

**Proposal to rename “Washington Park”  
in honor of  
William Alexander Cooper**

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**1. Applicant name:**

City of Coral Gables, presented by Commissioner Maria Anderson.

**2. Identification of park to be renamed:**

Washington Park  
4920 Washington Drive  
Coral Gables, FL 33133

See attached information from the City of Coral Gables Parks & Recreation Department.

The park is believed to be named for the street on which it is located, which in turn is believed to be named for President George Washington. The other streets surrounding the park are similarly named for presidents (i.e. Grant, Jefferson, and Lincoln).

**3. Proposed name of park:**

“William Alexander Cooper Park”

**4. Brief biography of William Alexander Cooper:**

William Alexander Cooper was born on April 12, 1929 in Miami, Florida to Bahamian immigrants. He graduated from George Washington Carver High School (Class of 1946) and went on to attend St. Augustine's College in Raleigh, North Carolina. In 1950, Mr. Cooper married his sweetheart Leona and together they raised five children. He had a long career with the United States Postal Service and retired as a letter carrier in 1989. During his time with the Postal Service, Mr. Cooper was a member of the Letter Carriers Union and served as a local president of the Nation Alliance of Postal and Federal Employees. During a lifelong involvement with Christ Episcopal Church in Coconut Grove, Mr. Cooper served his parish in almost every capacity. He also served his immediate neighborhood and the greater City of Coral Gables in many ways (detailed below) and was a staunch supporter of both. William Cooper passed away on June 16, 2008.

**5. The association of the person with park to be renamed:**

William Alexander Cooper was born and raised in the house at 201 Washington Drive and later moved to 200 Washington Drive where he resided with his wife, Leona, until his death in 2008. “Washington Park” is located at the opposite end of the street where Mr. Cooper spent his life and is situated within the neighborhood he loved and worked to protect.

**6. Background information detailing Mr. Cooper's accomplishments that support the name designation:**

William Alexander Cooper was a driving force for change in his immediate neighborhood and the City of Coral Gables. He was a strong advocate for community safety and improvements. Mr. Cooper was the founder and president of the Lola B. Walker Homeowners Association of Coral Gables. In that role, he was instrumental in placing the "MacFarlane Homestead Subdivision Historic District" on both the Coral Gables Register of Historic Places and the National Register of Historic Places. (The "MacFarlane Homestead Subdivision Historic District" is the City of Coral Gables only nationally registered Historic District.) Mr. Cooper also served his City as a member of several City Boards and Committees including the Crime Watch Committee (past president), Citizen's Advisory Committee and the Code Enforcement Board.

**7. Letter of approval from next of kin for the name designation:**

See attached letter received from Mrs. Leona Cooper, widow of William Alexander Cooper, supporting the renaming of "Washington Park."

**8. Three letters of endorsement supporting this proposal:**

Attached please find letters of support from:

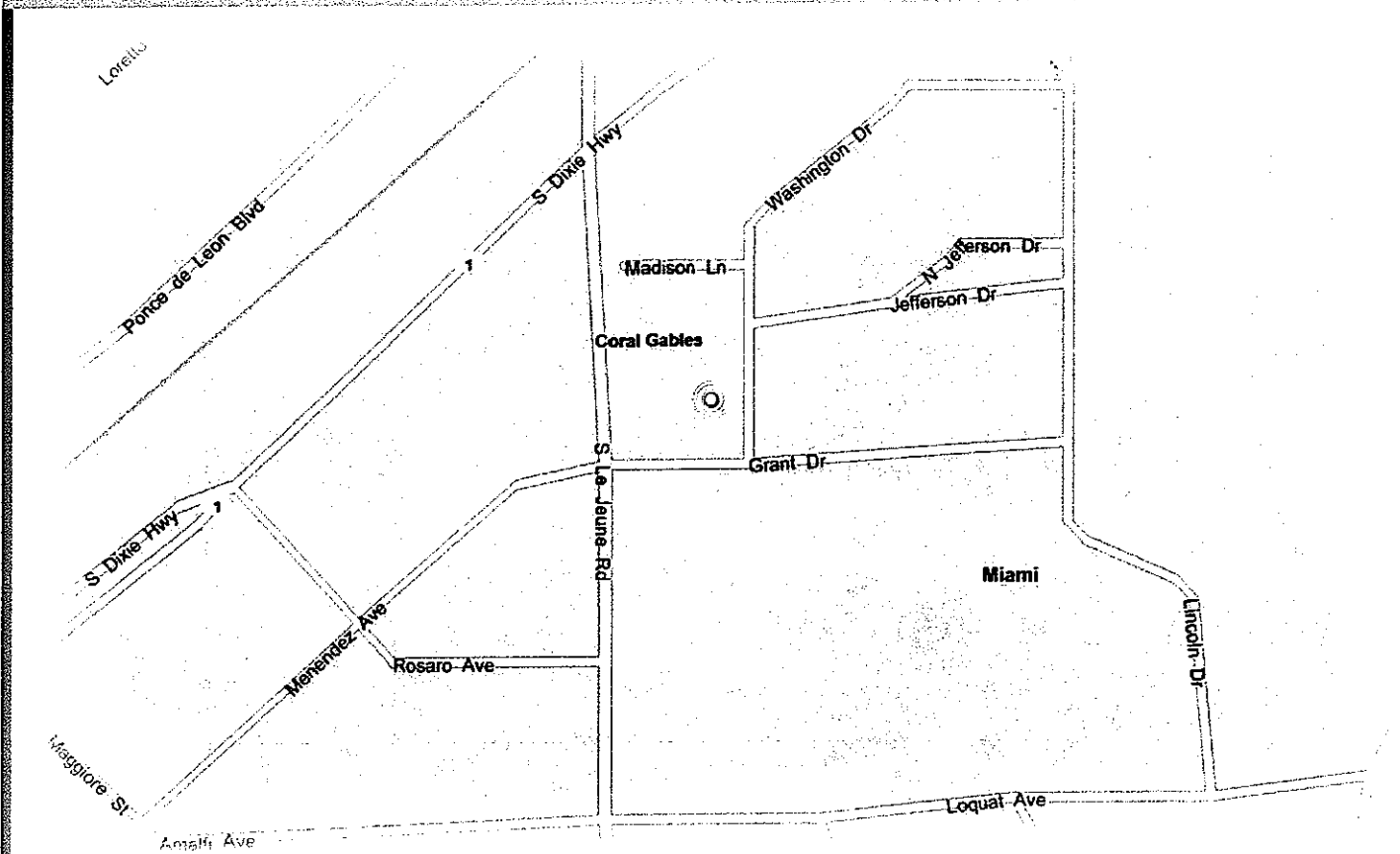
Mrs. Edwina Prime

Former City of Coral Gables Mayor Dorothy Thomson

Former City of Coral Gables Commissioner Jim Barker

# WASHINGTON PARK

## 4920 WASHINGTON DRIVE



# WASHINGTON PARK

4920 WASHINGTON DRIVE

**AMENITIES:**

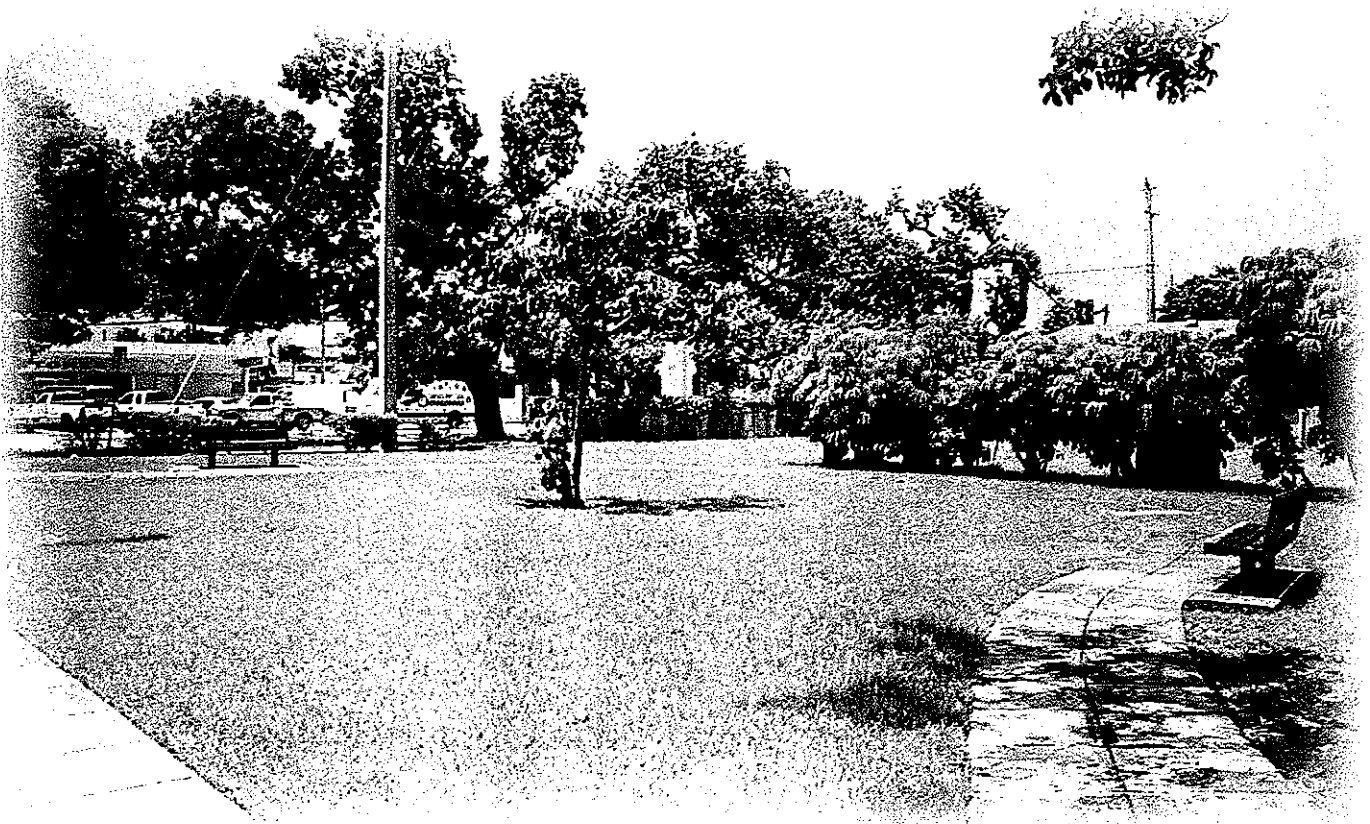
SCENIC VIEWS • BENCHES • WALKING PATH

**SIZE: 0.1 ACRES**



# WASHINGTON PARK

4920 WASHINGTON DRIVE



Leona H. Cooper  
200 Washington Drive  
Coral Gables, Florida 33133  
305.443.9466

2008 JUN 30 PM 9: 20

RECEIVED  
CITY OF CORAL GABLES  
HISTORICAL RESOURCES

June 29, 2009

Kara Kautz, Historic Preservation Officer  
City of Coral Gables Historic Resources Department  
405 Biltmore Way  
Coral Gables, FL 33134

Dear Ms. Kautz:

It is with great pleasure that I accept, and approve, this honor of re-naming Washington Park for my beloved husband, William Alexander Cooper. Our entire family is very grateful for this tribute to him. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours truly



Leona H. Cooper



**To:** Kara N. Kantz  
Historical Resources Department  
P. O. Box 141549  
Coral Gables, FL 33114-1549

**From:** Edwina Prime, President *EP*  
Lola B. Walker Home Owners Association  
141 Florida Avenue  
Coral Gables, FL 33133

RECEIVED  
CITY OF CORAL GABLES  
HISTORICAL RESOURCES

2009 AUG 10 AM 9:51

**Subject:** Naming of Park - William Cooper

**Date:** July 31, 2009

William Cooper saw the need to create the Lola B. Walker Home Owners Association and functioned as its president until his death. His achievements on behalf of the community included: home improvements, crime watch rallies and a term as president of the Coral Gables Crime Watch Association. Further he was a resource for residents and was instrumental in securing a scholarship for graduating high school seniors and other beneficial activities. I recommend the naming of the park in his honor.

**DOROTHY H. THOMSON  
2600 CARDENA STREET  
VILLA #3  
CORAL GABLES, FL 33134**

August 3, 2009


Mayor and Commissioners  
City of Coral Gables  
City Hall  
Coral Gables, Florida

RE: "William Alexander Cooper Park" Renaming

It is most appropriate for the late William Alexander Cooper to be remembered in his community by renaming "Washington Park" in Mr. Cooper's honor. If he were alive today, however he would probably demur because he was a very humble, unassuming gentleman.

William was undeniably dedicated to contributing to the betterment of his community. On a personal assessment, I was impressed that he immersed himself in doing the right thing. Time and time again, he would step up to volunteer his services. In Coral Gables Citizens' Crime Watch, for instance, William served on the Board of Directors and rarely missed a meeting. When neighborhood crime watch meetings were requested, William was the first to commit to his neighborhood. When I, as a city commissioner, appointed him to the city's Code Enforcement Board, William took his responsibility seriously and performed his duties in an exemplary manner. He was always a person who could be depended on.

Mr. Cooper was born to Bahamian immigrants. Coral Gables was built largely by Bahamian labor, and George Merrick, founder of the city, depended on these hard workers from the Bahamas to build his dream. Many from Mr. Cooper's neighborhood are direct descendants of these early laborers, possibly Mr. Cooper, himself. How appropriate, therefore that a park should bear his name and symbolize the essence of a populace that played such a vital part in the entire history of Coral Gables.

  
Dorothy Thomson  
Former Mayor and Commissioner  
Coral Gables



July 22, 2009

To The Honorable Mayor and Commissioners:

It is an honor for me to support and recommend the renaming of Washington Park to The William Alexander Cooper Park in honor of my dear friend, Bill Cooper.

Bill worked tirelessly for our city. He was active in so many areas and was a devoted citizen of the city he loved.

It was my pleasure to work with him on the Donald Hopkins Scholarship Program. In our 20<sup>th</sup> year, he was very proud of the fact that we have had 14 students graduate and return to the South Florida community.

What a fitting tribute for the man who was loved by so many to be honored in this way.

Please add my name to this proposal. I would sincerely appreciate your approval.

Yours Truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Barker', written in a cursive style.

James T. Barker