



The City of Coral Gables

Historical Resources Department

CORAL GABLES HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, November 20, 2014, 4:00 p.m.

City Commission Chambers

405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, Florida

MEMBERS:	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	APPOINTED BY:
	13	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	
Dorothy Thomson	P	P	P	P	-	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	Mayor Jim Cason
Margaret Rolando	P	P	P	P	-	P	P	P	P	E	E	E	Vice Mayor William H. Kerdyk, Jr.
Alejandro Silva	E	P	P	P	-	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	Commissioner Patricia Keon
Venny Torre	P	P	P	P	-	E	P	P	P	P	P	P	Commissioner Frank C. Quesada
Tony Newell	P	P	P	P	-	P	P	E	P	P	P	P	Commissioner Vince Lago
Carmen Guerrero	E	E	P	P	-	P	P	P	E	P	P	E	Historic Preservation Board
Robert Parsley*				P	-	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	City Manager
Dolly MacIntyre	P	P	P	P	-	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	City Commission
Judy Pruitt	P	P	P	P	-	P	P	E	P	P	P	P	City Commission

LEGEND: A = Absent; P = Present; E = Excused; * = New Member; ^ = Resigned Member; - = No Meeting

STAFF:

Dona Spain, Historic Preservation Officer
 Kara N. Kautz, Assistant Historic Preservation Officer
 Emily Ahouse, Historic Preservationist
 Yesenia Diaz, Administrative Assistant
 Bridgette Thornton, Deputy City Attorney
 Glenn Kephart, Public Works Director
 Yamilet Senespleda, Traffic Engineer, Public Works Department

GUESTS: Margarita R. and Henry Courtney, Bill Bonn, Bruce Brockhouse, Gay Bondurant, Todd Traskos, Paula Lancaster, Nazifa Given, Pedro Benavides, Alfredo Duran, Leticia Callava, Julius Lostal, Barbara Zwick, George Volsky, Hung Nguyen, Robert Gill, Barbara Saenz, Rafael Gomez, Julie Yanson, Ed Villalobos

RECORDING AND PREPARATION OF MINUTES: Nancy C. Morgan, Coral Gables Services, Inc.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Torre at 4:05 p.m. A quorum was present.

MINUTES: MEETING OF OCTOBER 16, 2014:

Correction to the minutes of the October 16, 2014 meeting: Ms. Thomson's attendance was incorrectly marked "excused" and Ms. Rolando's attendance was incorrectly marked "present" in the October meeting record. At the October 16th meeting, Ms. Thomson was present and Ms. Rolando's absence was excused.

A motion to approve the minutes of the October 16, 2014 meeting with corrections as noted above was made by Ms. Thomson, seconded by Mr. Silva and unanimously approved by voice vote.

MEETING ATTENDANCE:

After noting that Ms. MacIntyre had not yet arrived at the meeting, but whose attendance was anticipated, Mr. Newell made a motion, seconded by Mr. Silva, to excuse the absences of Ms. Rolando and Ms. Guerrero from the meeting.

Ms. Spain advised that Ms. Guerrero was in town and working versus out of town, ill or serving jury duty. She agreed to again speak with Ms. Guerrero about the City's meeting absence policy.

The motion was approved by voice vote.

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT and DISCLOSURE OF CONTEXT:

Mr. Torre read for the record the statement regarding lobbyist registration and disclosure. Board members who had ex parte communication or contact regarding cases being heard were instructed to disclose such communication or contact.

DEFERRALS: Case File LHD 2014-006: 1615 Country Club Prado.

PUBLIC SWEARING IN: Ms. Morgan administered the public swearing in for those testifying during the meeting.

LOCAL HISTORIC DESIGNATIONS:

CASE FILE LHD 2014-007: Consideration of the local historic designation of the property at 2623 North Greenway Drive, legally described as Lots 6 & 7, Block 9, Coral Gables Section "D" Revised Plat, according to the Plat thereof, as recorded in Plat Book 25, Page 74 of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County, Florida.

Ms. Ahouse conducted a comprehensive review of the property's history, designing architect, architecture and ownership records, augmented by site maps and aerial, historic and current photographs. She concluded her presentation by stating that staff found the property historically, culturally and architecturally significant, and recommended a motion to approve local historic designation of the property.

Ms. Thomson commended the Historical Resources Department for the comprehensive research conducted to prepare the designation report. In response to Ms. Thomson's question about current ownership, Ms. Ahouse responded that Henry Courtney recently purchased the property, thereafter submitted a request for a historic significance determination to determine if the house was eligible for designation or if it could be demolished.

Mr. Torre opened the public hearing portion of the application and invited audience members to speak.

Mr. Traskos, 547 Aragon Avenue: Mr. Traskos asked for evidence of precedents set in properties with similar profiles to the subject property that would bode either for or against the current case, and for outcomes of decisions in those cases. Ms. Ahouse responded that research would be necessary to provide an appropriate response to the question.

Mr. Gomez, 2700 North Greenway Drive: Mr. Gomez, who lives next door to the subject property, asked for information about the application. After Ms. Ahouse described the application, he stated he had no objection to the application.

Mr. Brockhouse, architect representing the owner, stated his professional background in matters and properties related to historic preservation and provided examples of historic projects on which he worked. Despite the property's historic appropriateness in terms of age, he disagreed with designating the property, citing his reasons. He described details of his

evaluation of the property, its history and background, concluding that the house did not exemplify the ability of renowned architect Phineas Paist or architectural significance of the 1930s era. He asked the Board to deny designation.

Mr. Courtney, owner of the subject property with his wife, Margarita, explained the reasons for their desire to relocate from Miami Beach to Coral Gables. He described the very small size of the rooms and the poor condition of the house, adding that he and his wife decided to purchase the house after they were advised by the Realtor that the City would allow the house to be demolished to build a new home on the property. Subsequently, they submitted a request for demolition and received a letter from the Historical Resources Department stating that the house might be historically significant. He then contacted Mr. Brockhouse to render a professional opinion about historical significance. To demonstrate the condition of the house, he distributed photographs of the interior and exterior of the house, asked the Board to deny historic designation and said if any preservation was required, he would be willing to save the front façade.

Mr. Volsky, 1008 Alhambra Circle: Mr. Volsky encouraged the Board to deny designating the house historic since the property owners did not want it designated.

Mr. Torre described the City's system regarding the historic preservation ordinance and the Board's thoughtful consideration and respect for the ordinance.

Mr. Volsky continued to dispute the historic designation ordinance.

Ms. Spain expressed concern that a local Realtor didn't advise the prospective owner about the possibility that the house could be designated.

Hearing no further requests to speak, Mr. Torre closed the public hearing and called for Board discussion.

Board comments:

- Ms. Thomson voiced opposition to designating the property historic.
- Mr. Torre expressed disagreement with the criteria used to determine significance, and said that local Realtors needed to disclose correct information to buyers and sellers.
- Mr. Newell stated that the criteria as applied in this case provided too much latitude, and indicated he would vote to deny designation.
- Mr. Parsley opined that the house had charm, sufficient room to expand and renovate it, and was advised by Ms. Spain that a Board designation approval could be appealed by the applicant to the City Commission.
- Mr. Silva concurred that it would have been a simple matter for the Realtor to notify the owners prior to their purchase about the potential for historic designation. He added his opinion that the property didn't rise to the level of historic significance.

Ms. Thomson made a motion to deny local historic designation for the property located at 2623 North Greenway Drive. Mr. Newell seconded the motion.

Roll Call: Ayes: Mr. Silva, Ms. Thomson, Mr. Newell, Ms. Pruitt, Mr. Torre. Nays: Mr. Parsley. Not yet present: Ms. MacIntyre.

Ms. MacIntyre arrived at 5:05 p.m.

SPECIAL CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS:

CASE FILE COA (SP) 2014-017: An application for the issuance of a Special Certificate of Appropriateness for the alteration of the intersections of Segovia Circle and Alhambra Circle, legally described as that portion of the right-of-way that lies at the intersection of Alhambra Circle with Segovia Circle, in Coral Gables, Florida (The same also being between Blocks 20, 21, and 22, Coral Gables Section "B," according to the Plat thereof, as recorded in Plat Book 5, at Page 111, of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County, Florida.) and Segovia Street and Alhambra Circle legally described as that portion of the right-of-way that lies at the intersection of Alhambra Circle with Segovia Street, in Coral Gables, Florida (The same also being between Blocks 20, 21, 11, and 12, Coral Gables Section "B," according to the Plat thereof, as recorded in Plat Book 5, at Page 111, of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County, Florida.) The applicant requested design approval for the alteration of the intersections to introduce traffic-calming devices.

On behalf of the City's application (Public Works Department), Ms. Spain read the case application, concluding that staff recommended approval of the design for the alteration of the intersections to introduce traffic-calming devices and issuance of a Special Certificate of Appropriateness with the following conditions:

- Minimize the length of curbing as much as possible.
- Eliminate the gutters.
- The modification to the Alhambra median at Segovia Street should be more rounded, less "squared off" to be more in keeping with the historic geometry of the median.

Ms. Senespleda presented the project brought to the City's attention by residents near the traffic circle. A traffic study was conducted and revealed a high volume and vehicle speeding. A proposal to improve safety, reduce vehicle speed and address current conditions at the traffic circle was described as renderings and photographs were displayed.

Ms. Pruitt observed that trees at the traffic circle needed trimming and shaping to eliminate obstruction of the stop sign, and also commented about the large palm tree at the circle was dangerous at night for drivers who weren't aware of it.

Mr. Kephart stated that this improvement project had been underway with the community to develop solutions for years. As he described issues and details, he stated that a well-attended public meeting was held this fall to gain input, hear neighbors' concerns, and to detail how the plan was designed to address the issues. He specifically mentioned that traffic engineers are still working on a corner property with a driveway issue that needs design resolution, but committed that the issue would be satisfactorily resolved during the final design process.

Board comments (in addition to Ms. Pruitt's above):

- Consider a mountable curb.
- Good lighting is necessary for safety as well as reflectors.
- Keep the design of safety modifications as organic as possible to minimize it from a historical perspective.
- Round the curve more to eliminate a "square" look as much as possible.
- During discussion about brick proposed to slow traffic, Mr. Parsley suggested rectangular versus square design and new pavers rather than the proposed brick (sample displayed) described as "similar to Chicago brick". If brick-type texture helps, a suggestion was made by Mr. Parsley to augment calming using gray on gray colored pavers. (Mr. Kephart mentioned the need to consider ADA concerns as well and suggested letting staff work together on the materials to be used.)

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Mr. Volsky spoke about the history of the property, mentioned the palm tree at the circle that is currently surrounded by garbage and discussed at length traffic calming measures proposed seven years ago. He praised Mr. Kephart for his efforts with this proposal, and suggested sending a simple design to all people who live in the area. His comments prompted Ms. Thomson's expression of disappointment after she viewed results from the project undertaken seven years before. She suggested installing signage before embarking on a complicated, expensive project. Mr. Torre urged the discussion to focus on reviewing the application from a historic preservation viewpoint.

Ms. Callava, 540 Aragon Avenue: Ms. Callava opposed signage to direct or divert traffic in the area. She expressed additional concerns about the cost of the project, and about addressing direct traffic on Aragon Avenue from LeJeune Road between Segovia Street and LeJeune.

Ms. Saenz, 638 Alhambra Circle: Ms. Saenz expressed concerns about traffic speed, accidents that will occur at the median and her ability to safely back out of her driveway if a median is constructed at the circle.

Mr. Traskos: Mr. Traskos said he would also have to back out into a median similar to that described by Ms. Saenz. To Ms. Callava's point about cost, he terms the design "overkill" and said the design should have less impact on the area, to create balance throughout the entire area versus only focusing on Aragon and Segovia residents.

Ms. Lancaster, 934 Sorolla Avenue: Stating that she uses Segovia circle regularly, she agreed that improvements were necessary, asked to have historical issues clarified and asked about costs. She mentioned a lot of truck and construction vehicle parking on Segovia circle, asked if citizens would have other opportunities to provide more input. Ms. Torre said that would be clarified with staff.

Mr. Bonn, 501 Alhambra Circle: Mr. Bonn spoke in favor of the plans presented, concerned only that the stop sign was not visible on the north side of Alhambra Circle. He thanked the Board for its patience.

Ms. Torre invited Ms. Spain and Mr. Kephart to the podium to discuss providing an opportunity for residents to comment and raise their issues. Mr. Kephart replied that many public meetings had been held over multiple years, and referenced the vigorous public meeting held at the Youth Center in September 2014. He said residents from the entire surrounding area were invited to participate in discussions, the meeting was well attended, conversation was respectful, plans were displayed and explained, public involvement was extensive and he believed that general consensus was reached at that meeting. Following the meeting, he wrote and distributed a letter to area residents outlining the results of the meeting and stating how the City would move forward (a copy of the letter was included in Board packets). He said he didn't receive one objection to the letter, though he received a few calls expressing a wish that more could be done, but also accepting the consensus. He added his thoughts that the issues and proposal had been entirely vetted. He favored focusing on two historic issues: a slight modification of the intersection; and for Alhambra Circle, the integration of a curb. From a traffic engineering viewpoint, he said the project would not work if they don't integrate curbs. He agreed with the conditions brought forward by Historical Resources Department staff.

Ms. Spain described driving speed and conditions she witnessed at the circle during the time she posted the property in advance of the meeting, pointing out that a meeting notice was also mailed to neighbors within a 1,000-foot radius of the property.

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Mr. Kephart explained that the Segovia Street project could be started within a few weeks. This larger project has design issues to resolve regarding the median driveway issues at Segovia and Aragon. He added that no further approvals were necessary to begin permitting. Mr. Kephart said the Board needed to determine what the median would consist of as the shape of it would remain the same. He advised that the median would force drivers to slow down and maneuver the turn more respectfully, and said he would further discuss these issues with Tim Plummer and Miami-Dade County engineers. During discussion he described a mountable curb and said it allowed more forgiveness when a tire on a moving vehicle hit it. When Mr. Torre discussed gutters and raised curbs, he observed that a raised median island could be a problem; however, Mr. Kephart asked for some flexibility to resolve these issues with staff. He suggested considering a different, but aesthetic, surface type that isn't desirable to drive on. Mr. Torre agreed as long as the appearance is as residential as possible in appearance.

Ms. Thomson made a motion to approve in concept the presented proposal, including conditions specified in the Historical Resources Department's written report, with the understanding that Public Works staff and advisors will devise a sensible solution. Ms. MacIntyre suggested employing a trompe l'oeil effect (creating an illusionary raised median). Mr. Kephart said he was familiar with the concept and it was possible to accomplish. Ms. Thomson accepted the suggestion as worthy of consideration and as part of the motion. The motion was seconded by Mr. Parsley.

Roll Call: Ayes: Mr. Newell, Ms. Thomson, Ms. MacIntyre, Ms. Pruitt, Mr. Parsley, Mr. Torre. Nays: None. (Mr. Silva was no longer present at the meeting.)

Ms. Pruitt urged a solution to the deposit of garbage at the circle, stating that its presence was very unsightly. Mr. Kephart said the City would remedy the condition.

CASE FILE COA (SP) 2014-005 – CONTINUED: An application for the issuance of a Special Certificate of Appropriateness for the property at 1258 Obispo Avenue, a contributing resource within the "Obispo Avenue Historic District," legally described as Lots 1 and 2, Block 3, Coral Gables Section "E," according to the Plat thereof, as recorded in Plat Book 8, at Page 13 of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County, Florida. The application requested design approval for an addition and alterations to the residence.

After stating that the architect was present as a result of the Board's request to return with a redesign of the windows and the addition, now completed, Ms. Spain called Mr. Benavides forward.

As architect for the project, Mr. Benavides said he now had Board of Architects' approval and a positive staff recommendation. After comprehensively reviewing the redesign of the structure, focusing on details of windows and the addition, he asked for Board approval, adding that staff recommended approval.

In response to Ms. Thomson's inquiries about roof elevations and double doors, Ms. Spain explained that all earlier concerns were cleared as a result of the redesign, and the addition / alterations did not affect the historic integrity of the residence. She, Mr. Benavides and other staff members also reviewed the design with City Architect Carlos Mindreau.

Mr. Torre invited additional audience comment. Hearing no requests to speak, he closed the public hearing.

Ms. Thomson made a motion to approve the design for an addition and alterations to the residence at 1258 Obispo Avenue, and issuance of a Special Certificate of Appropriateness. Ms. Pruitt seconded the motion.

Roll Call: Ayes: Mr. Newell, Ms. MacIntyre, Ms. Thomson, Ms. Pruitt, Mr. Parsley, Mr. Torre. Nays: None.

CASE FILE COA (SP) 2014-012: An application for the issuance of a Special Certificate of Appropriateness for the property at 814 Santiago Street, a contributing resource within the “Santiago Street Historic District,” legally described as the S ½ Lot 6 and all of Lots 7 & 8, Block 2, Mariana Place, according to the Plat thereof, as recorded in Plat Book 9, at Page 111 of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County, Florida. The application requested design approval for an addition and alterations to the property.

Ms. Spain opened the proceedings by calling forward architect Nazifa Given and homeowner Hung Nguyen.

Ms. Given presented details of the project to create a new master bedroom suite addition in the rear of the property and a one-car garage addition. She displayed photographs of the property and house, specifying the location of the proposed additions and reviewing the kitchen renovation, covered terrace, impact windows / doors and driveway replacement. Ms. Given said the Board of Architects approved the design, displayed proposed elevations and described the roof plan.

Mr. Nguyen disclosed that he was a friend of Ms. Rolando. He relayed that he purchased the house two years ago, wanted to keep it quaint and historic while making it more modern and functional.

Mr. Torre observed that the windows were mismatched. Ms. Given said the existing house was eclectic and discussed how she approached the windows on the addition.

In response to Ms. MacIntyre’s comment that the garage doors appeared busy, Ms. Given said the doors were all white with raised panels and would not have a visual impact.

Mr. Parsley questioned the wing wall with the half arch on the existing north elevation that encloses/protects the dining terrace, noting it was removed on the proposal. Ms. Given detailed how the change removed a hazardous condition that was actually illegal according to the Florida Building Code, and redesigned a solution to correct the problem and also enhance the area’s functionality and appearance. Rather than stepping down into the driveway, Mr. Parsley suggested creating a parking court, treating the entire driveway and parking area architecturally. Ms. Given agreed.

Ms. MacIntyre made a motion to approve the design for the addition and alterations to the property at 814 Santiago Street, and to approve issuance of a Special Certificate of Appropriateness. Mr. Parsley seconded the motion.

Roll Call: Ayes: Ms. Thomson, Mr. Newell, Ms. MacIntyre, Ms. Pruitt, Mr. Parsley, Mr. Torre. Nays: None.

Comment: Ms. MacIntyre apologized for her late arrival at the meeting, explaining she had been asked to justify at Miami City Hall on behalf of the Marine Stadium, and the meeting lasted longer than anticipated.

ITEMS FROM THE SECRETARY:

42 Navarre Avenue Update: Ms. Spain reported that Attorney Zeke Guilford sent notification that they withdrew their request for a variance on the property at 42 Navarre Avenue. Regarding the Certificate of Appropriateness approved by the Board, they will redesign the project to remove 2,000 square feet; however, the change will not affect the design of the building.

December Board Meeting Change: Pointing out that the December 18th Board meeting date was the third day of Hanukkah, she suggested changing the meeting date to Thursday, December 11th. The Board agreed to the date change.

NEW BUSINESS:

Green Workshop Funds: Ms. MacIntyre reminded the Board of its approval of a \$1,000 grant to pay expenses for the Green Workshop. As workshop expenses were slightly less than \$400, she asked to retain the balance of the funds for the next workshop, anticipated to focus on making additions to historic buildings.

Ms. MacIntyre made a motion to retain the balance of workshop funds (approximately \$600) for the next scheduled workshop. Ms. Thomson seconded the motion.

Roll Call: Ayes: Ms. Pruitt, Mr. Parsley, Ms. Thomson, Ms. MacIntyre, Mr. Newell, Mr. Torre. Nays: None.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business to be considered, the meeting adjourned at 6:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Dona M. Spain
Historic Preservation Officer