

CORAL GABLES PINWOOD CEMETERY ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
Meeting Minutes of August 7, 2023, 3:30 p.m.
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, 2nd Floor, Coral Gables, Florida 33134

MEMBERS	J 23	F 23	M 23	A 23	M 23	J 23	J 23	A 23	APPOINTED BY
Jorge Arguelles	-	P	-	-	E	-	-	P	Mayor Vince Lago
Lorrie Martin	-	*	-	-	*	-	-	P	Commissioner Ariel Fernandez
Denise West	-	P	-	-	P	-	-	P	Vice Mayor Rhonda Anderson
John Swain	-	*	-	-	*	-	-	P	Commissioner Melissa Castro
Maurice Habif	-	P	-	-	P	-	-	E	Commissioner Kirk R. Menendez
Richard Bennett	-	P	-	-	P	-	-	P	City Manager Peter Iglesias
P. Tristan Bourgoignie	-	*	-	-	P	-	-	P	Board-as-a-Whole

LEGEND: A = Absent; P = Present; E = Excused; * = New Member; ^ = Resigned Member.
 - = No Meeting; # = Late meeting arrival.

STAFF: Anna Pernas, Historic Resources and Cultural Arts Director,
 Kara Kautz, Assistant Historic Preservation Officer

RECORDING SECRETARY/PREPARATION OF MINUTES: Yvelisse Bonilla, Administrative Assistant

CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order at 3:37 P.M.

Ms. Anna Pernas, Director of Historical Resources and Cultural Arts introduced herself to the board.

A motion was made by Ms. West and seconded by Mr. Swain to approve the nomination of Richard Bennett to be chairperson for this meeting, which passed unanimously by voice vote.

The board members in attendance are Mr. Richard Bennett, Ms. Denise West, Mr. John Swain, Mr. Jorge Arguelles, Ms. Lorrie Martin and Mr. P. Tristan Bourgoignie.

A motion was made by Mr. Bourgoignie and seconded by Mr. Bennett to excuse Mr. Habif from this meeting, which passed unanimously by voice vote.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Draft meeting minutes were provided for the May 1, 2023 meeting. No action was taken.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Restoration of Site Planning – Ms. Kautz is meeting with survey companies next week to obtain quotes. There is funding to get this process started. The approximate rough cost is \$20,000. The survey will be of the entire cemetery.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Pinewood Cemetery Cleanup Event – Great turnout to event. Over 40 volunteers collected 110 bags of garbage estimated to be 7,000 lbs. of oyster plants.
2. The Board agreed that they would like to set dates for future clean-up days. Staff would coordinate with Keep Coral Gable Beautiful and bring back an update at the next meeting.
3. Ms. Kautz met Robert Gibson at the cleanup. He expressed his desire to do more volunteering at the cemetery. Mr. Gibson would also like us to contact his organization for more volunteers. His contact information was shared with the board members.
4. The Board discussed that parking is an issue for visitors of the Cemetery.

Public Comment: Jim Berlin, 737 Tibidabo Street, is on the Senior Advisory Board, would like to know what the future of the cemetery is. Wants to know when the next Pinewood Cemetery Day is. Asked if we allow visitors to plant items in memory of their loved one.

5. Restoration of Tombstones – Still researching for a vendor to do this work.
 - a. Mr. Bennett contacted Rosa Lowinger from a restoration company who did the work at City Hall. The administrator at this company said the cost for a workshop to train volunteers to clean the headstones would be \$4,000. The cost for cleaning 15-20 tombstones would be between \$5,000 – \$8,000.
 - b. Staff shared their concern for having members of the public try to clean headstones and accidentally cause more damage. The products used need to be sensitive to the material and age of the tombstones.
6. Need to come up with a long-term plan to put in place so we have a plan of action after we obtain the survey. Tentative plan is as follows:
 - a. Making the space walkable and accessible
 - b. Finding a location to park.
 - c. Interim measures for tree trimming to allow for more light.
 - d. Strategic Plan for long term
 - i. Restoration of the natural habitat.
 - ii. Restoration of cemetery sites.
 - e. Develop community partnerships to promote restoration. Maintain and expand a contact list of community groups and engage them with future events and special projects.
7. Easement – Mr. Bourgougnie is aware of some activity by Miami-Dade County related to the properties that abut in the back. Still need to do more research to decipher.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

1. Ms. West would like to work with the City’s communication department to come up with a presentation and talking points on the Cemetery to be used in 2024.

A motion was made by Ms. West and seconded by Ms. Martin to work with The City of Coral Gables Communication Department to create a presentation/content on the Pinewood Cemetery for the City’s upcoming Centennial, which passed unanimously by voice vote.

CITY COMMISSION ITEMS: None

ITEMS FROM THE SECRETARY: None.

ADJOURNMENT:

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

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

Respectfully submitted,



Anna C. Pernas
Historic Preservation Officer