



CORAL GABLES MERRICK HOUSE GOVERNING BOARD MEETING
Meeting Minutes of November 8, 2021, 8:30 a.m.
Coral Gables City Hall, City Commission Chamber
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, Florida 33134

Historical Resources &
 Cultural Arts

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MEMBERS	D 20	J 21	F 21	M 21	A 21	M 21	J 21	J 21	A 21	S 21	O 21	N 21	APPOINTED BY
Ana Lam	-	-	P	P	P	-	P	P	E	E	P	P	Mayor Vince Lago
Barbara Reese	-	-	P	P	P	-	P	P	E	E	P	E	Vice-Mayor Michael Mena
Bonnie Seipp	-	-	P	P	P	-	P	E	P	E	P	P	Commissioner Rhonda Anderson
Carmen Cason	-	-	P	P	P	-	A	P	P	P	P	P	Commissioner Jorge L. Fors, Jr.
Vanessa Torres*	-	-	-	-	-	-	E	P	P	P	E	^	Commissioner Kirk R. Menendez
Alexis Ehrenhaft	-	-	P	P	P	-	P	P	P	P	E	P	City Manager Peter Iglesias
Joanne Meagher	-	-	P	P	P	-	P	P	P	P	P	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, Kara Kautz, Assistant Historic Preservation Officer, Colette Worm, Docent Coordinator

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

The meeting was called to order by Chair Meagher at 8:36 a.m. and attendance was stated for the record.

OPENING STATEMENT

Chair Meagher opened the meeting with the following quote: “From 1930 to 1952 the Gazlay family managed the Coral Gables riding Academy bringing the beauty of horses and the excitement of horse shows to Coral Gables residents. The Academy played an important role in the local equestrian community and offered breakfast rides on Sundays which were very popular. Some horses at the Coral Gables Academy were well known. Silver, a pure white Arabian stallion, famous as the mount of the Lone Ranger in the movies, was the star at local events and parades. Silver was shod in special rubber shoes to provide for surer footing on pavement. The Academy’s Sunday breakfast rides were a weekly social event during the 1930s and 1940s. The rides wound through the Gables’ trails. When the riders reached “open country” now the Riviera section of Coral Gables, they ate breakfast under the trees Riviera section.”

APPROVAL OF ABSENCES:

A motion was made by Ms. Seipp and seconded by Ms. Cason to excuse the absences of Barbara Reese. The motion was unanimously approved.

Ms. Kautz let the board know that Vanessa Torres had resigned from the board due to personal reasons.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A motion was made by Ms. Lam and seconded by Ms. Seipp to approve the minutes of October 8, 2021, with the change of the spelling of the name of Christopher Harrell. The motion was unanimously approved.

PERSONAL APPEARANCE – CORAL GABLES GARDEN:

Chair Meagher welcomed Liz Parnes from the Coral Gables Garden Club. Ms. Parnes had submitted an application to rent the Merrick House on Wednesday, May 4, 2022 for the installation of the club’s officers. They planned to have a 1920s/1930s-themed picnic on the lawn. She stated that she had sent the insurance to Risk Management and asked Ms. Kautz if she needed to submit anything else. Ms. Kautz noted that Risk Management sat on the Special Events Committee and would let her know what was needed. Ms. Parnes acknowledged that the caterer, Rita Tennyson, will have to be reviewed by the Special Events Committee. She estimated attendance at about 100 people, but it could be closer to 60. Members will pay a fee and they will have picnic tables. They want to use the house from 9 am to 2 pm to allow time for set-up and break down. Ms. Parnes requested that the house be open, but they will not be requesting tours.

Ms. Kautz stated that the board first needed to approve the use of the house by the Garden Club.

A motion was made by Ms. Seipp and seconded by Ms. Lam to approve the use of the Merrick House for the Garden Club's installation on May 4, 2022. The motion was unanimously approved.

A motion was made by Ms. Cason and seconded by Ms. Lam to waive the fee and the security deposit for the use of the Merrick House for the Garden Club's installation on May 4, 2022. The motion was unanimously approved.

Ms. Parnes gave the original application to Ms. Kautz. Ms. Ehrenhaft asked what the contingency plan was if it rained. Ms. Parnes said they would use the Danielson Gallery at the Biltmore. They will be requesting the use of Young Park and the Venetian Pool for parking.

DOCENT COORDINATOR REPORT:

Ms. Worm provided updates on: Halloween decorations, updates from the gardener, incidents with a homeless person, security systems and cameras, lights in the house, cleaners at the house, requests to rent the Merrick House, A/C, trash and recycling, labeling and removal of books in the Little Library, the display box, bumpers on framed art to allow air circulation, approval of fiber for the house phone lines, silver tea set was polished by the DAR, website and internet updates. She mentioned an Instagram account named after George Merrick (not City-sponsored). Ms. Worm also noted she had written an after-action report for Doc Dammers Day.

1. **Holiday Dates of note at the House** (as corrected by Ms. Ehrenhaft): Monday, December 6, 2021 – Garden Club decorates, Tuesday December 7 – Christmas tree delivery, Wednesday, December 8 – Board decorates tree, tour by Colette and treats.
2. **Docent Numbers:** 7 are active, 1 in training, 1 temporary. 1 military spouse retiring. Chair Meagher said that there were two architectural students that wanted to be involved with the Merrick House and there would be a potential new docent, Nicholas Cabrera. Ms. Worm said she would reach out to him.
3. **October Visitors:** 28 visitors for days other than Doc Dammers Day. 153 including Doc Dammers Day. \$169 collected.

Chair Meagher reminded everyone of the shadowbox that shows the original piece of upholstery and the story of how Richard Merrick recreated the textile from memory. It was restored courtesy of a Villagers Grant. The Chair noted that it be moving to a more prominent place in the house.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. **Doc Dammers Day:** Chair Meagher brought commemorative programs for everyone and apologized to everyone, for not having the Board members up with her when she was giving remarks at the event. She was not scheduled to speak and was only up there to show the program. She asked Commissioner Anderson to speak on behalf of the mayor and then Malcolm (Coral Gables Museum) would talk briefly about Doc Dammers and the Merrick House, leading into the acknowledgments and thanks. Chair Meagher thanked everyone for their graciousness and making Doc Dammers Day happen. She felt that besides the fundraising, the event accomplished their original mission to focus on the legacy of the George Merrick, the Merrick family, and to continue to put the Merrick House on the map. The fact that the trolleys did not distribute guests as planned worked to the benefit of the Merrick House as everyone was there at the same time. Ms. Cason commended Chair Meagher on her work for the event and stated that she did not need to apologize as it was a great event, with four parties in one. Chair Meagher went on to thank each member of the board for their work and participation. Chair Meagher said they had gotten the word out, but there were places that they had missed. Ms. Seipp said people had been reintroduced to the history of Coral Gables. Chair Meagher said that there is a potential for partnering with different historic places in the future. Ms. Cason noted that Ms. Worm had done an incredible job with the Merrick House and the Venetian Pool shined like a diamond. Ms. Seipp commended the docent, Juan Riera. Ms. Seipp suggested including copies of the program with the passes being sent to event sponsors. Chair Meagher said she was waiting on the tax wording.

Financials were reported by Chair Meagher as follows: Sponsorships- \$14,400; expenses- \$14,460; auction and ticket sales- \$18,425. Chair Meagher took the two Carlos Garcia-Barbón consignment paintings that did not sell to the mayor's office to allow him to bid on them. Chair Meagher read a note from Marlin Ebbert who sent a donation

of \$100. There are still outstanding expenses consisting of the photographer (\$400), consignment of two artworks that sold (\$800), and trolleys (\$750). The profit is about \$16,500. She thanked Ms. Seipp for the idea of partnering with Coral Gables Community Foundation and Eventbrite. The head count for the event was 180 and the number given to the caterer was 155. The total number of people that attended was 100.

2. **Continued Use of Internet Auction Site:** Chair Meagher said that the Coral Gables Community Foundation gave permission to continue to use the auction platform. Ms. Kautz said that, by Resolution, the board had the ability to fundraise, but the methodology would have to be well-detailed and get approval from the City Manager's Office. Ms. Seipp noted this would give people the opportunity to get gifts locally.
3. **Potential New Board Member:** Chair Meagher said Mary Beth Burke was interested in filling the empty spot on the board. Ms. Kautz said she should submit her resume to the City Clerk's Office or Commissioner Menendez.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. **Holiday Open House:**

Chair Meagher showed the poster from 2019 and asked Ms. Lam to give an update. Ms. Lam said the Junior Orange Bowl Parade is the same day as the open house so the kids from PAL could not attend, but the Symphonettes would. Ms. Lam called all the vendors from previous events. She had to confirm with the museum, but was sure they will attend. In addition, the Villagers are bringing their angels and the Garden Club will sell something. She also found some vendors at the Harvest Festival. She inquired if the board wanted food and was answered in the affirmative. Chair Meagher stated that she had a candle vendor. Ms. Lam said she was going to meet with a vendor that turns old and vintage clothing into something new and wearable. She asked if anyone knew any other vendors, as they were looking for someone who did bags. Ms. Cason said she will let them know. Ms. Lam will confirm everyone by the end of the week. She will also donate children's crafts for the event. The carolers will come at 1:30 pm and Santa at 2:30 pm. The board discussed the use of masks. John Adams will be Santa. Chair Meagher said she would buy paper bags for cookies and suggested they reach out to Misha's Cupcakes. Ms. Kautz will contact the cappuccino vendor, copy the flyers, and have the postcards printed. Ms. Kautz will provide Ms. Lam with a survey of the property for event layout purposes. Ms. Lam will advise vendors to bring their own tablecloths with the city providing one table to each. Vendors will be asked to donate to the Merrick House. Ms. Ehrenhaft asked that Santa not walk home when he was finished.

2. Chair Meagher recognized Ms. Kautz for her 15 years of service to the city and invited everyone to have some of the cake she had prepared.

DISCUSSION ITEMS: None.

CITY COMMISSION ITEMS: None.

ITEMS FROM THE SECRETARY: None

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:45 am.

Respectfully submitted,



Warren Adams
Historic Preservation Officer