



CORAL GABLES PINWOOD CEMETERY ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
Meeting Minutes of February 6, 2023, 3:30 p.m.
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, 2nd Floor, Coral Gables, Florida 33134

Historical Resources &
Cultural Arts

2327 SALZEDO STREET
CORAL GABLES
FLORIDA 33134

☎ 305-460-5093

✉ hist@coralgables.com

MEMBERS	J 23	F 23	APPOINTED BY
Jorge Arguelles	NO MEETING	P	Mayor Vince Lago
David Mitchell		#	Vice-Mayor Michael Mena
Denise West		P	Commissioner Rhonda Anderson
Christina Carabeo		#	Commissioner Jorge L. Fors, Jr.
Maurice Habif		P	Commissioner Kirk R. Menendez
Richard Bennett		P	City Manager Peter Iglesias
Vacant			Board-as-a-Whole

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 began at 3:32 pm.

Mr. Adams introduced himself and requested each member to introduce themselves and advised them that they need someone to serve as acting chair. The board members introduced themselves. Mr. Bennett volunteered to be the acting chair.

ROLL CALL:

Four members were present making a quorum.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Pioneer Day:
 - a) Description: A yearly day to celebrate the cemetery, usually held on a Saturday morning for approximately 1-1/2 hours. There is either a speaker or they give tours of the cemetery and tell different stories about the individuals buried there. The City provides refreshments and there is a small turnout.
 - b) Date: Ms. Kautz reminded the board that they were getting ready for Pioneer Day which was scheduled to take place just after the COVID shutdown. She advised the board to discuss this to re-schedule. They used to coincide Pioneer Day with Dade Heritage Days in the spring, but they are not tied to a date as Dade Heritage Trust does not sponsor that event anymore.
 - c) Speakers:
 - i) Previously Selected:
 - John Allen: The past director of the Coral Gables Museum, who has since passed away, was selected two years ago. He had done research on burials at the cemetery and found some new names/families.
 - Podcast Producer: Had done at that time about 26 episodes on the history of Miami. There was a presentation about Coral Gables and South Miami and the cemetery and early pioneer life. It was well received.
 - ii) Upcoming Speakers: To be determined.
2. Pinewood Cemetery Book:
 - a) Ms. Kautz will provide copies of the book written by Harriet Liles to the new members. It is the most comprehensive listing of the people buried in the cemetery.

Coral Gables Pinewood Cemetery Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes February 6, 2023

3. Assessment of the Cemetery:
 - a) An assessment of the state of the cemetery needs to be done before planning anything else.
4. History of Pinewood Cemetery:
 - a) The cemetery is one of the oldest historic pieces of property in Coral Gables.
 - b) It began as a cemetery in the late 1800s and many of the area's original pioneers are buried there.
 - c) The book on the Pinewood Cemetery will be very helpful as it has a lot of information on the people buried there and who purchased plots. Harriet Liles research began around 1983 when either the mayor or a commissioner came to her and asked what they could do to make the cemetery into Pinewood Cemetery and not just a forgotten piece of land.
5. Current condition of the Cemetery:

Board comments included: it is currently very overgrown, the coral rock wall needs repair, it is a beautiful natural habitat, There is a large section with no known burials as the plots were never sold.
6. What to do next:
 - a) Decide what should be done with the cemetery for the next 40 years.
 - b) What can be done to make it more welcoming, a more passive or natural area while preserving the integrity and dignity of the graves?
 - c) Cleanup was the first priority.
7. Plans previously discussed by the Board:
 - a) Landscaping and removing invasive trees that were there.
 - b) Restoring tombstones or erecting tombstones for people who could be identified.
 - c) How to raise the funds to do the work?

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Funding:
 - a) Pinewood Cemetery Trust/Expenditure Fund:
 - i) The balance: \$6,751.00 and it is not a replenishing fund.
 - ii) A request for funding was made to the City Commission for a one-time fund to restore or repair headstones.
 - iii) The board has to authorize expenditure of the trust fund money.
 - iv) This fund was specifically set aside for repairs and replacement of grave markers.
 - b) Everything else would be absorbed by the City's or the Department's budget.
 - c) If the board wants to undertake a project, a budget request would have to be made to go forward with the City budget or vote to use trust fund money and donations.
2. Donations:
3. Memorial bench/tree program:
 - a) Originally memorial benches and memorial trees were used to raise funds for the cemetery. The cemetery has an abundance of benches at the moment.
 - b) The maker of the benches has retired.
 - c) The tree program was slowed down as the natural trees were being crowded by the decorative flowering trees.
 - d) There is an opportunity to remove invasive species of trees as it is very overgrown and very little light is coming through.
 - e) Some of the trees with memorial plaques are no longer alive.
4. Current Work:
 - a) Ms. Kautz did an inventory of the condition of the cemetery and reached out to Public Works who would go out tomorrow and would send pictures of the situation.
 - b) Deena Bell-Llewellyn, Assistant Director of Public Works for Landscape Services is scheduling a large branch trimming.
5. Walkthrough:
 - a) A request was made to have a walkthrough with Ms. Bell-Llewellyn and the board.

Coral Gables Pinewood Cemetery Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes February 6, 2023

6. Butterflies:
 - a) The Garden Club extension service sent someone out who understands butterflies a long time ago (20 or 30 years) and they had found very rare butterflies that were only surviving in this area because it has some of the original coontie plants.
 - b) It was not certain if the butterflies were still there. Maybe they could look at bringing them back or creating a butterfly garden.
 - c) If someone could be found to go to the cemetery and look at the butterflies, they could go without any advance warning or notice as it is a public area.
7. Future Plans:
 - a) There has been no plan since COVID.
 - b) What should be done in the next couple of years?
 - c) It could be somewhere people could come and enjoy, a safe place.
 - d) They should rethink what to do with this property and how best to honor the people that are there.
8. Parking:
 - a) There is no parking.
 - b) There used to be parking on the swale on the 2 corners across the street in front of the house, but it does not exist anymore.
 - c) A large number of cars is not desirable due to the residential neighborhood.
9. Future Meeting:
 - a) The suggestion was to have the next meeting in the Cemetery with the Greenspace Division and Deena Bell-Llewellyn
 - b) The meeting would have to be advertised and minutes taken.
 - c) Mr. Adams had mentioned to the GIS department to have a map layer showing the location of all the grave markers and the existing native and non-native species. It was suggested that a member from their department attend.

A motion was made by Mr. Bennett and seconded by Ms. West to have a special meeting on Friday, March 17, 2023, at 10:30 am in the Cemetery.

The motion was unanimously approved.
- d) A back-up date of March 16, 2023, at 10 am was given.
10. Creating a Park:
 - a) There has been discussion of calling Pinewood Cemetery a park or using the south end as more of a passive park, there was an issue doing this that Ms. Kautz could not recall.
 - b) A suggestion was made to contact the City Parks Department about some sort of partnership.
11. Audubon Society:
 - a) Ms. Kautz suggested reaching out to the Audubon Society to see if they could work together. Ms. West volunteers to try and get the name of a contact.
12. Future Pioneer Day:
 - a) The speaker needed to be decided.
 - b) It could be advertised on Social Media and/or put on EventBrite.
 - c) The event should not be held until the clean-up is completed.
 - d) It was suggested that the next Pioneer Day should be postponed until the fall to give ample time to plan.
13. Board Meeting Dates:
 - a) The Board meets four times a year. Meetings were set for the second Monday of the month at 3:30 pm.
 - b) The dates for this year are February 6th, May 1st, August 7th (summer date could be changed), and November 6th, 2023.
14. Tree Donations:
 - a) Ms. Kautz read an email from Janet Nostro, a previous board member for 8 years who submitted an application for a memorial tree in honor of her sister. She also wanted to donate a second tree in honor of her parents.

Coral Gables Pinewood Cemetery Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes February 6, 2023

- b) A copy of the application form was given to the board which was updated to change the trees to be more native than flowering or ornamental. The old price of the trees was no longer valid due to cost increases
- c) When a request is received, Public Works plants the tree, the donation covers the cost of the tree, and the balance goes into the trust fund.
- d) Ms. Nostro has been informed that there might be a price increase and she is okay with it.
- e) Public Service is pricing out trees of 10 to 12 feet. The board will be advised of the new prices. If the tree prices are similar, one price will be used for all, if not they will be priced separately.
- f) Donors usually request where they want the trees placed and this is taken into consideration, but Public Works and Ms. Bell-Llewelyn are consulted as to where the tree will thrive the best.
- g) There is a concern where trees are planted, especially if the location of the burials are not known and also how they grow.
- h) Typically, trees have generally been planted towards the south end, which is the unpopulated area, it has the clearest space. This is where the benches have been located.

15. Tree Plantings:

- a) Some of the trees that were planted have not survived.
- b) Ms. West said Ms. Nostro's request should be honored as long as the Parks Department thinks that trees will live and thrive, she did not want people to donate trees and they not survive.
- c) Ms. Bell-Llewelyn should be consulted as to the practicality of tree donations as there are trees that need to be removed.
- d) The board suggested letting Ms. Nostro know the price of the trees before accepting her second request for a tree.

A motion was made by Ms. West and seconded by Mr. Habif to accept Ms. Nostro's request to have a tree planted in her sister's honor.

The motion was unanimously approved.

16. Tree markers:

- a) Some were granite, and some were metal.
- b) The granite ones were not pre-approved but installed by a family member.
- c) Pictures of tree markers were shown where the trees had died.

17. Board Vacancy:

- a) There is a Board-as-a-whole vacancy, and two applicants were present.
- b) Both applicants addressed the board:

Ms. Lorrie Martin gave the Board a brief introduction with her background, interest and work in genealogy, and her interest in Pinewood Cemetery. She noted that if she was not chosen, she would still be happy to assist the board.

Questions asked by the Board and answered by Ms. Martin. The board questions are in regular type, Ms. Martin's answers are in italics.

- 1. One of the reasons that Harriet Lile could do a good job was because she did understand genealogy and was interested in researching the families. What area of expertise do you think you could add and also bring to the board that would enhance the cemetery?

Along with other things like art museums, there are so many monuments to history, but cemeteries are the physical representation of not just history, but of genealogy. Some stones will have full family trees on the back of them, so that the tie that genealogy has to a cemetery is quite strong. She said she could do some research into some of the unknowns in the book. She understood that there are others who have already filled in quite a few of the blanks. Ms. Martin has experience through other nonprofits in the area of non-profit finance. Such as how are the dollars earned? How is the revenue generated? How to budget going forward? Having a reserve fund in case the reserve fund is needed. If the City's budget doesn't cover the wall, and the Board's fund needs to

cover it, how is something like this managed? She said she was also quite interested in seeing how the budget is laid out, and how the funding works. Perhaps the deed might say something about why the southern end of the property versus the northern end of the property can or can't be used for certain things.

Mr. Tristan Bourgoignie gave the Board a brief introduction on his background, law practice, and interest in Pinewood Cemetery, noting that he is multi-lingual, English, French and Spanish. Mr. Bennett had mentioned this board to him, and after visiting the Cemetery last weekend he noticed that it is not very inviting for a variety of reasons including lack of parking, overgrown vegetation, and litter.

1. After a discussion with Mr. Bennett on how the board was funded, he suggested looking into State of Florida grants. Special category grants as well as some specific limited grants up to \$50,000 which could be used for this purpose might be a benefit and to allow them to do the landscaping.
2. Another option was creating a 501(c)(3) for the Cemetery where people could donate tax deductible funds to help the committee achieve its future endeavors.

18. Procedure to fill the vacancy:

- a) With competing applicants, the board will have to nominate someone and then take a vote.
- b) Sometimes boards wait until all the board members are present as a courtesy.
- c) Legal counsel advised that secret or written votes are not allowed under the Sunshine Law. A motion should be made, and a vote taken. If the motion failed, then another motion could be made.
- d) Ms. Kautz said that a board member was unable to be reached, so if there is no interest on her part there might be another space on the board.
- e) Seeing that Ms. West was in a dilemma over which applicant to choose, Ms. Martin withdrew her name, adding that if another position opened up she would be willing to serve. In the meantime, she would answer any questions or review any items if asked and was interested in doing so. She requested to attend the site visit. Ms. West said that she thought they would need the support of genealogists but thanked Ms. Martin for withdrawing her name and said she would keep her updated on what happens with the board and maybe in the future have her fill a vacancy.

A motion was made by Ms. West and seconded by Mr. Habif to nominate Mr. Bourgoignie to join the board in the position nominated by Board-as-a-whole.

The motion was unanimously approved.

19. Historic Preservation Fund:

- a) Mr. Adams advised that this fund was recently created by the City and is financed through the Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Program in which a historic property sells the development rights that it has not used, and the money spent on the maintenance of the building.
- b) Rights have been sold for several City buildings. It is not certain when the money will be received, and a significant amount of the money will be used for repairs to the Miracle Theater and adjacent building, and the Museum.
- c) Any leftover funds will be put into a Preservation Fund for use on City owned historic sites.
- d) The board needs to have a plan of what needs to be done, and then they could possibly apply for some of the funds along with a matching grant from the State.

20. Election of Officers:

- a) Election of officers will wait until all members were present.

DISCUSSION ITEMS: None

CITY COMMISSION ITEMS: None

ITEMS FROM THE SECRETARY: None.

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion was made by Mr. Bennett and seconded by Ms. West to adjourn the meeting.

The motion was unanimously approved.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 4:38 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Kara N. Kautz
Acting Historic Preservation Officer