

CORAL GABLES MERRICK HOUSE GOVERNING BOARD MEETING

Meeting Minutes of July 21, 8:30 a.m.

Hybrid Meeting – In-Person & Virtual via Zoom

Coral Gables City Hall, City Commission Chamber

405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, Florida 33134

MEMBERS	J 20	A 20	S 20	O 20	N 20	D 20	J 21	F 21	M 21	A 21	M 21	J 21	J 12	APPOINTED BY
Ana Lam	-	-	-	P	-	-	-	P	P	P	-	P	P	Mayor Vince Lago
Barbara Reese	-	-	-	A	-	-	-	P	P	P	-	P	P	Vice-Mayor Michael Mena
Bonnie Seipp	-	-	-	P	-	-	-	P	P	P	-	P	E	Commissioner Rhonda Anderson
Carmen Cason	-	-	-	A	-	-	-	P	P	P	-	A	P	Commissioner Jorge L. Fors, Jr.
Vanessa Torres*												E	P	Commissioner Kirk R. Menendez
Alexis Ehrenhaft	-	-	-	P	-	-	-	P	P	P	-	P	P	City Manager Peter Iglesias
Joanne Meagher	-	-	-	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:

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 introduced the Board's newest member, Vanessa Torres. Ms. Torres introduced herself and gave a brief history of her career and her family. Chair Meagher sang the song "Moon Over Coral Gables" which was received by a round of applause. She stated that the song, published by Irving Berlin's publishing company in 1924 and played by Tommy Dorsey, could be a wonderful feature of Doc Dammers' Day. She suggested that this music could be played on the piano at the Merrick House and might be piped in at the Museum and Venetian Pool. She said that she was on a mission to teach every student in Coral Gables that song and every resident in Coral Gables should know the song.

APPROVAL OF ABSENCES:

A motion was made by Ms. Lam and seconded by Ms. Reese to excuse the absence of Carmen Cason from the June 14, 2021 meeting. The motion was unanimously approved.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MEETINGS:

A motion was made by Ms. Lam and seconded by Ms. Cason to approve the minutes of June 14, 2021 with corrections. The motion was unanimously approved.

DOCENT COORDINATOR REPORT:

Ms. Worm gave each of the board member a copy of the book "Tales of the Alhambra." She noted that there were 19 visitors to the House for tours. Ms. Worm said that the docents were working on how to manage tours post COVID.

- 1. Breakfast Event:** 41 people from 25 different organizations attended the breakfast event. Some people represented dual organizations. Ms. Worm said that she spent the next day and half answering emails and calls from people who wanted to get more information on the Merrick House.
- 2. Social Media:** Ms. Worm said that she was going onto a lot of sites to make sure that they listed the Merrick House as being open. Ms. Worm said that she would send the board 2 emails with links where they could review the Merrick House and invited everyone to do so. She said that some people had knocked off a star on their review because the Merrick House was closed.
- 3. Board Tour:** Ms. Worm and Chair Meagher had looked at dates for a board tour of the Merrick House. Ms. Cason suggested that they offer the mayor and commissioners a tour along with the board members. The board discussed the importance of getting the commissioners and the mayor back to the house and that they could not

assume that any or all of them had taken a tour. Chair Meagher talked about the cocktail party for the commissioners and the mayor and their spouses. Ms. Worm said the commissioners and mayors could come to a “Lunch and Learn” or they could join the board for a tour. The board discussed and thought they should have it all in one. Ms. Worm said she would send the dates.

4. **Lunch and Learns:** Ms. Worm stated that she had scheduled “Lunch and Learns” for October when it would be cooler, as people would have to eat outside, and was going to invite City departments to take an abbreviated tour.

Ms. Worm also reported on the following: Chamber of Commerce award submission, brochure holder, garage fire alarm, Dishwasher repair, chickens on the grounds, phone line issues, wedding dress display, trash pit, “Great Gables Guide,” Pioneers and Natives of Dade membership

OLD BUSINESS:

1. **Breakfast Event:** Chair Meagher thanked Ms. Lam, Ms. Seipp and Ms. Slesnick for taking photos which had been forwarded to Ms. Levasser for the archives and to the mayor. Chair Meagher noted that since they had identified the individuals that represent the 22 organizations that are supporters of the Merrick House, she wanted to make sure to capture that information and to have it available for mail-outs for future events. Ms. Ehrenhaft volunteered to keep and update the list. Chair Meagher said if anyone wanted to add individuals to be reached by email, they should send the information to Ms. Ehrenhaft. Chair Meagher said the Ladies of the Lions Club had attended the event and wanted to have their 9th year celebration of the Chapter in December at the House. Chair Meagher said she would send them the link to the rental form. She will also send a thank you email to all attendees.
2. **Doc Dammers Event:** Chair Meagher said she would send the board via email a copy of the write up on the event that she had sent to the mayor for his newsletter, to Jeannett’s Journal, and to the Gables Insider.
 - a. **Sponsors and Advertisers:** Ms. Seipp’s email sent to the board members last week had everything that would be needed to get sponsors. She said that some events separate sponsors from advertisers, but they would not - if you are a sponsor, you get an ad and if you buy an ad, you are a sponsor. She said that when the board sent letters to potential sponsors, they should include the pdf form of the letter explaining the event. The donation form was two pages and explained what would be included with sponsorship as well as ad sizes. Ms. Seipp would be the sponsorship wrangler. Ms. Meeks would also be helping to design the ads for those advertisers/sponsors that do not submit camera-ready artwork. Chair Meagher stated that this needed to be done now as there would be four weeks this summer when Ms. Meeks would not be available. Everything must be completed by early September. She suggested that the board start with the companies that they have relationships with and then go through the Coral Gables Magazine. Chair Meagher asked everyone to keep Ms. Seipp informed of who they contacted. Once they finished with the advertisers and sponsors then they could proceed with obtaining silent auction items.
 - b. **Catering and Printing of Programs:** Chair Meagher said that these would be the biggest expenses. She said she would be meeting with caterer Rita Tennyson, the next day.
 - c. **Music:** Chair Meagher said she would contact Christopher Harrell, the organist and choir master from St. Philips, to see if he would be willing to donate his time to play the piano at the Merrick House during Doc Dammers Day. In response to a question from Ms. Reese, Chair Meagher stated that she thought the music at the Museum would be recorded 1920s music, however, if they had enough sponsors they could think about having live music. Mrs. Lam suggested asking the Music Club to play or University of Miami students might be interested in participating. Chair Meagher said that she thought that they could have classical guitar or strings of any kind at the Venetian Pool. Ms. Lam offered to follow up.
 - d. **Students:** Chair Meagher said she was thinking of the possibility of using students from the University of Miami dressed in 1920s bathing suits at Venetian Pool and talking to visitors. Maybe a mermaid waving from across the grotto.
 - e. **Sponsorship Links:** Chair Meagher said that they were working on getting the links to all the forms on the Merrick House website. Ms. Lyons suggested having a separate page for Doc Dammers Event. Chair Meagher agreed. She went on to say that Ms. Seipp had done some research and that access to an Eventbrite account could be had via the Community Foundation. It was confirmed that the City has an Eventbrite account. Ms. Seipp would be the Eventbrite contact.
 - f. **Special Events Committee:** Chair Meagher said that she and Ms. Kautz would be meeting with Special Events in the upcoming August meeting.
 - g. **Dancer:** Chair Meagher asked Ms. Lam to check with their dancer friend Maria to save the date.

- h. **Program:** Chair Meagher passed around a mock-up of the program cover. She said that they were working with Shutts and Bowen and had found a picture of Colonel Shutts with a 1920s car, noting the connection between Shutts and Bowen, the Miami Herald, the Merrick Family and Doc Dammers.
- i. **Antique Cars:** Ms. Lam asked if they were getting any antique cars for the Merrick House for the day of the event. Chair Meagher asked if anyone would be interested in contacting the Antique Car Association. Ms. Reese volunteered. Ms. Cason said she had a friend, Bill Bonn, that had antique cars. Chair Meagher said they were looking for cars from 1900 through the 1930s.

NEW BUSINESS:

- 1. **Dorothy Thomson:** Chair Meagher said she was talking with Dorothy Thomson the former Mayor of Coral Gables who has many stories about Coral Gables. She felt that Ms. Thomson's stories should be recorded so they would not be lost and would be a good addition to the archives of the city.
- 2. **Spring Event:** Chair Meagher said one of the docents (Mary Beth Burke) had suggested having a spring event focusing on the linens in the house. She thought an event about textiles, which could provide an opportunity for people to demonstrate tatting work, crocheting, knitting, quilting, and embroidery. Ms. Cason suggested having fashion also.
- 3. **Way-showers:** The mayor had said he would be interested in a proposal for a monument to the way-showers. Chair Meagher asked Ms. Kautz how they should go about it and if she could let Catherine Cathers know.
- 4. **Christmas Decorations:** The Garden Club requested a date to decorate the house. The Board chose December 6. It was decided that the Board would decorate the tree on Wednesday, December 8th at 8:30 am.
- 5. **Christmas Party:** It was decided that the Holiday Open House will be held on December 12.
- 6. **DAR:** Ms. Reese stated that the DAR wanted to hold their September meeting at the Merrick House and she had told them she would present it to the board. Ms. Worm said the September meeting would be too large so it could not be at the house. The meeting at the house would either be November or January. Ms. Lam asked if she needed to make a motion and Ms. Kautz stated that the DAR needed to submit a rental application to Department staff, and then it would be brought to the board.
- 7. Ms. Lam said she was able to obtain a copy of the last interview with Arva Parks before she died. Ms. Levasser has put it in the archives. Chair Meagher suggested that when the Commissioners and the Mayor got together for the board tour, they could have a portion of the interview on an I-pad and give them the link so they could watch the rest at their leisure. Ms. Lam said she would ask the communications department if they could give the board a copy for the website. Ms. Kautz noted that the video had not been publicly released.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

- 1. **Grotto:** Chair Meagher said she had run into an employee who takes care of the koi at the house. He said the grotto used to have a misting system and three waterfalls, but now only one waterfall was working. He also noted that grotto should be replumbed and some cracking in the archways. Chair Meagher mentioned the repairs to the mayor, and he said to get an estimate to fix the problems and he would see if it could be added to the budget. Ms. Kautz will follow up.

CITY COMMISSION ITEMS:

None

ITEMS FROM THE SECRETARY:

None

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:48 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Warren Adams
Historic Preservation Officer