. Kautz added that Code Enforcement secured and re-fenced the property again, and that she provided Mr. Rasheed with a list of five properties most in need of repair to encourage them to continue looking at the entire community. Urgency was encouraged to move forward as quickly as possible and meet again with the task force. Ms. Thomson agreed to schedule the meeting. Ms. MacIntyre updated Board members on the trend of historic houses declining nearly to the point of no return, and expressed great concern about the "domino" effect. If too many of the houses in that district are lost, the district will be removed from the national registry.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to be discussed, the meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kara N. Kautz
Historic Preservation Officer