

From: Valdes-Fauli, Raul <rvaldes-fauli@coralgables.com>

Sent: Monday, May 4, 2020 12:01 PM

To: Commissioners <Commissioners1@coralgables.com>; Iglesias, Peter <piglesias@coralgables.com>; Santamaria, Eduardo <esantamaria@coralgables.com>

Cc: Luzarraga, Beba <mluzarraga@coralgables.com>; Ramos, Miriam <mramos@coralgables.com>

Subject: FW: RVF Historic preservation (003)

Commissioners, attached is a letter I was going to send to the Miami Herald regarding our historic preservation efforts. I did not send it given our health emergencies.

I challenge anyone to show us a city that has dedicated more efforts and resources to the preservation of its history than Coral Gables. Let's keep this in mind when discussions come up regarding our commitment to historic preservation.

Thanks for reading both pieces sent to you.

RVF



Mayor Raúl Valdés-Fauli
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables 33134
Office: 305-460-5220
Email: rvaldes-fauli@coralgables.com



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Letter to the Miami Herald

Dear Editorial Board

In reference to your March 8, 2020 “Gables’ Refusal to Protect Ranch Home Alarms Preservationists.” I wanted to share my thoughts and set the record straight.

The article fails to mention our long-term commitment to the preservation of our rich history, and architecture. In the last three years the City we have spent more than \$7 million, restoring and acquiring historic properties. Examples of this are: the \$2 million restoration of the Biltmore Golf Course Bridges; \$530,000 for the Biltmore Gondola Building; the \$2 million acquisition of the Denman Fink Studio on Ponce de Leon Boulevard; the \$1.8 million restoration of the Merrick House on Coral Way, George Merrick’s first home; and \$800,000 for our continued commitment to the preservation of the Biltmore Hotel. In total this represents a major commitment on the part of our city and this administration. This list doesn’t include the \$7 million we spent in 2010 in the restoration of the Coral Gables Museum’s historic building.

It is important to note that in the last 10-years of the 85 applications reviewed for historic designation by the Historic Preservation Board, 79 were designated as local historic landmarks and the Coral Way historic district was also designated. In sum, only four applications for historic designation were denied by the Board and one application approved by the Board (229 Ridgewood Road) was overturned by the City Commission. This is an approval rate of more than 90 percent and evidence that the members of our Historic Board are extremely conscientious of the role they play in preserving our history and unique structures.

Additionally, the article does not explore the impact of Historic Designation on a property, nor does it ask the two proponents why they haven’t sought designations for their own houses. As the owner of a house that has historic designation, one of which I am proud to have lived in for more than 20-years, I can say that sometimes the impacts can be negative.

I appreciate the opportunity to set the record straight.