

**JOINT MEETING OF THE CORAL GABLES  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD  
& LANDMARKS ADVISORY BOARD**  
Wednesday, October 19, 2022, Meeting, 3:00 p.m.  
Coral Gables City Hall, City Commission Chamber  
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, Florida 33134

Historical Resources &  
Cultural Arts

2327 SALZEDO STREET  
CORAL GABLES  
FLORIDA 33134

☎ 305.460.5093  
✉ hist@coralgables.com

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD**

MEMBERS	N 21	D 21	J 22	F 22	M 22	A 22	M 22	J 22	J 22	A 22	S 22	JOINT MEETING OCTOBER 19, 2022	APPOINTED BY
Albert Menendez (Chair)	P	P	P	P	P	E	P	P	E	E	P	P	Commission-As-A-Whole
Cesar Garcia-Pons (Vice-Chair)	E	E	P	P	P	P	E	E	P	P	P	P	City Manager Peter Iglesias
Alicia Bache-Wiig	P	P	P	P	P	E	P	P	E	P	#	A	Mayor Vince Lago
Margaret (Peggy) Rolando	P	P	P	E	E	P	#	P	E	P	P	A	Vice-Mayor Michael Mena
Dona Spain	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	A	Commissioner Rhonda Anderson
Xavier Durana	P	P	P	E	E	E	P	P	P	P	P	P	Commissioner Jorge L. Fors, Jr.
Michael J. Maxwell	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	Commissioner Kirk R. Menendez
Bruce Ehrenhaft	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	A	Commission-As-A-Whole
John P. Fullerton	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	P	A	Board-as-a-Whole

**LANDMARKS ADVISORY BOARD**

MEMBERS	F 22	M 22	A 22	M 22	J 22	J 22	A 22	JOINT MEETING OCTOBER 19, 2022	APPOINTED BY
Don Slesnick	P	P	N O M E E T I N G	P	N O M E E T I N G	N O M E E T I N G	P	P	Mayor Vince Lago
Lauren Dowlen				P			#	P	Commissioner Kirk Menendez
Ramona Busot	P	P		E			P	P	City Manager, Peter Iglesias
Alice Goldhagen	P	P		P			E	P	Vice-Mayor Michael Mena
Donna Heisenbottle	P	P		P			P	P	Commissioner Jorge L. Fors, Jr.
Jane Maranos	P	P		P			P	P	Commissioner Rhonda Anderson
Ajit Asrani				P			P	A	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, Gus Ceballos, Assistant City Attorney  
RECORDING SECRETARY/PREPARATION OF MINUTES: Nancy Kay Lyons, Administrative Assistant

---

**CALL TO ORDER**

The Chair for the Historic Preservation Board, Mr. Menendez called the meeting to order at 3:05 pm.

**INTRODUCTIONS:**

Chair Menendez introduced the members of the Historic Preservation Board who were present. Mr. Don Slesnick, Chair of the Landmarks Advisory Board thanked Chair Menendez and stated that the ordinance called for this joint meeting between the two boards every so often and proceeded to introduce the member of the Landmarks Advisory Board who were present at the meeting.

Chair Slesnick said he was outnumbered as most of the members on the Landmarks Advisory Board were women and that it was a very hard working and well-integrated board.

Ms. Goldhagen stepped up to the podium and stated that she was a photographer and had recently created Gables Landmarks as a sub-domain on her website which consists of different historic buildings and wonderful homes in the Coral Gables. She said the website was growing and invited the Historic Preservation Board Members to visit the site.

**ROLE OF THE LANDMARKS ADVISORY BOARD:**

Chair Slesnick said that their board took their charge seriously and had already met on several occasions to create the board, get their work plan together and work with Director Adams. He commended Director Adams on the support and guidance that he had provided to the board. The board was trying to work with Public Works, as one of their charges stated in the ordinance was the upkeep and possible replacement of landmarks which could be signs, signages, different kinds of monuments and so forth. Ms. Bondurant one of their founding members had created a list of the Landmarks in Coral Gables. Ms. Bondurant had resigned to take on the role of docent at the Merrick House. Her terminology “landmarks” was what the Commission had in mind when they created the ordinance. It is substantive pieces of statuary and signage and so forth that exist in the city. The list was long, but each of the board members has come forth with additions.

Chair Slesnick asked Director Adams where the list was located. Director Adams stated that he would have it put on the internet on the city’s website.

Chair Slesnick spoke on behalf of the members of the Landmarks Advisory Board and said he understood that there was some outcry from certain citizens asking why they needed another board if they would be stepping on the toes of the Historic Preservation Board. He said that was not the board’s purpose, they were not here to do what the Historic Preservation board does, only to supplement in certain areas and be supportive. Both boards share a common interest and are committed to historic preservation, the history of the City and saving the City Beautiful to be the City Beautiful for the future. The board is still finding its way and looking for ways to help and support. Ms. Bonnie Bolton had given the board a presentation on “The Garden of Our Lord”. They had listened to her presentation and taken her points into consideration but had referred her to the Historic Preservation Board for any decisions. He assured the Historic Preservation Board that they would not read in the paper that the Landmarks Advisory Board was moving into their area of operation. He hoped they would complement what the Historic Preservation Board does, and they supported their work. The Landmarks Advisory Board consisted of Historic Preservationists who were concerned with the future of the city, just as the members of the Historic Preservation board were.

Mr. Brett Gillis spoke on Zoom and requested to make comments during the public portion of the meeting Director Adams said that public comments should be held until the end. Chair Menendez advised Mr. Gillis to wait until that time.

Director Adams said that everyone had a copy of the ordinance that set up the Landmarks Advisory Board and a quote from Chapter 2, Article 3, Boards and Committees, Division 7, Landmarks Advisory Board. He read the following:

“The board was set up in 2021. The City Commission identified a gap in City board and committees’ oversight as it relates to City owned and or maintained entrances, plazas, fountains, historically significant poles and lights, historic markers and other historically significant landmarks or items. The Commission believes that the addition of the Landmarks Advisory Board would provide resident oversight of the extensive landmarks throughout the City and allow a structure for residents and board members to propose new landmarks and entrances, identify parcels for acquisition, review the condition of entryways and landmarks and bring maintenance issues to the City’s attention in a timely manner. The creation and purpose are set out in Section 2-227. For the purpose of identifying and recommending improvement opportunities to City staff with respect to the City owned and/or maintained entrances, plazas, fountains, historically significant poles and lights, historic markers and other historically designated landmarks and items. The board shall establish a collection of written records and photographic inventory of each item within its purview and document its state of preservation. The board shall also be responsible for locating and identifying potential new landmarks, entrances, or entrance features to the City, and identifying parcels to acquire for such purposes. The board shall meet quarterly with special meetings scheduled as needed and at the end of the quarter the board shall make nonbinding policy recommendations and recommend maintenance care and improvement opportunities including potential new landmarks, entrances or entrance features and parcels to acquire for such purposes. Director Adams said this was the reason for the Board being set up and there was potentially some crossover between both Boards.”

**EFFECTIVE COOPERATION BETWEEN THE BOARDS:**

Director Adams said that the Board was very active and brought required maintenance issues to his attention at meetings. They had identified some areas for improvement:

- 1) The Board requested that someone from Public Works be present at every meeting. To improve the response time as now they reported the issue to Director Adams who conveyed it to Public Works, and they had to wait for an answer.
- 2) The board currently had requested to meet every two months instead of once a quarter.
- 3) The list of landmarks needs to be put on the website.
- 4) They would try to have a GIS layer on the map alongside the historic site districts showing the landmarks.
- 5) The condition of the landmarks needs to be identified.

This was an open forum for both boards to discuss how to work together, support each other and prevent duplication of efforts. This could be done by having members of each board present at each other’s meetings.

Chair Menendez asked for the dates of the Landmark Advisory Board meetings. Director Adams said the next meeting was in November. He said that they could start emailing agendas for both boards to all members of both boards.

Chair Slesnick said he thought it was a great idea and invited the Historic Preservation Board members to attend the Landmarks Advisory Board meetings. He said the reason for Public Works attending their meetings was because they were trying to get damaged or lost items around the City replaced. The concern was how many of the signs were damaged or lost. They were also aware of how many of the low-lying street markers were whitewashed, crumbling or damaged. They continued to remind the City of what needed to be repaired or replaced. In most cases Public Works were very responsive. A couple of items were repeatedly damaged. Ms. Bondurant had not been aware of the plaques on the bridges, signifying their historic significance to the City and they would add them to the list.

Chair Menendez asked if any of the board members had any questions. There were no questions from members of the Landmarks Advisory Board.

Mr. Maxwell commended both the Landmarks Board member and Director Adams. He hoped that their efforts would help the Historic Preservation Board achieve several things including the city hiring a conservator to begin

to preserve some of the City's landmarks in a very manageable way. They reduced their budget last year by eliminating a court reporter. He thanked them for their work and volunteering to serve.

Vice-Chair Garcia-Pons said when he learned about the Landmarks Advisory Board and Director Adams had brought this to their attention, he had two concerns:

1. The potential for duplication and confusion: If both Boards were not on the same page, it would cause confusion to the residents. This was not the point of either Board, they were there to help and preserve the best parts of the City. From what he heard today he did not see a problem.
2. Staff Resources: The staff is already incredible overburdened and now with additional responsibilities, albeit important responsibilities that have been overlooked by the Historic Preservation Board, staff and the City for a long time. He had not thought about it until Mr. Maxwell mentioned getting additional resources. They were happy to support. He is a huge fan of having a City Conservator for the Historic Landmarks and properties. He was also concerned about the follow-up which is not currently being done.

He referred to four things mentioned by Chair Slesnick, the Landmarks List, a Public Works representative at the meetings, meeting more often and a condition study. The list needed to be verified before being put on the internet. Director Adams said he would send it to all the Board members. Vice-Chair Garcia-Pons said it was the Landmarks Advisory Board's domain, but maybe they could add a few things to it or help staff with whatever they needed. He thought it was imperative that a Public Works representative attend the Landmarks Advisory Board meetings. The Historic Preservation Board relied on staff and for them to invite the appropriate people to their meetings, the entire City staff is incredibly busy, but it was more important for the Landmarks Advisory Board to have someone there, he asked if it was appropriate that they pass a resolution to support these requests. He said he did not want to overstep, but he was supportive of their requests, thought they were important and was excited to work with them and thought their board was something the City had been missing.

Chair Slesnick said he agreed that staff was too small and overburdened and hoped that by creating the Landmarks Advisory Board and their working together with the Historic Preservation Board that the message will get to the City Commission, and they really consider (for next year's budget as it is too late for this year's budget) the work that is being done. Together they could lobby the City Commission to provide additional resources to Director Adams so that his department can do the job that they all needed done in the City. They join the Historic Preservation Board in that concern and in any appropriate effort to bring that message loud and clear to the City Commission.

Chair Menendez addressed both boards and said that he thought it was fantastic that they were working together and that the Landmarks Advisory Board was looking at things that maybe the Historic Preservation Board had not been looking at. They were there to complement and help each other and not to duplicate each other's efforts. He thought that having their eyes, passion and ideas will help a long way in making this venture a big success and he agrees with his board members that staff does need additional resources and that they could help and those resources not only for the Historic Department, but also for both boards.

Chair Slesnick said that there was no group that respected the Historic Preservation Board more than the members of the Landmarks Advisory Board. Chair Menendez said the feeling was mutual and they would work together.

Director Adams said there were things that would only be dealt with by the Historic Preservation Board, but there were areas that overlap such as the entrances and the plazas. There will be areas that cooperation will work the best, such as structures as opposed to the signs and the markers. In some cases, they will require board input as well.

#### **PUBLIC HEARING:**

Mr. Bret Gillis called in on Zoom and made the following comments:

1. The current budget has deferred restoration of several important historic landmarks to future years.
  - a) The Alhambra Water Tower is projected for 2025
  - b) City Hall is projected for 2027
2. He did not know the dates the projects would be finished.

3. These were the dates the projects were fully funded.
4. The Centennial is in 2025. Coral Gables is only turning 100 once.
5. He asked the board to go and see the condition of the Alhambra Water Tower and City Hall.
6. He referred to the painting of George Merrick behind the dais in the Commission Chambers as needing restoration.
7. He asked the boards to make a joint recommendation to the Commission that these important landmarks need to be restored for the Centennial. If they didn't do it for the Centennial, he did not know when it would be.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Processes for Effective Board Cooperation:**

Chair Slesnick asked Director Adams for the City Budget, they could review it and then get back together to discuss a joint position on the items.

Director Adams said that maybe the Landmarks Advisory Board was not aware of the proposal to sell development rights from City owned Historic Properties. The sale of TDRs allows property owners to sell unused development rights to another property owner which allows the receiving property to be developed. Chair Slesnick said he was familiar with TDRs, but they should be concerned with what Historic Properties they were talking about. Director Adams said the eligible properties were the Fink Studio, the Miracle Theater, the Starbucks building and the Museum in the Central Business District. The money from the sale of TDRs must be used for the repair of Historic properties. The Historic Preservation Fund was recently created and announced in the budget. The intent was if the TDRs are sold from City owned Historic properties, those properties will be repaired, and anything extra can be put into a fund and be used for the repair of any City owned Historic buildings.

Chair Slesnick said if the TDRs are properly evaluated, sold and disposed of that maybe the schedule that Mr. Gillis spoke about could be moved up if new money is found. Director Adams said it depends on what the repairs costs are for the buildings that sells them. The fund has been set up and there are actually a few on the agenda today and it could be a potential source of revenue. Chair Slesnick said that he spoke with the new director of the Museum and the Board, and they said the building has deteriorated greatly and needed a lot of work. He had taken a tour and saw some of the deterioration. He thought it was important for the citizens who watch or listen to them now or later to understand that the development of the TDR system was not just to raise money (some people get scared when they hear that they are going to sell development rights over the museum), but it was to protect those historic buildings, because they could never be developed. The historic building under those development rights is protected in its current format and then the money is raised for other purposes. The program is a solid program, he can't comment on any specific request for sales, but he hoped that would be an answer to moving the projects up. If we raise enough money to repair the Water Tower and start City Hall at an earlier date.

Chair Menendez said he was sure the City has a plan for taking care of some of these buildings that need help so they would need to review the plan and then regroup. Chair Slesnick said they did not want to set off in a direction without having all the facts.

Vice-Chair Garcia-Pons asked if the line items on the budget was searchable. Director Adams said he would provide either a link or the .pdf. Vice-Chair Garcia-Pons said his concern was that there were hundreds of line items in a budget.

Chair Menendez asked if anyone had any questions and asked if the Landmarks Advisory Board had any questions for the Historic Preservation Board. Chair Slesnick said they were satisfied with the meeting and thought it productive, and they were looking forward to marching arm in arm for the right reasons.

Chair Menendez thanked them for coming and Mr. Maxwell invited them to stay for the Historic Preservation Board Meeting where they would be discussing TDRs.

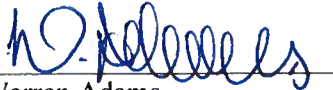
Ms. Kautz said that the George Merrick painting was restored, cleaned and conserved by a professional conservator in 2013-2014. The reason it did not look like it was restored was the lights in the room. The conservator had done a light study and said that in because of the TV lights the painting would never look right. If you lit the painting the TV lights would not work properly.

Vice-Chair Garcia-Pons asked what the protocol was for communication between members of the Historic Preservation Board and the Landmarks Advisory Board. Director Adams said they could ask the attorney at the Historic Preservation Board meeting, but he usually blind copied everyone and told them not to respond. He did not think there was an issue to contacting them individually. Vice-Chair Garcia-Pons said he would send it to Director Adams who forward the information.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:41pm.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "W. Adams", written over a horizontal line.

Warren Adams  
Historic Preservation Officer