

City of Coral Gables

405 Biltmore Way
Coral Gables, FL 33134
www.coralgables.com



Meeting Minutes

Monday, April 21, 2025

9:00 AM

Sister Cities Conference Room - Coral Gables Museum

Coral Gables Merrick House Governing Board

*Chairperson Joanne Meagher
Board Member Mary Beth Burke
Board Member Carmen Cason
Board Member Bonnie Crouch Seipp
Board Member Alexis Ehrenhaft
Board Member Margaret Groves
Board Member Genevieve Orr*

The Merrick House Governing Board will be holding its Regular Meeting on Monday, April 21, 2025, commencing at 9:15 am EST.

Members of the public may join the meeting via Zoom at <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83315833193>.

In addition, a dedicated phone line will be available so that any individual who does not wish (or is unable) to use Zoom may listen to and participate in the meeting.

Meeting ID: 833 1583 3193

One tap mobile

+17866351003,,83315833193# US (Miami)

+19292056099,,83315833193# US (New York)

Dial by your location

+1 786 635 1003 US (Miami)

+1 929 205 6099 US (New York)

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

+1 470 381 2552 US (Atlanta)

+1 646 518 9805 US (New York)

Find your local number: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/koHpBvqy7> 305-461-6769 (Coral Gables local number)

To speak to the Merrick House Governing Board on an Agenda Item, please “Raise your Hand” or send a message to one of the meeting hosts using the Zoom Platform.

If you joined the meeting via telephone, you can “Raise your hand” by pressing *9.

The public may also comment on an item on the agenda using the City’s already-established e-comment function which may be found on the City’s website at: (www.coralgables.com/commissionmeetings) once the meeting’s agenda is published or by sending an email to cityclerk@coralgables.com prior to the start of the meeting.

I. CALL TO ORDER

This meeting was called to order at 9:25 AM.

II. ROLL CALL

Present: 5 - Chairperson Meagher, Board Member Cason, Board Member Crouch Seipp, Board Member Ehrenhaft and Board Member Orr

Absent: 2 - Board Member Burke and Board Member Groves

OPENING STATEMENT

The mother of George Merrick, Althea Merrick nee Fink met George's father, Solomon, in college, and spent much of her life devoted to her family. She taught her son to be creative and nurture his mind and encouraged him to read and write poetry. When the family moved to Massachusetts to barren area that would later become Coral Gables, their home was nothing more than a wooden shack, and there was no road, paved or otherwise. Still, Althea did not despair, in her diary, she wrote, "There was no other way but just unpack, all go to work - we knew that we must stay." She rolled up her sleeves and transformed the shack into a home - and, years later, designed a new two-story home that would become the now iconic Merrick House.

Though Althea was known herself to be quite an orator, often stepping in to deliver sermons, for her minister husband, not much remains of her speeches. However, a 1925 Miami Herald article entitled "Mrs. Merrick's Story is One of Inspiration," states, "Mrs. Merrick has never lost her keen interest in the growth and development of everything around her.... [T]here are a few women who have lived a life as rich in accomplishment, who are constantly kept as active, and are able to carry through each day as does this remarkable woman, in spite of the fact that she loves quietness and her home much more than she cares for public life."

III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

1. [25-8873](#) Merrick House Meeting Minutes for February 10, 2025

A motion was made by Board Member Ehrenhaft, seconded by Board Member Seipp, to approve the minutes for the February 10, 2025, Merrick House board meeting. This motion passed by the following vote:

Yeas: 5 - Chairperson Meagher, Board Member Cason, Board Member Crouch
Seipp, Board Member Ehrenhaft and Board Member Orr

Absent: 2 - Board Member Burke and Board Member Groves

2. [25-8874](#) Merrick House Meeting Minutes for March 10, 2025

A motion was made by Board Member Seipp, seconded by Board Member Ehrenhaft, to approved the minutes for the March 10, 2025, Merrick House board meeting. This motion passed by the following vote:

Yeas: 5 - Chairperson Meagher, Board Member Cason, Board Member Crouch
Seipp, Board Member Ehrenhaft and Board Member Orr

Absent: 2 - Board Member Burke and Board Member Groves

IV. NEW BUSINESS

1. [25-8872](#) Merrick House Activity Report - March 2025

2. Grandpa Fink Event, May 4th - Barbara Stein, Actors Playhouse Executive Director, is allowing us to post informational postcards about this event. The Board will also hand out cards during the City's recycling event. This event is also in Community News, Edible South Florida, Villagers Tuesday news and the Mayor's newsletter. Wendy Cook will also create an Instagram post. 26 RSVP's have been received. Raul Hernandez, Merrick House Docent, will give a 5 minute introduction before the presentation to describe the connection between George Merrick and the Coral Gables Congregational Church.
3. Garden Club - Artwork by Xavier Cortada installation scheduled for October 25, 2025.
4. Villagers - Requesting little metal plaques for the plantings

V. OLD BUSINESS

1. Vintage Market - The event was a success and there is interest in holding another one at the House. 15 vendors were in attendance.
2. Upholstery - The Board discussed cleaning or reupholstering various furniture pieces in the House.
3. Stag Painting - Ramiro Ramirez does not have adequate insurance for the City. Board members will move forward with getting an updated quote with Art Care Conservation.
4. Merrick Minute - For May, the Merrick Minute will be an essay read by a High School student.

VI. CITY COMMISSION ITEMS

VII. DISCUSSION ITEMS

Board member Orr proposed that Merrick House celebrate the centennial with residents and their children by having an event sometime in April 2026 that includes cake and possibly have Charleston dance lessons.

A motion was made by Board Member Orr, seconded by Board Member Cason, to have an event in April 2026 for the Merrick House to celebrate the centennial with residents. this motion passed by the following vote:

Yeas: 5 - Chairperson Meagher, Board Member Cason, Board Member Crouch Seipp, Board Member Ehrenhaft and Board Member Orr

Absent: 2 - Board Member Burke and Board Member Groves

VIII ITEMS FROM THE SECRETARY

IX. ADJOURNMENT

This meeting was adjourned at 10:29AM.

NOTE