



**LANDMARKS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING**  
**Meeting Minutes of March 28, 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	M 28	APPOINTED BY
Don Slesnick	P	P	Mayor Vince Lago
Gay Bondurant	P	P	Commissioner Kirk R. Menendez
Ramona Busot	P	P	City Manager Peter Iglesias
Alice Goldhagen	P	P	Vice-Mayor Michael Mena
Donna Heisenbottle	P	P	Commissioner Jorge L. Fors, Jr.
Jane Maranos	P	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 9:04.

**ROLL CALL:**

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

Interim Chair Slesnick welcomed everyone to the second meeting of the Landmarks Advisory Board and explained that this meeting was a result of a decision at the first meeting not to wait until May for a second meeting. He had met with Mayor Lago who had requested an update and would otherwise have been present at today's meeting if he was well. Mayor Lago liked city meetings to start with the pledge of allegiance and a prayer.

The board stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance, and a moment of silence was also observed in solidarity with the people of Ukraine. Interim Chair Slesnick noted how many historic landmarks had been and continued to be destroyed in Ukraine and thanked God that we lived in a country that has been spared that type of destruction.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

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

Interim Chair Slesnick thanked Ms. Lyons for the minutes. Mr. Adams asked if the board members were happy with the minutes or would they like them abbreviated. The board agreed to leave them as is.

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

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**1. Board as a whole nomination:**

There were two nominees Mr. Ajit Asrani and Ms. Lauren Dowlen. Ms. Lyons called the roll, and Mr. Asrani was selected.

Interim Chair Slesnick noted that Ms. Dowlen was an excellent candidate for the board and suggested her nomination and resume be kept on hold in the event of an opening.

**2. Women’s History Month:**

Interim Chair Slesnick noted that it was Women’s History month, and stated he was proud to serve on a woman dominated board. Whereas others spoke about doing something the City had in fact done something and they had a wonderful cadre of women serving on this board.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**1. Voting:**

Interim Chair Slesnick suggested that they vote on making the positions of Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson permanent.

A motion was made by Ms. Heisenbottle and seconded by Ms. Bondurant to remove the title of interim from the positions of Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson and make them permanent.  
The motion passed with a collective aye.

Chair Slesnick said that he and Ms. Maranos would work together as a team. He had met with Mr. Adams, and he had faith and confidence in his ability to guide the board in the future. He suggested that the joint meeting between the Historic Preservation Board and the Landmarks Advisory Board be in the fall and that the Landmarks Advisory Board members attend the meeting of the Historic Preservation Board to present their goals and objectives.

**2. List of Landmarks:**

Mr. Adams had sent everyone a copy of the list that Ms. Bondurant had compiled and asked if they had any comments. Ms. Maranos thanked Ms. Bondurant for her work and asked if there were any photographs. Mr. Adams said there were photographs but were too numerous to send via email. Ms. Bondurant said the photograph column clearly depicted the location of the markers. Chair Slesnick clarified by saying this was a list of markers, plaques, statues, plaza benches and memorials and markers throughout the city catalogued by Ms. Bondurant and was available through the Historic Preservation Office. He asked if anyone could access the file and the photos, to which Mr. Adams responded that currently they were available only on flash drive due to the size of the file. Ms. Bondurant said the list was not definitive and if anyone had additions, they should let her know, her criteria was to get it all on one page. Ms. Adams advised them that there was a map on the city’s website showing the historic districts and designated properties that he was working on to ensure was correct and that once completed he would work on a layer for the items on Ms. Bondurant’s list.

**3. Additional Markers:**

Ms. Maranos noted that the marker at James T. Barker Park (1035 Venetia Park) was not on the list. Ms. Bondurant said it was new. Chair Slesnick suggested that they take a survey of items at the University of Miami as there were several memorials throughout the campus that relate to the City, e.g., a Veterans memorial. He also suggested Fairchild Tropical Gardens to which Ms. Bondurant responded that she had included some on the list.

**4. Golf Course Signs:**

Coral Gables Sign – North Greenway Drive/Coral Way and the sign near the clubhouse and first tee. Mr. Adams said there were no photos or records in the archives. He would reach out to Parks and Recreation and Public Works to see if anyone recalled them and if they still existed. Ms. Maranos suggested reaching out to the public and the Coral Gables E-News to see if anyone had any record or memory of these signs. Mr. Adams agreed. Chair Slesnick said that several people had told him they thought the sign on North Greenway Drive had said “Coral Gables Country Club” not “Welcome to Coral Gables” as was originally thought. Mr. Adams thought it may have been moved during intersection improvements.

**5. Presentation on Markers:**

Mr. Adams gave updates following the on-screen presentation:

- a) **Coral Gables Riding Academy Marker** - had been installed.  
On seeing the picture Chair Slesnick said his thoughts were with the owner of Caffè Abbracci, Nino Perneti who was ill. Ms. Maranos asked if when new markers were installed or replaced if coral rocks and/or plantings be placed around the markers to prevent them being damaged.
- b) **MacFarland Homestead Marker:**  
Mr. Adams had met with Mr. Prime to discuss various issues in the district and let him know that they had the marker, but the question was where it would be placed. He had agreed to go to a neighborhood association meeting to discuss placement and other concerns.

**6. Issues raised by the Public:**

**a) Entrance to El Prado and Coral Way:**

There was no wall or foliage present to protect the greenspace. The lack of wall or boundary or foliage makes it an open parkland for Miami and not a protected park for Coral Gables residents. The inclusion of landscaping or wall or something of that nature would certainly enhance the greenspace for Coral Gables Residents.

Mr. Adams said that he understood from the email that the entrance to El Prado from Coral Way has no wall or foliage to protect the greenspace, because it is in the midst of the City of Coral Gables.

**b) Alcazar Plaza:**

Ms. Maranos said she had received an email from a resident about this issue and the Alcazar Plaza. The City had declared blocks 4 to 7 on Alcazar historically designated and there should be some recognition on either end of the street to denote that.

**c) The twin entrance to 8<sup>th</sup> Street:**

Mr. Maranos said the heavy traffic probably stopped people enjoying the north part of that greenspace. She asked if something could be done to enhance it with hedging. Mr. Adams stated that they had already discussed replacing two golf course signs, putting rocks and landscaping around all the signs to protect them from traffic, building coral walls, and currently there was no funding. He said for this board to be effective every suggestion should come through the chair and be prioritized. If the board wanted to move forth with everything at once he could certainly ask but doubted a good outcome. He noted that they had recently gotten a quote for reinstating the coral rock wall only at the front of the Merrick House and that was \$26,000. Ms. Maranos suggested instead of a wall maybe some hedges to create a boundary separating the busy highway from the park. Ms. Bondurant asked them to repeat the first item. Ms. Maranos said there was a request for benches, a place to rest and enjoy that park.

**7. Prioritized List:**

Chair Slesnick suggested Mr. Adams could come to the next meeting with a prioritized list. When asked who would make the final determination Mr. Adams said that some things would go to Parks and Public Works, but everything would have to go to commission for funding approval. Chair Slesnick issued an official invitation to Parks and Public Works to attend the next meeting to work with the board on the prioritized list. He also said they needed to work on a proposed budget that was tied to a prioritized list to present to the commission. Mr. Adams said the list might change once the budget was identified. Chair Slesnick said the landmarks and markers were getting older and if the city wanted to save them it would take an investment. The reason for this board was because they thought the investment was important.

**8. Whiteway Lights:**

Mr. Adams said that samples were dropped off and showed the board pictures of how the bases and poles would look and said everyone was happy with them. Ms. Bondurant asked if they were new or restored. Mr. Adams said the picture was of a restored base and they were stored in the yard. The band on the poles read: Coral Gables The Miami Riviera. The question was whether the original light fixtures would be recreated? They currently had one which could be used as a mold. However, Allen Architectural Metals (the restoration company) would give them a price even though they said it would be incredibly expensive and difficult to recreate them, and they would have to comply with electrical and other codes. Also, if there was a problem or they had to be replaced it would be very costly. The other option was to use an off the shelf Steinberg fitting. They had met with the City Manager and the proposal was to install two poles, one with the original fitting and one with the Steinberg fitting to compare how they looked. Mr. Adams said that once they were installed, he would send the board an email requesting that they look at both and give their recommendations. Ms. Maranos and the board asked if the budget had been approved financially by the City Commission, when Mayor Cason was in office, he had said they would get restored and they would be on the corridor of Riviera Drive, she hoped this would happen soon. In answer to the board's question Mr. Adams said there were 82 lights some were restorations, and some were reproductions. The first phase had gone for restoration, the only question was the fittings at the top. From a preservation point of view, recreating them would be ideal, but the cost could be prohibitive. The person providing the money would make the final decision. The other things to consider was whether they would provide the required light which the Steinberg fittings did. In the event of an accident the question would be asked if there had been sufficient lighting in the area. Ms. Bondurant asked if the insurance companies would reimburse the city for damages in the event of an accident involving the poles. Mr. Adams said he believed insurance claims had been submitted in the past for damages. Ms. Bondurant said she was always stunned when people run into the DeSoto Fountain. Chair Slesnick said he was bothered by lights in the historic districts having bright lights intermittently with the lights that have a golden glow. If the decision had been made to replace all the lights with bright lights he would not have agreed, but when they had bright lights at intermittent points it destroyed the ambience of the district.

**Public Comment:**

Ms. Carbonell participated by Zoom and thanked the board for taking her call. She had joined the meeting late but wanted to put it on record that the City Manager had been committed to getting the White Way Lights done correctly. She thought that over \$1 million was budgeted from Mayor Cason's term. She asked that the City get the restoration right and that they be as original as possible as the lights were some of the city's gems. The city should not only think about the present, but how to get them right. These lights had been the Historical Preservation Association of Coral Gables signature project for over 10 years, and it was one of the reasons that she joined the organization. Chair Slesnick thanked her for speaking.

**9. Photograph of board members:**

Mr. Adams said he would try and arrange it for the next meeting of May 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**10. Entrance to Miracle Mile and Douglas Road:**

Ms. Busot showed photos and stated that this entrance has two beautiful arches and fountains flanking the left side of the street. Although the arches appear to be in very good shape, they do need some cleaning and removal of overhanging leaves so you can see the sign that says Coral Gables. The fountains on the north side of the street were clearly in disrepair and have had work done on them. She asked Mr. Adams how long have the fountains and their surroundings been torn up and what was the timetable for their completion? She went on to say that half of the barriers around the site have been knocked down along with the safety netting and were a liability for the city and a danger for the pedestrians. She was not sure if the exposed pipes were for sprinkler systems or for the fountains themselves. The bricks as shown in the photos were extremely exposed. Mr. Adams did not have an answer and said he would have to speak to Public Works as they were not under the Historical Resources Department's purview and this item would not have come across his desk. He did not believe the fountain was historic. He thought that this had happened soon after he had joined the City and would take time to get reimbursement from the insurance company and then be repaired. He said that one of the consequences of the calendar of the board was that they would have to wait a month and a half to get an answer. Ms. Busot suggested that the site should be cleaned up and made secure. Ms. Bondurant speculated on how the fountain had ended up in such disrepair. Ms. Busot said several tiers were missing, but the photograph of the other fountain was not available. Chair Slesnick thanked Ms. Busot for bringing it to the board's attention.

**11. Article in Gables Living:**

Chair Slesnick mentioned the article "A Board is Born in Coral Gables and it is a Star" in Gables Living written by Dr. Karelia Martinez Carbonell which praised the formation of the Landmarks Advisory Board. The article showed a picture of Ms. Maranos with Dr. Carbonell.

**12. Status of Markers discussed at the last meeting:**

Ms. Maranos asked for a status update to which Mr. Adams said that he had not had a chance to investigate. Ms. Bondurant said the garage at the Merrick House had been opened, and nothing was present that referred to the plaque.

**13. Bahamian Statue:**

Ms. Bondurant asked if Mr. Adams had spoken to Mr. Prime about the Bahamian statute or significant marker that George Merrick had wanted them to put up in 1937? Mr. Adams said that it was not mentioned but would raise it at the neighborhood meeting. Ms. Bondurant clarified that George Merrick had made a speech to the Miami Realty Board in 1937 and quoted: "when the true pioneers are monumented there should be an inspired one for the black Bahamians". It had been mentioned at a meeting in October but had gotten sidetracked due to other issues being discussed. She noted that it had taken nearly 80 years to have the statue of George Merrick erected at City Hall.

**14. Founder's Day:**

Ms. Maranos said the initial Founders Day celebration to commemorate George Merrick's birthday was held at City Hall last year on June 3<sup>rd</sup>. The city was framing the proclamation and medal that George Merrick had received from King Alfonso of Spain, and it would be displayed in City Hall. Ms. Maranos wanted this to be an ongoing tradition, and as the city took over the Country Club it would be a wonderful venue for such a celebration and if not, it should once again be celebrated at City Hall. Mr. Adams said he did not think it was under his purview to organize city events. He thought that the board had to be very careful to stick to their intended purpose. The board could make a recommendation or show support of it. Ms. Maranos said she wanted to make a recommendation for it to happen each year.

**15. Street Markers:**

Ms. Bondurant commended Public Works for their quick response to her notification of missing markers in the neighborhood. Some had been replaced and others painted so the letters were legible. Ms. Heisenbottle asked if the street markers were historic to which the answer was yes. She said some were illegible either from mold or

the letters needing to be redone or in some cases tree roots had uprooted the markers and they were pointing in the wrong direction.

**16. Notification Process:**

Mr. Adams suggested setting up a process at the next meeting for notifications to Public Works. He wanted to implement a system to ensure items were completed quickly. Ms. Maranos thought one contact person would be more efficient.

**17. Landmarks Advisory Board Budget:**

Ms. Heisenbottle asked how they would create a budget? Mr. Adams said that he suggested they create a list of priority projects and discuss them with Parks and Public Works to see if they would be willing to either use their own budget to get the projects accomplished or support any requests the board had. Depending on that outcome they could move ahead with a request for funding. He said that the availability of funds would determine the list priority. Chair Slesnick suggested that after they created the priority list and received the associated costs, they could suggest to the commission the funds be slotted into the appropriate department's budget so that the projects could be completed. Mr. Adams said he had a list of items, but if anyone had any additions, they should send them to him, and he would bring them up to the board at the next meeting for their vote. Ms. Bondurant asked if street marker maintenance was a Public Works budget item, and it was important to let them know that people were taking note of maintenance items in the City. Ms. Maranos said that this board had been formed to spread awareness and communication between departments. Mr. Adams advised the board that grants might be another avenue to explore for additional funding.

**18. Additional Item for Landmark List:**

Chair Slesnick mentioned another marker by a bridge near Ms. Goldhagen's house and was asked by Ms. Bondurant to take a picture for it to be added to the list.

**CITY COMMISSION ITEMS:** None

**DISCUSSION ITEMS:** None.

**ITEMS FROM THE SECRETARY:**

Mr. Adams stated he was Secretary to the Board in response to Chair Slesnick's question about this item and added that this was taken from the standard format for the agenda. He asked Ms. Lyons if they could change it to suit the board. Ms. Lyons said that this item was for any items that he, Mr. Adams felt necessary to update the board on. Chair Slesnick said that Mr. Adams title should be changed to Staff Director for the Board.

Chair Slesnick once again thanked Ms. Lyons, he also thanked Mr. Adams and the board.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

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

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:24 am.

Respectfully submitted,



Warren Adams  
Historic Preservation Officer