



CORAL GABLES MERRICK HOUSE GOVERNING BOARD MEETING
Meeting Minutes of February 13, 2023, 8:30 a.m.
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, 2nd Floor, Coral Gables, Florida 33134

Historical Resources &
Cultural Arts

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MEMBERS	M 22	A 22	M 22	J 22	J 22	A 22	S 22	O 22	N 22	D 22	J 23	F 23	APPOINTED BY
Ana Lam	P	#	P	N	N	P	P	P	P	N	E	P	Mayor Vince Lago
Barbara Reese	P	P	P	O	O	E	P	E	E	O	P	#	Vice-Mayor Michael Mena
Bonnie Seipp	P	P	P	M	M	P	E	P	P	M	E	P	Commissioner Rhonda Anderson
Carmen Cason	P	P	A	E	E	E	P	P	P	E	P	E	Commissioner Jorge L. Fors, Jr.
Mary Beth Burke	P	P	P	E	E	P	E	P	P	E	E	P	Commissioner Kirk R. Menendez
Alexis Ehrenhaft	P	P	E	T	T	E	P	E	E	T	P	P	City Manager Peter Iglesias
Joanne Meagher	P	P	P	I	I	P	P	P	P	I	P	P	Board-as-a-Whole
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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; Gay Bondurant, Docent Coordinator.

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

CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order by Chair Meagher at 8:40 a.m. and attendance was stated for the record.

OPENING STATEMENT:

Although George Merrick, named George Fink Coral Gables' official architect, having designed more homes than anyone else, he remained the only one of the four major architects the others being Hampton, DeGarmo and Kiehnel, who had never been to Europe. His knowledge of what was commonly called the Spanish style came from careful study of books and photographs. His only firsthand encounter was with Cuba's Spanish-Colonial Buildings, which he viewed during his frequent trips to the island. But even though most of his homes and commercial buildings were described as Spanish style, he, like the others incorporated Moorish details into his designs. This was a natural inclusion, considering southern Spain's strong Moorish architectural legacy, which Washington Irving made popular in his *Tales of the Alhambra*. In late July 1922, George Fink and his wife Josie left for a two-month trip to Spain, Italy and southern France. Upon his return in October, both *The Miami Herald* and *The Miami News and Metropolis* wrote lengthy articles about his new discoveries. The coverage, however, was nothing compared to the stories in the *New Miami Tribune*. In full-page spreads with multiple photographs, the *Tribune* not only reported on his trip but also gave him a forum in which he declared a new name for what he described as a "composite of European designs, that were in reality a style of architecture that should not be called Spanish, but 'Mediterranean'".

APPROVAL OF ABSENCES:

A motion was made by Ms. Lam and seconded by Ms. Burke to approve the absence of Ms. Cason.

The motion was unanimously approved.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A motion was made by Ms. Lam and seconded by Ms. Seipp to approve the minutes of January 9, 2023, with the correction of the spelling of Ms. Hyland's name.

The motion was unanimously approved.

Ms. Reese joined the meeting at 8:47 am.

HOUSE REPORT:

1. **Coral Gables Merrick House Report for January 2023:** Ms. Bondurant read the Coral Gables Merrick House Report for January 2023 (see attached).
2. **Merrick House Temporary Closure in February 2023:** The house was initially scheduled to be closed for the remainder of February due to Ms. Bondurant's illness and the unavailability of backup docents, however, this has changed. The house will be open for the last two weeks in February with docents Kurt Schubert and Chair Meagher. Chair Meagher said that she was okay with the schedule and was glad the house would not be closed for the whole month.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. **Thank you letters for donations:** Have already been sent out.
2. **Faux Christmas Tree:** A friend of Chair Meagher will donate one but wants to remain anonymous.
3. **Maintenance Schedule:** This is being worked on, but the transitions in Public Works are causing a delay.
4. **Cell Phone:** Is now at the Merrick House. Ms. Bondurant has the phone and knows the number. The intent is to transfer the house phone to the cell phone when the land line is not working. Now that the land line is working, the phone will not be transferred. If the fiber issue is not worked out, it might become the permanent number and the land line disconnected.
5. **"100 Voices":** Chair Meagher thanked Ms. Burke, Ms. Lam & Ms. Kautz for picking up the ball and running with it when they just had a perfect storm of competing events. The event ran smoothly, was interesting, well attended, and everyone had something nice to say. Ms. Lam efficiently managed the front door. There were three walk-ins that paid. Originally 41 chairs were set up but at least 15 more were added to accommodate attendees. Ms. Kautz stated that the fire code occupancy limit is 50 people, and suggested advising attendees that seats are limited in the future. If numbers exceeded 50, they would have to consider another location. Sandwiches and sweets were served, and Mr. Gillis provided the wine. Ms. Burke said docents Kurt and Juan were a huge help. Ms. Lam suggested that the sign-in book should either be at the entrance or have someone remind the attendants to sign the book. Ms. Kautz suggested letting attendants know they can join the mailing list. Ms. Reese suggested using the Coral Gables Cinema as an event setting.
6. **Acrylic Ice Bucket:** Ms. Kautz said she would investigate a replacement for the cracked one at the house. Ms. Burke suggested having two instead of just one.
7. **Garden Tea:** Chair Meagher had thought the date would be March 26, 2023. She contacted the caterer for that date but will check their availability for March 19, 2023.
 - a) **Teapots for centerpieces:** Each board member was asked to create two centerpieces. Ms. Burke showed the board members examples of teapot centerpieces. Centerpieces will be on the tables on the lawn.
 - b) **Theme:** The theme will be tea trades and sets from several countries and a showcase of tableware, glassware, and linens by decade from the turn of the century through the 1960's.
 - c) **Speakers:**
 - i) **British Consulate:** Someone from the British Consulate will speak about the history of tea and the proper way the British serve tea.
 - ii) **Japanese Tea:** They are waiting on confirmation from a Japanese lady who could speak about the Japanese tea ceremony.
 - d) **Displays:** In different rooms there will be different forms of tea services. There will be information about tea services from every country.
 - i) **Russian:** There will be a Russian samovar and the Russian customs of serving teas.
 - ii) **Great Britain:** The Royal Dalton from the Merrick House will be in the dining room.
 - iii) **Oriental:** The Oriental tea set will be in the downstairs office.
 - iv) **Hand Painted Tea Set:** There will be a breakfast tray display in Helen's room.
 - v) **Place Settings:** Place settings from different decades will be on the porch along the wall. Chair Meagher asked the board members to see if they had items that could be part of a display or tableau of the different decades. Notes will be on the tables with information. Board members should send Chair Meagher pictures so that she could do some research as to what the decade was, and she will also reach out to Mr. Gillis, as he has a lot of items. In addition, she will check with Maria the vintage vendor to see if she can do the silverware display. Chair Meagher suggest that some silverware could be purchased at thrift stores. No one should give anything too precious.
 - vi) **Monitors:** Monitors will need to be at the tables to ensure the safety of the items.

- e) **Limiting Attendance:** This is not a fundraiser so attendance will be limited to advance ticket sales only. This will allow for a correct count of attendees. There will be a sit-down tea instead of food boxes.
 - f) **Music:** It was suggested to have a strolling violinist or a string quartet. Price for the violinist is \$250 per hour. Ms. Lam suggested going through the Coral Gables Music Club to see if they had students at a lesser cost. Ms. Kautz suggested scheduling the violinist to play for an hour around the speakers.
 - g) **Caterer:** Three quotes are required.
 - h) **Vintage Sellers:** Vintage sellers will be invited.
 - i) **Ticket Costs:** The price should cover the costs of the event.
 - j) **Food:** Food tiers would be at tables, and tea would be served.
8. **“100 Voices” Lecture:**
- a) **April Lecture:** Tentative date is April 16, 2023. Chair Meagher will ask Dolly McIntyre to be the speaker.
 - b) **May Lecture:** Tentative date is May 7, 2023. The speaker will be Monk Terry talking about his great grandmother Julia Ward Howe who started Mother’s Day and penned the “Battle Hymn of the Republic”.
 - c) **Event Space:** Ms. Reese said that Chair Meagher should contact Ms. McIntyre immediately as well as checking into the cinema as an event space.
9. **Dishwasher:** Ms. Kautz is still working on this.
10. **Vanity Set:** The new set purchased is at the Historic Preservation Office. The archivist is processing it and then it will be brought to the house.
11. **Christmas Open House:** Ms. Lam wanted to get the dates for the City’s Christmas events to ensure the Open House did not clash with those dates. Chair Meagher said she would check with Don Slesnick, Jr. regarding the City schedule.

NEW BUSINESS: None.

DISCUSSION ITEMS: None

CITY COMMISSION ITEMS: None

ITEMS FROM THE SECRETARY:

- 1. **Coral Rock Wall:** Has been completed.
- 2. **Quote for Water Intrusion Repair:** Has been received and sent to everyone for review.
- 3. **DAR (Daughters of the American Revolution):** Will be meeting at the house on February 19th. Setup has been completed.
- 4. **St. Lucia Consulate:** Is having their event all day on February 22, 2023, at the house.
- 5. **Placement of Donated Items:** Pictures are being taken and where they will be placed is being decided. Ms. Bondurant’s next newsletter will mention these items and information about them to inform everyone, including the docents who can point them out on their tours.

ADJOURNMENT:

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

Respectfully submitted,

Warren Adams
Historic Preservation Officer