

CORAL GABLES HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD MEETING MINUTES
January 17, 2008, 4:00 p.m.
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, Florida

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

STAFF:

Kara N. Kautz, Historic Preservation Officer
 Betty Perez, Historical Resources Department
 Simone Chin, Historical Preservation Administrator
 Rodney Carbonell, Historical Resources Department

A = Absent

P = Present

E = Excused

*** = New Member**

^ = Resigned Member

GUESTS: Maurine Harrison, M. Sandra Lysinger, Kelly Marcum, Oscar and Aiola Enriquez, Rand W. Smith, Betsy Hoover Thomas, Benito Diaz, Ana De Armas Hernandez, B.J. and C. Paul Batcheler, Ronald Herzog, Jerry Llevada, Resident, 1040 Alhambra Circle; Virginia Sosa, Bill Curtin, Bibiana Madiedo, Luba DeWitt, Kathleen Holmes, Art DeNunzio, Howard Umansky, Michael Fine, Marshall Bellin, Bruce Brockhouse, Rosa Compain, Albert Rodríguez, Ann Goodman, Olga Ramudo, Annette Gluck, Eileen Sutton, Vivian Cullell, Gay Bondurant, Mike Sardinas, Peggy Rolando, Susan Elwell

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

The meeting was called to order by Chair Lisa Bennett at 4:05 p.m. A quorum was present.

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT and DISCLOSURE OF CONTEXT:

Ms. Bennett 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.

MEETING ATTENDANCE:

Mr. Beeman made a motion to excuse meeting attendance of Ms. Stewart. Mr. Santos seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by voice vote.

Ms. Bennett announced that Dr. Edmund Parnes resigned from Board participation, and expressed appreciation for his diligence and years of service.

January 17, 2008

Continued

MINUTES: MEETING OF DECEMBER 20, 2007:

Ms. Meyers made a motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of December 20, 2007. Mr. Beeman seconded the motion, which were unanimously passed by voice vote.

DEFERRALS:

Ms. Kautz reported deferrals as follows: Case File LHD 2007-14, 1700 Cortez Street.

SWEARING IN THE PUBLIC:

Nancy Morgan swore in members of the audience who planned to testify during the meeting.

LOCAL HISTORIC DESIGNATIONS:

CASE FILE LHD 2007-07 Consideration of the local historic district designation of the “Castile Avenue/Plaza Historic District”, a lengthy legal is on file in the Historic Preservation Office.

Ms. Kautz reported receiving many letters from residents in favor of and opposed to the district designation. During a comprehensive presentation, Ms. Kautz reviewed the consultant's and staff's reports, district boundaries, staff's recommendation to limit the period of significance to 1956 rather than 1958 as suggested by the consultants, construction trends, architectural typologies, architects and notable residents. She recommended that 1232 and 1200 Castile be listed as non-contributing structures as numerous changes damaged the historical integrity of the structures; and that 820 Castile be listed as contributing. Ms. Kautz concluded that staff recommended designation of the district as presented.

Ms. Bennett expressed appreciation for staff's efforts and extensive report.

Ms. Kautz referred to the letter in Board packets from Oscar Enriquez, 1120 Castile, stating his reasons for requesting the listing his house as non-contributing. She said that staff reviewed the details of his house and indicated that staff was “on the fence” about the contributing status as many architecturally-defining details had been removed from the original structure. She pointed out that Mr. Enriquez was in the audience.

Ms. Bennett invited comments in support of the designation from the audience.

Bill Curtin, 1235 Castile: Spoke generally in favor of the designation, and commented that the swales and entire street should also be included in the designation. Ms. Kautz confirmed that the street, median, park, swale and trees were all included, but stated that the Board could separately designate the roadway or include it in the motion to designate the district. Regarding 1232 Castile, Mr. Curtin sought assurance that the home would not be demolished to be replaced by a large structure.

Gay Bondurant, 446 Alcazar: Spoke in support of both proposed district designations and encouraged support by other residents.

For the record, Ms. Kautz reported that emails were received from David and Sandy Lysinger, Dr. Carol Damian and Lisa DeNunzio indicating support for the district designation, and one opposed to designation from Ronald and Glenda Herzog.

Ms. Bennett invited audience members opposed to the designation to speak.

Ronald Herzog, 1250 Castile: Spoke in opposition to the designation, stating that the City did not need another layer of bureaucracy and that remodeling and construction work in the City was difficult enough without requiring more from homeowners.

January 17, 2008

Continued

Benny Diaz, 3016 Alhambra Circle: Spoke in opposition to the designation, stating that today's families could not live in small homes without the ability to alter them to accommodate needs. He supported leaving a determination of designation as an individual property right. Mr. Diaz suggested that designating an entire area was unconstitutional.

Eileen Sutton, 804 Alhambra Circle: Spoke in opposition to wide area designations, which she said would ultimately result in additional taxes.

Oscar Enriquez, 1120 Castile: Spoke in opposition to the designation.

Hearing no further requests to speak, Ms. Bennett closed the public participation portion of the issue.

Ms. Meyers stated that including the street in the boundary description of the district would be beneficial, and also agreed with Ms. Kautz' recommendation about the eligibility of 820 Castile as contributing.

Ms. MacIntyre explained to the audience why designation did not make changing their homes more difficult, and also stated that there was legal precedent for designating historic districts. Ms. Kautz added that Assistant City Attorney Lourdes Alfonsin-Ruiz said it had been constitutionally upheld that historic designation did not constitute a "taking."

Ms. Thomson suggested Board consideration of including streetscapes within historic district boundaries as a customary practice. She also addressed concerns raised by a few citizens as they spoke.

Ms. Thomson made a motion to approve the Castile Avenue/Plaza Historic District, including the streetscape, as presented by staff, specifying as non-contributing 1120 Castile Avenue. Mr. Beeman seconded the motion.

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

CASE FILE LHD 2007-05 Consideration of the local historic district designation of the "Alhambra Circle Historic District", a lengthy legal is on file in the Historic Preservation Office.

Ms. Kautz conducted a PowerPoint presentation as she thoroughly reviewed staff's and a consultant's report on the district, again covering issues such as boundaries, architecture, architects, notable residents, parkways that included bridle paths, the Alhambra Water Tower and special plazas, and a recommendation of limiting the period of significance to 1952. Those properties recommended by staff to be made non-contributing included: 511, 620, 1040, 1341, 1501, 2110, 2222 and 2601 Alhambra Circle. She also suggested including 1101 Alhambra Circle as contributing even though it was not within the period of significance. Citing Alhambra Circle as one of the most distinctive roadways in the City, she reviewed significance criteria and concluded by stating staff's recommendation of approval.

Ms. Bennett again thanked staff for this comprehensive effort. She then invited members of the audience to speak in favor of the designation.

Gay Bondurant, 446 Alcazar: Ms. Bondurant, who was a regular patron of the Coral Gables Riding Academy and a rider on the bridle path, and mentioned that the Academy was the oldest, continually-operating business in Coral Gables until it relocated. She also suggested the Board move on the de-designation of the house at 737 Alhambra Circle.

Kendell Turner, 1106 Alhambra Circle: Spoke in favor of designation, and commented that historic designation added value to any home within the district.

Ms. Bennett called attention to letters supporting designation had been received from Maria Flores, 2606 Alhambra Circle; Victoria Orr, 829 Navarre; the owner of 1200 Alhambra Circle; Katherine Sarduy, an Alhambra Circle resident;

January 17, 2008

Continued

Susan Elwell, 738 Santander Avenue; Elizabeth Cozad; Kendell and Tony Turner. She then invited members of the audience to speak against the application.

Betsy Hoover Thomas, 2700 Alhambra Circle: Spoke in opposition to the designation. Ms. Thomas read the letter she prepared, stating designation would restrict her use of her property, add another layer of bureaucracy, and discourage potential purchasers from the area which they may perceive is highly regulated and restricted. She commented that the entire City should be designated historic so it is fair to all residents or leave it up to the individual owners to pursue designation.

Mr. Beeman, Ms. Kautz and Ms. Thomas engaged in discussion, with Mr. Beeman stating that historic homes and districts draw more interest from purchasers than other neighborhoods, and Ms. Thomas pointing out specific features of her home, a non-contributing structure that she described as a “tear-down.”

Kathleen Holmes, 1117 Alhambra Circle: Spoke in opposition to designation, citing added bureaucratic layers.

Peggy Rolando, 760 Alhambra Circle: Spoke in favor of designation of the district.

Eileen Sutton: Ms. Sutton requested information about homeowners' options if the district is designated. Ms. Bennett replied that an appeal could be made within 10 days of the decision of the Board. She explained that the Ordinance did not require permission of homeowners.

With no further requests for audience participation, Ms. Bennett closed the public participation portion of the application.

Ms. Thomson commented about the excellence of the well-documented research and study.

Ms. Thomson made a motion to approve the designation of the Alhambra Circle Historic District as presented. Mr. Beeman seconded the motion.

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

The meeting was suspended for 10 minutes, and resumed at 6:10 p.m.

CASE FILE LHD 2007-19 and COA (SP) 2007-34 Consideration of the local historic designation of the property at 7601 Old Cutler Road, legally described as the Lots 7 through Lot 16, inclusive, in Block 61 of Coral Gables Biscayne Bay Section, Part One, Plat “D”, according to the Plat thereof as recorded in Plat Book 25, at Page 52, of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County, Florida. The applicant is also requesting the issuance of an Accelerated Special Certificate of Appropriateness and design approval for the construction of additions and alterations. Variances have been requested from Article 4, Division 1, Section 4-101, Subsection D, for the allowable setbacks.

Ms. Chin conducted a presentation that featured current and historic photographs as she described the history of the property, its past owners and the alterations made to it over the years. She concluded by stating that staff recommended approval of the designation.

Ms. Bennett invited members of the audience to speak. Hearing no requests, Ms. Bennett closed the public participation portion of the application and called for Board comments.

Mr. Santos made a motion to designate the property historic. Ms. MacIntyre seconded the motion.

Roll Call: Ayes: Mr. Beeman, Ms. MacIntyre, Ms. Thomson, Ms. Meyers, Mr. Santos, Ms. Bennett. Nays: None. Ms. Maroon left the meeting prior to the vote.

January 17, 2008

Continued

Ms. Chin stated that three variances were requested and described reasons for each request, stating that variances were necessary in order to add to the structure. Architect Bruce Brockhouse would describe the design and further explain reasons for the variances.

Mr. Brockhouse, representing the owners, displayed drawings as he comprehensively described the proposed alterations and additions. At the conclusion of his presentation, he responded to Board questions and suggestions regarding the design and variances.

Ms. Chin presented staff comments on the drawings as follows:

- Quoins introduced at the exterior façade of the entry foyer should be stucco rather than rusticated keystone;
- The original balustrades at the second floor of the north and south wings should be retained and not removed or replaced with white metal pickets.
- Reconsider the alteration of the rectangular window at the north façade and its cast surround with a round window unit.
- The introduction of new entablatures should not exactly match existing details, but should be similar in shape and size and be recessed.
- The new balustrades at the east entry should not engage the existing rock quoins.

As each item was discussed, Mr. Brockhouse indicated agreement with staff and Board suggestions. Regarding the second floor bathroom addition and its affect on the exterior of the house, there was significant discussion, which Mr. Brockhouse said he would further review with the owners, though he pointed out that the prominent side of the house was the rear of the property, rather than the front, and the addition would not be visible from Old Cutler Road. Discussion included various details of the guardhouse as well.

Ms. Thomson made a motion to approve the addition, including variances and staff's comments agreed to by the architect, which included the quoins, balustrades, entablatures, but excluded the rectangular window alteration. Mr. Beeman seconded the motion.

Roll Call: Ayes: Ms. Thomson, Ms. Meyers, Mr. Santos, Mr. Beeman, Ms. MacIntyre, Ms. Bennett. Nays: None. Ms. Maroon was no longer present.

AD VALOREM TAX RELIEF:

CASE FILE AV 2005-01 An application requesting ad valorem tax relief for the property at 1024 Asturia Avenue, a local historic landmark, legally described as Lots 6 and 7, Block 8, Coral Gables Section "C", according to the Plat thereof, as recorded in Plat Book 8, at Page 26, of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County, Florida. The related Special Certificate of Appropriateness – Case File COA (SP) 2004-31 was granted design approval on October 21, 2004 by the Historic Preservation Board.

As a PowerPoint presentation was conducted, Ms. Kautz stated that this was part two of the Ad Valorem application. She reviewed the history of the residence and described changes made that applied to the application. She said that all work was conducted in accordance with the applicant's COA application and consistent with the Secretary of Interior Standards.

Mr. Beeman made a motion to approve the application as presented. Ms. Thomson seconded the motion.

Homeowner Rand Smith briefly addressed the Board.

Roll Call: Ayes: Ms. MacIntyre, Ms. Thomson, Ms. Meyers, Mr. Beeman, Ms. Bennett. Nays: None. Mr. Santos was not present at the time of the vote.

SPECIAL CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS:

CASE FILE COA (SP) 2007-30 Continued An application for the issuance of an Accelerated Special Certificate of Appropriateness for the property at 435 Alcazar Avenue, a potential contributing structure within the “Alcazar Avenue Historic District”, legally described as Lot 21, Block 4, Coral Gables Section “B”, according to the Plat thereof as recorded in Plat Book 5, at Page 111, of the Public Records of Miami Dade County, Florida. The applicant is requesting design approval for alterations to the existing structure.

Ms. Kautz conducted a presentation, including photographs and drawings, stating that the design was a restudied version of those viewed by the Board at its last meeting. She comprehensively described changes made to the design, after which Architect Albert Rodriguez elaborated and indicated he was pleased with the design alterations. Mr. Santos advised that the architect appropriately addressed all the Board’s comments and suggestions. He stated that the railing, a necessary safety feature, appeared too modern for the house, and suggested the wrought iron work could be addressed with staff.

Mr. Santos made a motion to approve the application as submitted, with staff administratively reviewing the wrought iron work. Ms. MacIntyre seconded the motion.

Roll Call: Ayes: Mr. Beeman, Ms. MacIntyre, Ms. Thomson, Ms. Meyers, Mr. Santos, Ms. Bennett. Nays: None.

CASE FILE COA (SP) 2007-29 An application for the issuance of a Special Certificate of Appropriateness for the property at 657 North Greenway, a non-contributing structure within the “Country Club of Coral Gables Historic District”, legally described as All of Lots 31 and 32 and that portion of Lot 30 described as follows: Beginning at the southeast corner of Lot 31, thence southeasterly 1.7 feet, thence northeasterly 167.08 feet, thence northwesterly 25.14 feet to the northeast corner of said Lot 31, thence southwesterly 166.96 feet to the point of beginning, Block 22, of Coral Gables Section “B”, according to the Plat thereof, recorded in Plat Book 5, Page 111, of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County, Florida. The applicant is requesting design approval for alterations that were completed without a Certificate of Appropriateness.

Stating that the application included an unusual situation, Ms. Kautz reviewed the application, saying it sought approval to correct work of the owner that was performed without permits or Certificates of Appropriateness. She reviewed Code Enforcement’s efforts to have the violations cured, and concluded that staff’s opinion was that changes made to the property were inappropriate given the style of the house and detracts from it. She spoke with the architect and determined that the homeowner needed to correct the changes and restore them to their original design, obtain a permit and obtain a COA to do the restoration. As Ms. Kautz reviewed the drawings and some of the proposed changes, she stated that staff recommended additional changes as follows: removal of the slate flooring at the southeast porch, replacing it with brick pavers to match the existing; place shutters on all windows on the front façade and on the two windows that flank the projecting gable-ended bay; rustic wood doors at the northwest porch should be replaced with doors appropriate to the house; staff wants to review the front door and front door surround for accuracy prior to purchase and installation.

Architect Marshall Bellin relayed to the Board that he was not the architect for the previous work conducted at the house, and said his intent was to restore everything to the best of his ability. He concurred with staff’s recommendations and observations.

After Board discussion, formal action was called for by Mr. Beeman, Vice Chair, who briefly led the meeting until Ms. Bennett returned prior to the vote.

Ms. Thomson made a motion to approve the design for alterations, with incorporation of all staff recommendations. Mr. Santos seconded the motion.

Roll Call: Ayes: Ms. MacIntyre, Ms. Thomson, Ms. Meyers, Mr. Santos, Ms. Bennett, Mr. Beeman. Nays: None.

BOARD ITEMS/CITY COMMISSION UPDATE:

Ms. Kautz pointed out a memo in Board packets regarding partial demolition reviews. She reviewed research conducted with other cities on the issue, learning that few reviewed partial demolitions.

Ms. Kautz reviewed proposed provisions of the ordinance draft, which she stated would also be reviewed by the Planning and Zoning Board prior to being proposed to the City Commission. Board members and Ms. Kautz discussed aspects of the draft, clarified portions and suggested revisions. A comment was made that there could be a major burden on City staff from the effects of the ordinance. Mr. Beeman volunteered to help staff review the applications, and recommended that comprehensive information be provided to Realtors regarding demolitions and the ordinance.

Ms. Meyers made a motion to recommend that the City Commission approve the draft ordinance with clarification regarding demolitions involving removal of 25% or more of the roof structure, and that the Board also send a letter to the Realtors Association informing about them about the existing law and proposed change to the Code.

Roll Call: Ayes: Mr. Santos, Mr. Beeman, Ms. MacIntyre, Ms. Thomson, Ms. Meyers, Ms. Bennett. Nays: None.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Ms. Meyers requested that staff initiate a discussion regarding homeowners' comments during the historic district applications about designation adding additional layers of review, suggesting that the Board supplant some of the Board of Architects' reviews as the elimination of one step in the process. If this were agreed, another architect with expertise in historic preservation could be added to the Board. As discussion grew, various issues were debated, though everyone agreed that process streamlining should be encouraged. Ms. Meyers reiterated that she recommended discussion of the issue.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. Santos made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7: 56 p.m. Ms. Meyers seconded the motion, which passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Kara N. Kautz
Historic Preservation Officer