



**LANDMARKS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING**  
**Meeting Minutes of May 3, 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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MEMBERS	F 22	M 22	A	M 22	APPOINTED BY
Don Slesnick	P	P	N O  M E E T I N G	P	Mayor Vince Lago
Gay Bondurant	P	P		P	Commissioner Kirk Menendez
Lauren Dowlen				P	Commissioner Kirk Menendez
Ramona Busot	P	P		E	City Manager, Peter Iglesias
Alice Goldhagen	P	P		P	Vice-Mayor Michael Mena
Donna Heisenbottle	P	P		P	Commissioner Jorge L. Fors, Jr.
Jane Maranos	P	P		P	Commissioner Rhonda Anderson
Ajit Asrani				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

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

**CALL TO ORDER:**

The meeting was called to order at 9:06 after a brief technical delay.

**ROLL CALL:**

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

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

A motion was made by Ms. Dowlen and seconded by Ms. Maranos to approve the minutes with corrections. The motion passed with a collective aye.

Chair Slesnick thanked Ms. Lyons for the minutes and stated that he had discussed them with her.

**APPROVAL OF ABSENCES:**

A motion was made by Ms. Heisenbottle and seconded by Ms. Maranos to excuse the absence of Ms. Busot. The motion passed with a collective aye.

- New & Retiring Members:** Chair Slesnick welcomed Mr. Asrani and Ms. Dowlen who both made brief introductory comments. Mr. Asrani will be confirmed at the next commission meeting. Ms. Dowlen replaced Ms. Bondurant who had resigned to become docent coordinator for the Merrick House. Chair Slesnick noted Ms. Dowlen was recently recognized by the Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce as Realtor of the Year. He thanked Ms. Bondurant for being one of the founding members of the board and invited her to stay and participate in today's discussion. Ms. Bondurant said she will keep working on the list of landmarks and was sorry she could not serve in both capacities and requested the board to continue to identify markers, photograph them and send to either Mr. Adams or herself for addition to the list. She requested to be kept in the loop. The board applauded Ms. Bondurant. Chair Slesnick suggested they meet at the Merrick House for a meeting.

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

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**1. Department Representatives:**

Mr. Adams said there were representatives from Public Works and the Parks Department to explain to the board the following:

- a) Current and upcoming projects.
- b) Projects that had been applied for funding through next year's budget.
- c) Process to deal with requests.
- d) Financial and staffing constraints.
- e) Help the board formulate and prioritize their list of projects.

**2. Public Works Department:**

Mr. Jose Olivo, Deputy Public Works Director introduced himself. He explained his department's role in the maintenance and repair of landmarks and historic monuments. They have a list of the fountains, facilities and things of that nature which total over 60. They routinely maintain and clean them. Maintenance consisted of the application of a landscape friendly germicide and light pressure washing. In the event of an accident the structure is relocated to their facility where the contractor will repair. Sometimes risk management and insurance companies get involved which takes time. The accident repairs to the fountain at Miracle Mile and Douglas Road had just been completed as it took time to obtain risk management and insurance company approval. Mr. Olivo agreed to share his list of the 60 items. He invited the board to provide any priorities to Mr. Adams who would forward them to him.

**3. Alhambra Water Tower:** The insurance claim for the Alhambra Water Tower was taking a long time. Claims on historic sites were difficult and the insurance company always raised questions as they preferred to see historic buildings treated as new buildings and repaired as such. The Alhambra Tower claim was from hurricane damage. Mr. Olivo said when estimates come in high, they must submit a budget request. In answer to Chair Slesnick about the city being self-insured, Mr. Adams said there was an insurance policy, but he was not sure of the amount. Chair Slesnick said the Alhambra Water Tower had been an issue for the last 40 years, it was a wood frame structure with stucco. Ms. Adams related that the most recent email stated that the structure had suffered damage in Hurricane Irma and showed signs of deterioration, FEMA would not cover the structure, and an insurance claim had been filed. An assessment of the exterior wall panels was conducted. The consultant's investigation consisted of review of plans, thermal imaging, long term monitoring and physical testing including pressurized water testing. The report was used to complement the insurance claim which has been a lengthy process. Additional information was requested and provided and coverage confirmation when received would be used to define the scope of work. Hurricane Irma was in 2017. Ms. Maranos asked why the City didn't pay for the repairs instead of waiting on the insurance as the tower kept deteriorating with time. Ms. Heisenbottle asked what the City was doing to prevent the deterioration as the insurance company would not pay for the additional deterioration? Mr. Adams read a section from the code which stated: "at the end of each quarter the board shall make non-binding policy recommendations and recommend maintenance, care and improvement opportunities including potential new landmarks, entrances or entrance features and parcels to acquire for such purposes, to the city commission for items within its purview". This would be the vehicle for their recommendations including funding. Chair Slesnick said they needed additional specific input from Public Works before their next meeting to make knowledgeable recommendations. He requested Public Works to submit their list of public landmarks/monuments they maintained and their recommendation of what could and should be happening with the water tower with regards to engineering and construction. Vice-Chair Maranos said it should be a priority. Mr. Adams suggested the board work with Public Works on a budget, which would be better received if they were providing information to support their budget requests. Chair Slesnick asked the board if anyone had any further questions for Public Works.

**4. Markers:** Ms. Bondurant asked about the Frank Button Marker on Alhambra which was split in two and was missing. Chair Slesnick mentioned Ms. Bondurant's compliment to Public Works for their efforts to clean up the street signs/markers. Mr. Olivo said sometimes maintenance became a budgetary issue and they needed the extra help. Mr. Olivo will investigate the street markers southeast of the cemetery, south of Sunset and west of Old Cutler that needed maintenance. Ms. Karelia Martinez Carbonell of 532 Altara Avenue joined the meeting on Zoom, she received photographs from a neighbor showing the extent of the Water Tower's neglect and the damage from Hurricane Irma and vandalism in 2022. The City was historic, and she had been advocating for them to have a budget for things of this nature. She did not understand why it had taken so long for an insurance claim on a historic structure. Chair Slesnick agreed and thanked her for her input. He also thanked Public Works for attending the meeting and their efforts.

5. **Parks and Recreation (Community Recreation Department):** Mr. Mitchell Zuriarrain introduced himself. He said there was a lot of work and beautiful things that the city maintained, and they relied heavily on Public Works to help them maintain the things they were responsible for.
- a) **Current Projects:**
- i) Maggiore Park (5028 Maggiore Street) and Lamar Louise Curry Park (2665 DeSoto Boulevard) which should be completed before the end of the fiscal year.
  - ii) Blue Road Open Space (757 Blue Road) and Toledo and Alava Neighborhood Park (Toledo Street and Alava Avenue) - they have been told that they would receive two grants which would not be signed into effect by the governor until July.
  - iii) Pierce Park (101 Oak Avenue) - under construction and may undergo a name change to rename it for a more historically significant figure to the area.
  - iv) Venetian Pool – as structural assessment was done of the pool vessel and towers. Estimates have been requested to do the entire pool vessel and repair the towers. There are issues with the pumps at different levels, iron oxide intrusion is turning the bottom of the pool brown in color. They don't have the option to go deeper into the aquifer as the deeper you go the water becomes brackish so they are trying to see where else they can get water that does not have iron oxide. These are big problems that affect the aesthetic of the pool and landmark.
- b) **Signs:** Mr. Zuriarrain said they use new standard wood signs in the parks for park name signs. The original signs were made in the 1990's, pink in color. The city went through a rebranding, and they updated the colors (terracotta), but the style remained the same. They had specific use short stone markers at Washington Cooper, Nellie B. Moore, Coral Bay and Nat Winokur. They also used bronze plaques whose size was dictated by the content and were put on posts or pedestals (Kerdyk Park) depending on donations or purpose. In answer to Mr. Adams' question, Mr. Zuriarrain said requests or recommendations for new signage were based on budget and should be sent to Mr. Adams to forward to Parks. Sometimes the commission would have to approve. Repair of signs in parks depended on the type of sign and the work required, more intricate repairs requiring more craftsmanship would be referred to Public Works, simple work for replacement of refurbishing was handled by Parks. Mr. Zuriarrain responded to Chair Slesnick's question regarding benches in the Lamar Louise Curry Park saying that there was an interest and he had advised Mary Snow (The Community Foundation) to wait until the park was finished and the ribbon cutting was held, to see where additional benches could be placed or plaques added to existing benches. The small plaques had to be bought in sets of 2 and cost about \$300. Parks installed and maintained the plaques. He said the board should reach out to them through Mr. Adams or [parks@coralgables.com](mailto:parks@coralgables.com) with any comments, questions or concerns, they were there to help and wanted to make sure the city stayed beautiful. A matrix of all the parks and everything in them was available online. At Ms. Dowlen's request he said he would narrow it down to show the plaques and signs. Mr. Zuriarrain said the plaques at the Water Tower did not fall under parks. He clarified that Parks and Open Spaces, usually have an attractive amenity like a playground, a hardscape if it is maintained by the Parks Department. Open space is maintained by Public Works Greenspace Management, and they maintain the Miracle Mile with SFM and contracts. Parks maintains parks that have playground, benches, lighting and things that require maintenance. Chair Slesnick said it was important that the people of Coral Gables know that the people that work with us and for us are also community minded. Mr. Zuriarrain was a brand-new member of the Rotary Club. Mr. Zuriarrain said he did not live in Coral Gables, but he grew up here and he had a lot of love for the city and appreciated what the board was doing, preserving the landmarks, he was a history buff and felt they needed to be there for future generations. Chair Slesnick thanked Mr. Zuriarrain for attending.
6. **City Purchase of 142 SW 37 Avenue:** Ms. Zeida Sardinias, Asset Manager for Economic Development gave a brief introduction, and thanked the board for all they did. She stated the following:
- a) There are certain requirements in the procurement code when the city buys, sells or leases city property.
  - b) By code it goes to 3 specific boards and any other board that applies.
    - i) Economic Development. Board
    - ii) Property Advisory Board.
    - iii) Budget and Audit Board.
    - iv) An example of an applicable board would be Parks if they were acquiring park lands, parking would go to Parking, etc.
  - c) It has come to the Landmarks Advisory Board that an entrance feature for this parcel is being considered.
  - d) The property is located at the corner of Douglas Road and Ponce de Leon Boulevard.

- e) It is a great location for an entrance feature, it will also be a park and will be maintained by the Parks Department.
- f) It borders the City of Miami and serves as a focal point for entrance to the City of Coral Gables.
- g) They have 3 different appraisals varying in number as there was discussion that it could be subdivided into two lots and is currently zoned to for two homes.
- h) They have negotiated a price of \$750,000.00.
- i) The land is vacant; therefore, it is straightforward.
- j) There is a 15-day inspection period.
- k) Any permits or code violations would be closed, of which there are none.
- l) The Community Recreation Department routinely recommends that the City invest in these outdoor spaces.
- m) The City believes that the purchase price and terms are reflective of the market.
- n) They are recommending the purchase to the commission.
- o) It has already been to the Property, Parks and Budget Advisory Boards who have recommended the purchase. They are requesting the Landmarks Advisory Board's approval. Tomorrow it will go to Economic Development, which will make a total of 5 boards who have reviewed the purchase.

Chair Slesnick referred to the picture on the screen and told the board that the low red roofed house was City of Coral Gables, and the large white building was City of Miami. The western side of the Publix across the street is City of Miami, and the eastern half is the City of Coral Gables. Chair Slesnick asked if the church across the street was considered Coral Gables, Ms. Sardinias did not know. Ms. Bondurant thought that it was a precinct. Chair Slesnick said the used car lot next to the church was City of Miami and there was a formal entrance to the City of Coral Gables at Flagler and Ponce and the sign was missing, and if there were any discussions about restoring it. Ms. Sardinias said Public Works was doing a lot of work on assessing the missing or superfluous signage, it had been discussed at commission and other meetings, but she did not know where they were in the process. Chair Slesnick said people should know that was the entrance to Coral Gables and asked Ms. Sardinias to investigate. The entrance feature for this property had to be discussed in the future, this board would weigh in and determine the entrance feature and if a landmark feature would be created. Chair Slesnick said it was a very dangerous corner if it was going to have recreational features for children. Ms. Sardinias said the Parks Board had a lot of discussion of what should be done and would weigh in on what they would like to see there, and it would have to be put in the Capital Improvement Plan. Mr. Adams stated that this property falls in the Campina Court Historic District so would have to be reviewed by the Historic Preservation Board. There had been some interest in developing it. Chair Slesnick said the Greenway Drive as a Historic District and an asphalt walking path along the eastern end of the golf course. It did not go to the Historic Board or neighbors notified.

- p) The lot is 11,300 square feet and was purchased using impact fees and money from a fund to buy additional land.
- q) A recommendation was needed from the Landmarks Advisory Board to support the acquisition of the property. The commission had instructed Economic Development to come to an agreement to purchase the land.

Mr. Adams stated that the ordinance specifically stated that one of the Board's functions is to assess, advise, and provide recommendations to create new entranceways to the city. Ms. Sardinias said the Methodist church on the corner had an amazing non-profit and a lot of children and families in the area go there. Vice-Chair Maranos said she was always in favor of greenspaces and parks but would not agree to put a playground on that corner. Mr. Adams said it would come back to them for approval.

- r) The property was being bought as park land and would be under Park's purview and they would use their process to assess what they would do with the space.

Ms. Zully Pardo who resides at 49 Campina Court in the Campina Court Historic District introduced herself. She said they were part of the Flagler Street Coral Gables neighborhood and there was a small fixture that disappeared a lot of times. She knew the mayor took a trolley day and went around and looked at all the areas that needed to be fixed. She stated the following: "The property being considered is historic. It could be a designed greenspace, not necessarily a park because of the location. The entrance would be appropriate and support the continued protection and integrity of our historic district. The new

entrance would be a worthy reflection of our City Beautiful welcoming residents and visitors alike”. She asked the Board if they were aware of the 2019 neighborhood workshop which presented a gateway landmark designed for the property and presented a picture on her phone which was shown to the board. Ms. Pardo said she could send the board the community workshop details, and besides capital improvements for their neighborhood this was specifically designed as a vision for that entryway. She went on to say that in 1924 when George Merrick opened the Flagler Section it was to have a coral rock entrance designed by renowned artist Denman Fink. The new neighborhood brought the Miami trolley to Coral Way, but that entrance was never realized. The 2019 workshop had a vision plan for the future of that lot but was on hold because of budget constraints. Ms. Pardo approached the podium and explained the photos on her phone to the board. Chair Slesnick said he appreciated Ms. Pardo showing the photos, but they would not be voting on the design today. Ms. Pardo said the church was part of the Gables, and this resolution would not only bring to fruition a long-awaited vision for their community, but it would also advance our city’s commitment and broaden its greenspaces and landmarks. In answer to Chair Slesnick’s question Ms. Pardo said she had read about the agenda item on the internet. Chair Slesnick thanked Ms. Pardo for coming and her input.

Mr. Adams read two letters of support into the record from:

- i) Stephane L. DaCosta.
- ii) Karelia Martinez Carbonell, President, Historic Preservation of Coral Gables.

Ms. Carbonell once again spoke on Zoom and thanked the board. Chair Slesnick, stated that before anyone challenged the board, they did have a quorum and Ms. Bondurant and Mr. Asrani were not voting.

A motion was made by Vice-Chair Maranos and seconded by Ms. Heisenbottle to recommend to the City Commission that it move forward with the purchase of the property at 142 SW 37 Avenue for city owned open space, the exact purpose to be decided later for open space and/or park land with the concerns raised by the board, and if there is a monument it should be brought back to the Landmarks Advisory Board for approval.

The motion passed with a collective aye.

7. **Community Resource:** Ms. Goldhagen invited the board to view a growing community resource which she had created <https://gableslandmarks.alicegphotos.com/> which consisted of historic homes, Ponciana trees, fountains, Venetian Pool, entrances and landmark. Photos were of both the old and the contemporary from different areas of Coral Gables. Chair Slesnick thanked her. He asked Ms. Goldhagen to take photos of the plaques on the bridges and send to Ms. Bondurant. Mr. Adams read another excerpt from the ordinance, “the board shall establish a collection of written records and photographic inventory of each item within its purview and document its state of preservation”. He said he had reached out to IT to have the GIS program installed on his computer and he would have a layer created on the GIS map with locations, photographs and a brief description of each marker and landmark which could be updated periodically and could be possibly put on the city’s website. It was suggested to have a University of Miami intern do the project. Chair Slesnick said that thanks to Ms. Bondurant and Ms. Goldhagen the board was well on their way to achieving that goal.
8. **Vegetative Threats:** Vice-Chair Maranos had received an email from a resident with photographs about the vegetation causing damage to historic landmarks and structures. She showed pictures and did not know whose umbrella it was under, but it was an important issue. Mr. Adams thought that investigation needed to be done on how to prevent and remove the damaging vegetation. Care needed to be taken that the structures were not damaged in the removal. Chair Slesnick asked that Mr. Adams pass this on to Public Works and make this an agenda item at the next meeting. Mr. Adams responded to the question if a landscape architect was on staff by saying that possibly an arborist would be able to provide advice. Ms. Bondurant said the City had just hired a new arborist. Mr. Adams said sometimes it would be necessary to go outside the city and suggested speaking with a materials conservationist who would have experience using different products on different materials. Mr. Adams stated that budget request for repairs should be from Public Works, but they could make recommendations to Historic Resources for research which would be passed onto Public Works. Mr. Adams said he did not know if there was a Public Service Department and would make inquiries of what options were available.
9. **Farewell to Ms. Bondurant:** Chair Slesnick thanked Ms. Bondurant for her service to the board.
10. **MacFarlane Marker & Resident Meeting:** Mr. Adams had met with the residents of the MacFarlane district last week and discussed their concerns about inappropriate and over development in the neighborhood. He also asked them to consider where they wanted the MacFarlane District historic sign (currently in Historical Resources) installed. He had reminded them to discuss the potential opportunity for a monument to the contribution of the community to the development of Coral Gables. They had assured him that they would discuss these issues.

11. **Next meeting:** Chair Slesnick suggested an early July meeting and take a summer break and reconvene in August. Mr. Adams said that the next meeting was scheduled for August. He said if the board had a meeting in July and cancelled the August meeting the next regular meeting would be November and they needed to have a joint meeting with the Historic Preservation Board before then. It was suggested to have the meeting on July 12, cancel the August meeting and have a meeting with the Historic Preservation Board in September. Mr. Asrani asked that the meeting be in the latter part of July. Different dates were discussed and July 18, 19, 25 & 26 were proposed. Mr. Adams said he would investigate the availability of the Commission Chambers and board members could not attend via zoom they had to attend in person. He also said he did not know if there was a requirement to broadcast the meeting.

**OLD BUSINESS:** None

**CITY COMMISSION ITEMS:** None

**DISCUSSION ITEMS:** None.

**ITEMS FROM THE SECRETARY:** None.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

A motion was made by Ms. Heisenbottle and seconded by Ms. Goldhagen to adjourn the meeting.

The motion passed with a collective aye.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:33 am.

Respectfully submitted,



Warren Adams  
Historic Preservation Officer