

CORAL GABLES HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD MEETING MINUTES

November 20, 2008, 4:00 p.m.

City Commission Chambers

405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, Florida

MEMBERS:

D J F M A M J J J# A S O N

Dorothy Thomson	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Margaret Rolando*	^	^	^	^	^	^	^	^	^	^	^	^	^
Ernesto Santos	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	P
Gonzalo Sanabria				P	E	E	P	E	P	E	P	P	P**
Dolly MacIntyre	E	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Michael Beeman	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	P
Joyce Meyers	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	E	P	P	E	P
Lisa Bennett	P	P	P	P	E	P	P	E	E	P	P	E	E
Shirley Maroon	E	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P

APPOINTED BY:

Mayor Donald D. Slesnick, II
Vice Mayor William H. Kerdyk, Jr.
Comm. Maria Anderson
Comm. Rafael "Ralph" Cabrera, Jr.
Comm. Wayne "Chip" Withers
Historic Preservation Board
City Manager
City Commission
City Commission

** Arrived at 5:03 p.m.

STAFF:

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

A = Absent

P = Present

E = Excused

*** = New Member**

^ = Resigned Member

GUESTS: Lyle Lieberman, Sergey Krupsky, Meg Daly, Stephanie Schmidt, Jean J. Oliva, Jose Guerro, Jorge Hernandez, Viviana Rangel, Monica Loreda, Laura Russo, Jim Kennedy, Andrea Lynch Cole, Kendell Turner, Orestes, Lopez-Recio, Margaret (Peggy) Rolando

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

The meeting was called to order by Chair Dolly MacIntyre at 4:07 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 OCTOBER 16, 2008:

In accordance with a memorandum from Ms. Bennett explaining that she was out of town during the October 16, 2008 previous meeting, the Board unanimously and retroactively excused her absence for that meeting.

Ms. Thomson made a motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of October 16, 2008 as revised. Ms. Meyers seconded the motion, unanimously approved by voice vote.

MEETING ATTENDANCE:

Ms. Thomson made a motion to excuse the meeting absence of Ms. Bennett. Ms. Meyers seconded the motion, unanimously approved by voice vote.

DEFERRALS:

Ms. Kautz reported no agenda deferrals.

SWEARING IN THE PUBLIC:

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

INTRODUCTION OF NEW BOARD MEMBER:

Ms. Kautz introduced Margaret (Peggy) Rolando as Vice Mayor Kerdyk's new Board appointee. Ms. Rolando was present to observe at this meeting and would actively participate at the December meeting.

PERSONAL APPEARANCE:

Architect Jorge Hernandez was present to speak about the positioning of the Florida Historical Marker entitled WOMEN TAKE ACTION IN CORAL GABLES on the property located at 1302 Alhambra Circle, also known as "The Roxcy O'Neal Bolton House."

As background, Mr. Hernandez presented the following information:

- Ms. Bolton's property was interpreted by the State of Florida as appropriate for a State historic marker several years ago. At that time, the marker was placed on the private portion of the property.
- As a member of the State of Florida Historic Marker Committee, Mr. Hernandez reviews historic markers on a monthly basis throughout the state, most of which are placed in the public realm.
- As an important part of Coral Gables heritage, the marker should be moved to public property where it is visible to the public and maintained by the City.
- Ms. Bolton is supportive of this action.
- A suggested placement of the marker is 25 feet south of the corner, essentially in front of Ms. Bolton's house.
- Mr. Hernandez requested approval of the concept of relocating the marker to public property, stating that he would return to the Board with the exact location once it is determined.

Ms. MacIntyre invited members of the public to speak about the issue. Hearing no requests, she closed the public hearing portion of the meeting.

Ms. Meyers made a motion to approve the concept of relocating the historic marker from private to public property, contingent upon presentation of the final details. Mr. Beeman seconded the motion.

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

SPECIAL CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS:

CASE FILE COA (SP) 2008-18

An application for the issuance of a Special Certificate of Appropriateness for the property located at 1142 South Greenway Drive, a non-contributing structure within the "Country Club of Coral Gables Historic District", legally described as Lots 1 and 2, Block 12, Coral Gables Section "C", as recorded in Plat Book 8, at Page 26, of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County, Florida. The applicant requested design approval for the construction of an addition and alterations to the existing structure.

As a PowerPoint presentation was conducted, Ms. Kautz described the property, plans and proposed alterations. She stated that no variances were requested, adding that the architect was in the audience if the Board wanted additional information. Other than a request that the new perimeter wall addition at the northeast corner of the residence be recessed

slightly off the corner, she said that staff recommended approval. Ms. Kautz suggested that the new wall could be recessed the same as the garage façade; however, staff was unable to determine that dimension from the drawings.

Ms. MacIntyre invited members of the public to speak to the application. Hearing no requests, she closed the public hearing portion of the meeting and called for Board discussion.

Ms. Thomson confirmed that the house was a non-contributing structure within the historic district. Ms. Kautz stated that the property was eligible for contributing status designation now, and the owner would be so advised. Mr. Beeman added that the owners should designate the property before undertaking this major addition so they can be eligible for ad valorem tax benefits. Ms. Kautz added that staff can research additional houses in the district that may now be eligible for designation.

Mr. Beeman made a motion to approve issuance of the Special Certificate of Appropriateness for 1142 South Greenway Drive with staff's recommendation regarding recession of the new perimeter wall as stated. Mr. Santos seconded the motion.

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

CASE FILE COA (SP) 2008-20

An application for the issuance of a Special Certificate of Appropriateness for the property located at 10XX Cotorro Avenue, a vacant parcel within the "French City Village Historic District", legally described as Lot 3, Block 145, Revised Plat of Coral Gables Riviera Section Part Nine as recorded in Plat Book 28, at Page 29, of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County, Florida. The applicant requested design approval for in-fill construction within the historic district. Variances were requested for the front door facing, maximum allowable building height, maximum allowable floor area, and maximum allowable ground area coverage.

Ms. Kautz presented the history of the district, including photographs of the neighborhood, houses and this empty lot, and stated that Mr. Hernandez, architect for this project, would further describe specifics of the application.

Ms. Russo stated that her representation of Jose Luis Guerrero Garcia, owner of the property. Ms. Russo then discussed the importance to the owner of the selection of a highly-qualified architect with substantial historic experience to design the house, after which she described the credentials and qualifications of Mr. Hernandez.

Mr. Hernandez reviewed the history of the French City Village as well as the details of the proposed project, referencing numerous displays of design, context and features. All significant details of the historic district and its distinctions were enumerated by Mr. Hernandez, who stated that he carefully considered all the Village's unique qualities in the design of the house. The design of the house was comprehensively reviewed and similarly compared with other houses within the Village.

Ms. Kautz expressed staff's concern about the height of the building as the existing historic property to the right is lower than the height of the proposed residence. There is a precedent in the district where the first floor is eleven feet, second floor is nine feet, with steeply pitched roofs over the second floor. She advised that staff recommended the height be reduced to 31 feet to more accurately reflect existing buildings in the Village. The design would still be taller than the property to the left.

Ms. Kautz explained staff's research regarding the square footage calculations, pointing out that the calculations are done differently in the property appraisers office than the Coral Gables Zoning Code. Staff has some concerns about square footage of the design; however, Ms. Kautz said the size of the building is not out of context with the size of other properties in the Village, and the floor plan is tight.

Ms. MacIntyre announced at 5:03 p.m. that Mr. Sanabria had arrived at the meeting.

Variance requests were described by Ms. Kautz as follows:

- To allow the front door of the single-family residence not to face a street vs. the building facing the front of the lot and being subject to certain restrictions;
- To allow the residence to have a maximum building height of approximately thirty-three feet vs. a two-story single-family residence not exceeding a height of twenty-nine feet above established grade in all instances.
- To allow the residence to have a maximum ground area coverage for a principal building of approximately two thousand one hundred thirty-three square feet (42% of the lot) vs. one thousand seven hundred fifty square feet (35% of the lot).
- To allow the residence to have a maximum ground area coverage for principal buildings and accessory structures of approximately two thousand four hundred eighty-one square feet (49% of the lot) vs. two thousand two hundred fifty square feet (45% of the lot).
- To allow the residence to have a maximum floor area ratio of approximately four thousand one hundred thirty square feet (81%) vs. two thousand four hundred square feet (48%).

The Board engaged in a discussion regarding design scale and difficulties caused by differing ways of establishing square footage. Mr. Hernandez explained the different methods of calculating square footage according to the formula used and the governing authority, and the resulting confusion these differing methods produced. He also addressed height and footprint issues, adding his willingness to accept staff's recommendation regarding height. He indicated that the F.A.R. and footprint issues were contextual and reminded the Board that those items were measured with two different "rulers," one method by the County and one by Coral Gables Zoning Code.

Ms. Kautz pointed out that several members of the audience wanted to speak, and first brought the Board's attention to a series of eight e-mails in Board packets that were received regarding the application. All those who sent the e-mails were present in the audience. The printed e-mails were provided to the secretary as part of the record.

Ms. MacIntyre opened the meeting for public comment in favor of the application. No one requested to speak. She then invited those opposed to the application to speak, hearing comments as follows:

Mr. Hernandez made the following points regarding siting of the structure and distance from neighboring properties:

- The volume of the main house was placed on the west side of the lot, favorably positioning it between both neighboring houses;
- The massing of the house was pulled away from neighboring houses;
- Significant air and open spaces were created, including the garden setback.

Public comment in opposition to the application:

James Kennedy, 1033 Hardee, stated the following:

- He supported many portions of the design of the subject property as well as its location on the site;
- He expressed concern about the west side elevation height and need for more definition; no windows or architectural appeal features on that wall; garages in the neighborhood have a second story (his own request for a second story on his garage was denied); exposed stairwells don't fit; height needs to be contiguous with the neighborhood; windows on front and back need to be styled more in keeping with the older homes on the block; future treatment of the septic tank and how it would be serviced or replaced.

Stephanie Schmidt, 1028 Cotorro, commented as follows:

- Regarding functionality, the plans do not appear to accommodate access by utilities on either side of the property to reach the back of the house, and said this could be a potential hazard to all neighbors.

Meg Daly, 1004 Cotorro and 1010 Hardee, commented as follows:

- The proposed house appears large for a 50' X 100' lot, and suggested the ratio be analyzed and compared to other houses in the neighborhood.

- Would prefer the design to be closer to the original architect's architectural message, pointing out the space between windows to accommodate shutters.
- None of the houses have two-story carriage houses, though almost everyone would like to have the additional square footage.
- Safety is a major issue and a lack of access to the sides and back of the houses is potentially dangerous.
- The quoins proposed for the subject house are in the center of the portion that faces the street, and the only home that has center quoins also have them on the outside.
- None of the Mott Schmidt homes have articulated balconies.

Lyle Lieberman, 1030 Cotorro, commented as follows:

- The main concern is the height and size of the living space, particularly the two-story carriage house that is out of context with the houses on Cotorro. He supported staff's suggestion about lowering the height.

Meg Daly, 1004 Cotorro and 1010 Hardee, added:

- The homes on Cotorro that are contributing properties have entrances on the front of the street; those on Hardee that are contributing have side access.

Vivian Rangel, 1029 Hardee Road, commented as follows:

- Concerned about the number of people who rent out second floor spaces over garages or carriage houses.
- Concerned that this house might be built for investment purposes, and suggested it be scaled to the neighborhood in terms of square footage.

A discussion was held about illegal rentals of second stories of ancillary buildings. Mr. Beeman also stated that the quoins should be removed from the design.

Andrea Lynch Cole, 1009 Hardee, clarified several issues with Mr. Hernandez, and commented as follows:

- Concerned about the west façade, what appears to be a blank wall without any architectural details to distinguish it, and no specified color stated for the wall. None of the Mott Schmidt houses had blank walls. Ms. Cole requested that architectural elements be added to the wall.
- The house on Cotorro should not "announce itself" on the Hardee Road side.
- People with shared walls had to coordinate services and be cooperative with access issues.
- Features added to the design don't all belong to the French neo-classic architectural style.
- Concerned about the roof height and the requested variance for the two-story carriage house.

There being no further requests by the public to speak, Ms. MacIntyre closed the public hearing portion of this application.

Responding to a request from Mr. Sanabria to render an opinion, Mr. Santos praised Mr. Hernandez' excellent presentation, but also expressed concern about comments from the neighbors. He made the following observations/recommendations:

- Regarding the height of the building, Mr. Santos recommended lowering it. Mr. Hernandez agreed.
- Concern was expressed about hardship as a foundation for the request for variances. Ms. Kautz advised that staff felt variances were justified in terms of conditions that exist in the district, and the non-conformity of the entire district, with unusual circumstances. Mr. Santos disagreed with the approach to the hardship. Mr. Hernandez responded that in historically-designated districts, hardship is understood in the context of historic fabric, and these properties don't replicate other houses in the City. They are recognized as different, and their criteria is different.

Mr. Kennedy, recognized to address the Board again, stated that the most important element desired by the neighbors was conformity with the neighborhood, and all suggested that the roof height be the same as other houses in the neighborhood. Mr. Hernandez stated that he would limit the height to 31 feet.

Mr. Santos continued his observations:

- Adjusted square footage and F.A.R. have no relation to each other, and said the allowable square footage for the lot should be observed.
- The proximity to neighbors of the septic tank, which is potentially smelly, may be offensive. There is not sufficient green area to compensate for the requirements for a drain field and tank.
- The two-story carriage house needs to be lowered or the second floor eliminated.
- There is no justification for the variances.
- He agreed with the neighbors about the front door of the house.
- The architecture and articulation of the windows are substantially different from the rest and should be adjusted.

Stating that he thought the application was out of scale and the architectural treatments were not in conformity with the Village, Mr. Sanabria suggested that neighbors and the architect meet to review the design and the concerns expressed to develop a compromise. Ms. Russo, Mr. Hernandez and several neighbors voiced agreement with the suggestion, and indicated they were amenable to compromise.

Mr. Sanabria made a motion to defer the application to give the applicant and neighbors an opportunity to meet, discuss concerns and reach a compromise. Ms. Maroon seconded the motion.

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

Board members discussed the issues, and Ms. Meyers cautioned them about not making the design of the house exactly conform to the architecture of the historic homes as a new home is supposed to be differentiated. She also suggested that staff and/or the applicants develop data about the real comparable numbers of square footage of those homes already in the district to find out the zoning square footage rather than the tax assessor's square footage. Ms. Kautz asked the Board if they wanted to relay a list of suggestions to avoid development of a design that would not be approved by the Board. It was agreed that the applicant and neighbors knew the thoughts of the Board.

BOARD ITEMS/CITY COMMISSION UPDATE:

Ms. Kautz reported that at the November 18 City Commission meeting, the Commission denied the appeal of 111 Salamanca Avenue to bifurcate the undue economic hardship application of the designation.

CITY PROJECTS UPDATE:

The Coral Gables Museum started construction after receiving its permit. There will be a hard-hat tour on Friday, November 20 from 5:00 to 8:30 p.m.

ITEMS FROM THE SECRETARY:

Ms. Kautz reported that 1910 Country Club Prado passed the County Historic Preservation Board for ad valorem tax relief.

The Merrick Holiday Open House will be held Saturday, December 13, 2008, 2:00 to 5:00 p.m., free to the public.

The Coral Gables Museum is hosting the first gingerbread house contest and will give awards for specific entries.

Ms. Chin reported that the National Trust for Historic Preservation launched a campaign called This Place Matters to encourage communities and individuals passionate about locations or sites to photograph them, share stories about the sites and upload information to www.preservationnation.org/thisplacematters. She attended the National Conference in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Regarding the Museum, Mr. Santos asked if the project was sustainable and being approached for LEED designation. Ms. Kautz responded that the LEED designation would be silver and would be one of a handful of municipal-owned LEED buildings and restoration projects.

Regarding Matheson Hammock Park, Ms. Kautz stated that the applicant deferred until December; however, it might be deferred further pending a written master plan.

Ms. MacIntyre suggested that a workshop be conducted for the Board on Sunshine Law as both the Matheson Hammock application and the Biltmore application might present issues that might be difficult. Mr. Beeman advised that the City Attorney counseled Board members not to comment on these projects. Ms. MacIntyre said these type of projects illustrate the need for official instruction on the issues. Mr. Sanabria asked for clarification from the City Attorney. He requested a copy of a memorandum from the City Attorney speaking to these issues.

Ms. Thomson commented, and the Board agreed, that appreciation should be expressed to the City Commission for upholding the Board's position on the appeal of 111 Salamanca.

NEW BUSINESS:

Mr. Beeman reported that he was accused by a resident with violating the Sunshine Law regarding the Board meeting wherein the election took place. He received a letter from the City Attorney indicating she reviewed the circumstances, Mr. Beeman was not charged with a violation and the matter was cured. Ms. Hernandez suggested that a training meeting be conducted with the Board since there are newer members and two new members also coming into service.

Ms. Kautz closed by stating that a refresher course on Sunshine Law would be conducted.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to be discussed, the meeting adjourned at 6:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kara N. Kautz
Historic Preservation Officer