



**CORAL GABLES MERRICK HOUSE GOVERNING BOARD MEETING**  
**Meeting Minutes of January 10, 2022, 8:30 a.m.**  
**Coral Gables City Hall, City Commission Chamber**  
**405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, Florida 33134**

*Historical Resources &  
Cultural Arts*

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MEMBERS	J 21	F 21	M 21	A 21	M 21	J 21	J 21	A 21	S 21	O 21	N 21	D 22	J 22	APPOINTED BY
Ana Lam	-	P	P	P	-	P	P	E	E	P	P	N	P	Mayor Vince Lago
Barbara Reese	-	P	P	P	-	P	P	E	E	P	E	O	P	Vice-Mayor Michael Mena
Bonnie Seipp	-	P	P	P	-	P	E	P	E	P	P		P	Commissioner Rhonda Anderson
Carmen Cason	-	P	P	P	-	A	P	P	P	P	P	M	P	Commissioner Jorge L. Fors, Jr.
Mary Beth Burke *	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	E	P	Commissioner Kirk R. Menendez
Alexis Ehrenhaft	-	P	P	P	-	P	P	P	P	E	P	T	P	City Manager Peter Iglesias
Joanne Meagher	-	P	P	P	-	P	P	P	P	P	P	N	P	Board-as-a-Whole
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**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, Colette Worm, Docent Coordinator participated by Zoom.

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

The meeting was called to order by Chair Meagher at 8:38 a.m. and attendance was stated for the record. Ms. Ehrenhaft, Ms. Lam, Ms. Cason, and Ms. Worm attended via zoom.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

A motion was made by Ms. Seipp and seconded by Ms. Reese to approve the minutes of November 8, 2021, with the addition of credit being given to Karelia Carbonell for the excerpt read at the last meeting. The motion was unanimously approved.

**OPENING STATEMENT**

Chair Meagher opened the meeting with some facts from an interview with the youngest Merrick, Richard Merrick in 1977. “Solomon hired some Bahamian workers who were also new to the area. These men wanted to stock up on groceries and other household items at the local store in Coconut Grove after their first week on the job. As you know, Solomon paid his workers in store vouchers, so the workers would spend their paychecks at the Larkins’ grocery store which was owned by pioneer W. A. Larkins. With their vouchers in hand the new workers asked Solomon if he would loan out his wagon and mule so they wouldn’t have to carry all their purchases to their new home, which was probably the barn because Solomon offered free housing to single workers in one of his barns. Solomon agreed to lend his wagon and mule, so Maude was hitched up to the wagon and she took the men to the general store. When the men came out of the store after shopping, they discovered, to their horror, that Maude and the wagon were nowhere to be found. They remembered then that they hadn’t tied up the wagon as they weren’t going to be in the store that long. So, these poor men had to walk all the way back to the Merrick House which was about four miles and around an hour walking. When the men got back to the Merrick House Solomon chuckled and told them to go back to Coconut Grove as he might know where Maude had gone. Not to the store, but to the church. Solomon said he wasn’t worried that Maude and the wagon had been stolen, because he figured that Maude was so used to going to the church in Coconut Grove that she had probably walked the few blocks over from the store to the congregational church. So, when the workers finally reached the church after walking the four miles back again to Coconut Grove, there they found Maude on the church grounds standing under a tree.”

**DOCENT COORDINATOR REPORT:**

Ms. Worm provided updates on: a police incident from December 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup>, security cameras, windows, mask requirements, temperature scanner, trash and recycle pickup, the little library, Dade Heritage Trust’s tour and anniversary event, air conditioners, leaks in Solomon’s office, phones, doorbell, piano, lighting, blue tape on the windows, motion and

fire sensors in garage, door locks; business cards, glass and door cleaner;, wasp and bug removal. She also reported on the following items and finished up with a PowerPoint presentation.

1. The carriage in storage does not fit in the garage, Chair Meagher had asked about the possibility of it being returned to the front of the house.
2. The DAR Meeting has been rescheduled to March 8, 2022.
3. A request has been received for a re-enactment of Mary Poppins at the Merrick House.
4. There are 5 active docents, 2 sporadic docents, 1 trainee and 1 possible. 1 docent resigned.
5. November & December statistics: \$306 was collected in November, \$132 in December for a total of \$438. Visitors: 35 in November, 43 in December. 200 people were inside at the Holiday Open House.
6. July through December 31<sup>st</sup> statistics: \$1,690 from tours, merchandise, and tips, 675 visitors, the most popular time is 2pm and Sunday is the most popular day.

Ms. Reese stated that she had noticed a pickup truck at about 7:30 pm in the parking lot of the Merrick House and asked if there was a security camera in the area. Ms. Worm answered affirmatively. Ms. Ehrenhaft asked if a chain or barrier could be put up at the entrance to the parking lot at night. Ms. Kautz noted there was nothing to attach the chain to. Ms. Worm noted that someone would have to be there every day and night to put it up and take it down. Ms. Lam asked if there could be a motion sensor to trigger a light. Ms. Worm said she would ask at an upcoming security meeting.

Chair Meagher asked Mr. Adams to provide an update on the air conditioners and the fiber. Mr. Adams gave credit to Commissioner Menendez and the City Manager for the air conditioner replacement. He said that the units have been ordered. He said that he understood that there was some issue with running the fiber to the house. He had reached out to IT and believes that there is a proposal to move ahead with the fiber, commenting why the House was the only property in the neighborhood that did not have a working phone. IT is working on the issue.

Chair Meagher introduced Mary Beth Burke and invited her to tell the board about herself.

#### **OLD BUSINESS:**

**Doc Dammers Day:** Chair Meagher said that sponsor letters and auction donor acknowledgement letters had gone out with free passes to the Merrick House and a copy of the program. She passed out a sample of the letter to the board members, stating that specific tax language was still needed. She went on to say that financials stated at the November meeting for the earnings from the event had not included the permit fee, rental of tables and chairs and the juice that Ms. Worm had bought. The actual amount that the event had earned for the Merrick House was \$15,111.93. There were other contributions that had come after including sale of Mr. & Mrs. Ehrenhaft's furniture and Marlin Ebbert's donation. The Coral Gables Community Foundation charged them a 5% administrative fee.

The City Manager has approved the Merrick House Board to continue with its online auctions.

**Shadow Box Restoration:** The shadow box has been restored and moved to a more prominent location in the house. The invoice was a little more than \$1000, the Villagers would reimburse them for \$1000. Chair Meagher asked the status of the invoice, to which Ms. Lyons stated the invoice had been processed. Chair Meagher will follow up with the Villagers to have a check issued for the reimbursement.

**Holiday Open House:** Chair Meagher said that the house looked beautiful and commended Ms. Ehrenhaft and Ms. Lam. She thanked Ms. Reese for coordinating the singers and her nutcracker and asked if anyone had suggestions for improvement. Ms. Lam suggested acknowledging Santa. Chair Meagher agreed that a recognition or gift for Mr. Adams would be a good idea. Ms. Lam suggested a gift certificate to Books and Books. Ms. Kautz noted that city funds might not be appropriate for that use, suggesting that city material might be a nice thank-you gift. Chair Meagher asked if she could put together a basket and Ms. Kautz confirmed that she would take care of it.

Ms. Ehrenhaft suggested that they put the flyers out earlier next year. Chair Meagher said that now she had the deadlines for the City's Communication Department.

Chair Meagher congratulated Ms. Seipp on selling \$243 worth of merchandise at the Holiday Open House. She said that they should keep the table at future events.

Ms. Kautz asked if the vendors at the Holiday Open House paid a fee? Chair Meagher said no one had donated anything. Ms. Seipp said that they should ask vendors to pay a portion of their sales to the Merrick House. Ms. Seipp said if there were a fee people might be hesitant to attend if they had to pay for the table, she thought they should have them pay a percentage rather than a fee for the table.

Chair Meagher said that five people had mentioned to her that Coral Gables did not have rummage sales, where people could purchase tables and bring items for sale. She suggested using the Merrick House for an annual rummage sale which would help get the Merrick House on the map. Chair Meagher said the person that does the rummage sales at her church would help organize the event. Ms. Seipp thought they should limit the items to prevent people from bringing junk. Ms. Reese thought it would be hard to control what people brought. Everyone suggested to do it when the weather is nice and early in the morning. Ms. Reese suggested to sell coffee. Ms. Kautz said they would have to pull a garage sale permit and go to Special Events Committee for approval. Ms. Worm suggested having it the same day as the electronic drop-off.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

**Display Case:** Ms. Worm found a poster stand and a display case, it was \$216 on Amazon it could be switched from horizontal to vertical. Ms. Kautz said that they should send information to her and the department budget would cover it.

**Villager Grant:** The Villagers had granted \$3000 towards the restoration of three of Althea's watercolors and one oil. Chair Meagher said they had received estimates from Robinson and Reeves and Melissa Boe, she asked Ms. Kautz who the recognition letter should come from. Ms. Kautz said she would do one. Ms. Kautz said that Ms. Levasser should be the one to transport the pieces when the work would be done.

**Online Auction:** Chair Meagher said that there were things left over from Doc Dammers Day and Commissioner Anderson had dropped off four boxes of things at her house. She was asking for help in the following areas:

1. Someone to research if there are any vintage enthusiast groups that they could tap into to promote the auction. Ms. Cason said she would do this.
2. Someone to photograph the new items. Ms. Seipp volunteered.
3. Someone to value the new items. Ms. Cason said it would depend on how soon they needed the information.

**Spring Event:** Ms. Burke said that she and Ms. Worm had gone through the linens and suggested doing an elegant spring event using these items as the focal point. She suggested that they consider having the following:

- a) Mounting the linens on easels or quilt stands and put them on the porch with information about the textiles.
- b) A Victorian white linen and lace type of event, a garden party or picnic on the lawn.
- c) Vendors and a speaker on restoring textiles.
- d) Decorations, a croquet game on the lawn and Japanese lanterns.
- e) Round tables and chairs.
- f) Serving a box lunch.
- g) Lots of activities.
- h) A portrait artist in character on the porch.
- i) Crochet making, lace making, embroidery.
- j) People selling vintage items, such as clothes, big hats, linens, or antique china.
- k) Everyone dressing in Victorian costumes.
- l) Servers for the food dressed in black skirts or pants and white shirts.
- m) If it was an adult affair, it could be in the late afternoon or early evening.
- n) Have it closer to Mother's Day or Valentine's Day.
- o) Advertise it as a mother/child event or buy a ticket for your mother.

Ms. Seipp suggested having the sale and this event together. She thought that they should advertise it as an elegant event which did not exclude children, but people would be less likely to bring children. Chair Meagher suggested making it a ticketed event on EventBrite and reach out to sponsors to come to the event. Ms. Burke suggested taking group photos. Ms. Seipp suggested to have the event March 27<sup>th</sup> or April 3<sup>rd</sup>. Chair Meagher urged the board members, if they wanted to go forward with the event, to think about what they would like to see at the event and start reaching out to people.

A motion was made by Ms. Seipp and seconded by Ms. Reese to choose March 27, 2022, as the date for the event with a backup date of April 3, 2022. The motion was unanimously approved.

Ms. Seipp thought the Merrick House could have a table and sell some items, but it could not be combined with the vintage sale. It was decided to have the vintage sale in the Fall.

**DISCUSSION ITEMS:** None

**CITY COMMISSION ITEMS:**

Ms. Kautz said there would be a discussion of the air conditioning at the Merrick House at the commission meeting on Tuesday, January 11, 2022. Mr. Adams said that Commissioner Menendez had asked him to be there, and he would take the opportunity to convey the boards thanks to him for moving this along so quickly.

**ITEMS FROM THE SECRETARY:** None

**ADJOURNMENT:** There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:12 am.

Respectfully submitted,



Warren Adams  
Historic Preservation Officer