



CORAL GABLES MERRICK HOUSE GOVERNING BOARD MEETING
Meeting Minutes of May 9, 2022, 8:30 a.m.
Coral Gables City Hall, City Commission Chamber
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, Florida 33134

Historical Resources of
Cultural Arts

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MEMBERS	J 21	J 21	A 21	S 21	O 21	N 21	D 21	J 22	F 22	M 22	A 22	M 22	APPOINTED BY
Ana Lam	P	P	E	E	P	P	-	P	P	P	#	P	Mayor Vince Lago
Barbara Reese	P	P	E	E	P	E	-	P	P	P	P	P	Vice-Mayor Michael Mena
Bonnie Seipp	P	E	P	E	P	P	-	P	E	P	P	P	Commissioner Rhonda Anderson
Carmen Cason	A	P	P	P	P	P	-	P	P	P	P	A	Commissioner Jorge L. Fors, Jr.
Mary Beth Burke	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	P	P	P	P	P	Commissioner Kirk R. Menendez
Alexis Ehrenhaft	P	P	P	P	E	P	-	P	E	P	P	E	City Manager Peter Iglesias
Joanne Meagher	P	P	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 8:40 a.m. and attendance was stated for the record.

APPROVAL OF ABSENCES:

A motion was made by Ms. Lam and seconded by Ms. Reese to approve the absences of Ms. Ehrenhaft.
 The motion was unanimously approved.

OPENING STATEMENT

Chair Meagher wished everyone a happy Mother's Day and read about a memory of George Merrick about a truly biblical 40-day and 40-night downpour which caused problems unimagined today. "After a crop damaging drought that lasted 6 months, the clouds exploded in May and before the deluge ended in October almost 67 inches of rain fell. No matter how bad the conditions were outside, they were worse inside their arc." as George called it. "First their glade disappeared along with their vegetables under as much as 6 feet of water. The overflowing water then began moving toward their cabin. As the water rose the family removed boards from the barn and nailed them to the cabin floor to raise the level against the flood. Besides cooking, cleaning, fighting mildew, and tending to ground itch Ali's most difficult job according to George was her steady spirited endeavor to counter Solomon's gloom and despair. As usual when his father was in an unusually gloomy spell he would lash out at Ali and talk about her characteristic of Finkism and how much it made him angry. If truth were told George and his mother indeed were very much like Grandpa Fink. Both were optimistic and cheerful and had a way of attracting people. From his earliest childhood George was popular with both his peers and adults, especially women. In short George, like his mother, had a full measure of Grandpa's charisma and salesmanship and he and Ali did stick together. When the rains finally ended George wrote that it was like seeing sunshine for the first time. "The water receded, the frogs vanished, and the house was finally free of roaches." Miraculously the young grapefruit trees survived, each root encircled by the protective rock of the pinelands. Although winter vegetable planting was a little late the end of the drought helped the farmers more than the rain hurt them. In March, Solomon won 7 prizes at the county fair for his beans and peas, more awards than most of the other entrants. Besides \$5 in cash he also took home a pair of lady's shoes for Ali, 10 pounds of lard, 1 half barrel of flour, and some fertilizer.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A motion was made by Ms. Lam and seconded by Ms. Seipp to approve the minutes of April 20, 2022, with corrections.
 The motion was unanimously approved.

HOUSE REPORT:

Chair Meagher reported on the air conditioning, the rock wall, and recognized Ms. Reese's efforts to have the wall built. Ms. Kautz said that if funds remained, the wall on the west side of the property would be addressed. Chair Meagher went

on to report on the Garden Club installation on May 4th, docent recruitment, the bollards, window crank missing, and items from Juan Riera and Cheryl Ackerman which could be sold. Tours were given to four prospective docents on Saturday.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. **Coral Rock Wall:** Ms. Reese volunteered to coordinate the unveiling event and suggested inviting the neighbors. Ms. Burke volunteered to help Ms. Reese. There was a discussion of where it should be advertised. Ms. Kautz said that events for unveiling were usually not formal, usually chairs and a talk. If the board picked a date, she would bring it up at a staff meeting. Unless they wait until fall, the Board proposed Thursday, June 16 or Friday, June 17 at 10 am.
2. **Garage Organization:** Board is willing to help whenever Public Works and/or Ms. Levasser needed.
3. **Garden Tea:** A check for \$4,301.09 was received from the Coral Gables Community Foundation for tickets sold on Eventbrite. \$442.09 was made on event. Ms. Burke will donate funds to cover rentals.
4. **Donations:** Discussions on donated items was tabled until the August meeting.
5. **“100 Voices Merrick House Lecture Series” Meeting:** Committee met to discuss a series of Centennial lectures to be held at the Merrick House or other Coral Gables venues in coordination with the City. The mission statement was “to engage and educate the public by presenting speakers from the community on a variety of topics related to the history of Coral Gables.” It was decided that the lectures would take place on the first Sunday of the month from 4:30pm to 5:30 pm. Proposed dates are: 2022 - September 4th, October 2nd, November 6th and 2023 - January 8th, February 5th, March 5th, April 2nd. The lectures would be 20 minutes to 1-hour combined for a total of 1 hour per monthly meeting. Cost will be \$10 per lecture to be reserved on Eventbrite (non-refundable) to hold registrants accountable for their reservation. Video archiving the lectures was discussed, and it will be decided later who will be responsible. Suggested speakers (have not been contacted yet) include: Gay Bondurant (73 years in Coral Gables), Juan Riera, Linda Zahler, Pat & Scott Singleton, Dorothy Fields, Bea Hines, Robert Burr, Charles Flick (Historian & Miami native with extensive collection of Coral Gables postcards), Lola B. Walker residents (some are descendants of the Bahamians that worked on the Merrick House), Dr. Paul George (HistoryMiami) - he would have to be paid, but could be a good start to the series, Dolly McEntyre (Villagers), members of the older clubs in the Gables such as the Womans and Garden Clubs, Villagers who have written stories for the newsletter in the past, Members of the Historic Preservation Association of Coral Gables, Becky Matkov (lectured to Villagers about Julia Tuttle). The “Grateful Voices” film was discussed as a possible tie-in and Ms. Lam offered to get information on where the film can be viewed. The City is planning a centennial celebration with lecture series, coordinated by Caroline Vester. The board will collaborate with her for marketing / publicity and Chair Meagher will reach out to her for a meeting. Mr. Adams informed Ms. Vester that the Merrick House was already planning a lecture series and she was interested in collaborating. There is no charge for the city’s lecture series. The board was not charging to make a profit, but to ensure attendance.
6. **Fee Ordinance:** Ms. Kautz has not heard from the City Attorney.
7. **Venetian Plaster Estimate:** Chair Meagher will forward the contact to Ms. Kautz for an estimate.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. **Board Terms:** All members remain on the board until re-appointed or replaced. No one has reached the 8-year limit, and no one has been appointed in Ms. Lam’s position so everyone will roll over with no changes. In answer to Ms. Lam’s question Ms. Kautz said she thought they had to wait a full term before coming back, but will confirm. Ms. Lam said she termed out the year before, but no one had been appointed to replace her. If the wait is 1 year, she will ask Mayor Lago to re-appoint her which will make it official.
2. **Merrick House Account:** Balance in the account is \$44,189.53 with additional funds not reflected in the number. The Board discussed proposed expenditures, including piano repair, phonograph repair, and sewing machine repair. Ms. Kautz said restoration and conservation were exempt under the procurement code. The board would need to get estimates for the restoration projects. Once the estimates were in hand the board will need to vote on the expenditures.

A motion was made by Ms. Burke and seconded by Ms. Seipp to restore the following items to working order in the following order of priority: 1. Piano, 2. Phonograph, 3. Sewing machine.

The motion was unanimously approved.

3. **Cleaning of Linens:** Ms. Meagher noted that the linens are being cleaned. A hand towel with the initials of Ethel Francis Merrick (EFM) is on the dining room sideboard. Eunice Peacock Merrick’s towel in the upstairs bathroom.

4. **Photograph:** Staff will make copy of a 1927 photo of 807 Coral Way from Linda Zahler and research the ladies in the photo.
5. **Villagers Garden Books:** Villagers had requested to the number of books at the Merrick House. Ms. Burke will count and let them know.
6. **Kentucky Derby Party:** Ms. Lam suggested hosting a Kentucky Derby party as she liked the hats/fascinators. Chair Meagher suggested they have hats/fascinators at the next tea and have a workshop to make them beforehand.
7. **Summer Break:** Chair Meagher suggested the Board take a summer break and not meet in June and July, resuming in August.

A motion was made by Ms. Lam and seconded by Ms. Seipp to take a break for June and July and reconvene in August.

The motion was unanimously approved.

DISCUSSION ITEMS: None


CITY COMMISSION ITEMS: None

ITEMS FROM THE SECRETARY: None.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:30 am.

Respectfully submitted,



Warren Adams
Historic Preservation Officer