

CORAL GABLES MERRICK HOUSE GOVERNING BOARD MEETING
Meeting Minutes of November 4, 2024, 9:00 a.m.
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, 2nd Floor, Coral Gables, Florida 33134

MEMBERS	D 23	J 24	F 24	M 24	A 24	M 24	J 24	J 24	A 24	S 24	O 24	N 24	APPOINTED BY
Bonnie Seipp	N	P	P	P	A	A	N	N	P	P	P	A	Vice-Mayor Rhonda Anderson
Carmen Cason	O	P	A	P	A	P	O	O	E	P	P	P	Mayor Vince Lago
Mary Beth Burke Vice Chair	M	P	P	P	P	P	M	M	P	P	P	P	Commissioner Kirk R. Menendez
Margaret Groves	E	P	#	P	P	P	E	E	E	E	E	E	Commissioner Melissa Castro
Alexis Ehrenhaft	E	P	A	E	E	P	T	T	P	E	P	E	City Manager Peter Iglesias
Genevieve Orr	T	P	P	A	P	P	I	I	P	P	P	P	Commissioner Ariel Fernandez
Joanne Meagher Chairperson	I N G	P	P	P	P	P	N G	N G	P	P	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, Historical Resources Director; Kara Kautz, Assistant Historic Preservation Officer;
 Gay Bondurant, Docent Coordinator; Yvelisse Bonilla, Administrative Assistant.

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

CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order at 9:04 AM by Chair Joanne Meagher. Attendance was stated for the record.

ROLL CALL:

In attendance were Ms. Cason, Ms. Burke, Ms. Meagher, and Ms. Orr.

OPENING STATEMENT:

Description of some of George Merrick’s work as Miami’s Postmaster during the war years:

The day after Japan bombed Pearl Harbor, George came to work early because he knew that he would have added responsibility. A year earlier, following a government mandate that required men between 21 and 45 to register for the draft, he had set up the registration and recruitment offices on the second floor of the federal building in downtown Miami. When he arrived, he discovered more than 75 young men crowded into the hall in front of the Navy recruiting office waiting for it to open. The lines continued throughout the week and grew even longer after the United States declared war on Germany. Post offices also became the favorite place to buy defense bonds, later called war bonds. George had the responsibility of overseeing and promoting their sale. He also became one of the chairmen of the Defense Council of Dade County, organized to help sell bonds.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A motion was made by Ms. Burke, seconded by Ms. Orr, to approve as amended the minutes for the meeting on September 9, 2024. This motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Ms. Burke, seconded by Ms. Orr, to approve as amended the minutes for the meeting on October 14, 2024. This motion passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Merrick House Activity Report October 2024 - Ms. Bondurant read the October 2024 House Report. The report was shared with the Board in advance of the meeting and is included as an attachment to the minutes.
2. Coral Gables Garden Club - In February of 2025 the Garden Club will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the first Garden Club Board. They are interested in having an event on Sunday, February 16, 2025, or Sunday, February 23, 2025, at the House. There are many ideas for the itinerary of the event. Ms. Meagher will have a meeting with them shortly to obtain details.

A motion was made by Ms. Orr, seconded by Ms. Burke, to approve the concept of an event with the Coral Gables Garden Club, logistics of this event to be determined. This motion passed unanimously.

3. 100 Voices – Margot Friedman will be speaking at the February 2, 2025, event. No event in March due to the Vintage Market. Board members are working on a speaker for April 2025.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Vintage Market – This event will be a City of Coral Gables Merrick House event. Staff to advise on whether the vendors need insurance. Tentative date of this market is March 1, 2025.
2. Holiday Open House – The open house is scheduled for 12/15/2024, with a rain date of 12/21/24. The Bells of St. Andrew’s and the Palmetto Elementary School Jazz Combo will be performing. Each board member will supply four to five batches of cookies. Attendees will enjoy cookies, cider, crafts for children, and a Santa Claus visit. The Symphonettes will be volunteering,
3. Poetry Books – The poetry books have humidity damage on the covers. The inside of the books are not affected. Ms. Meagher has requested that each board member take a few books home and clean the damage from the covers.
4. English Pamphlets – Ms. Meagher is requesting more English pamphlets. Staff will look into a reprint but would also like the board to do a complete review of the brochure.
5. Stag Painting – Staff is requesting more information on the conservation background of the vendor, Ramiro Ramirez, proposed to work on the painting.
6. Staff Tours – Ms. Burke will be scheduling staff tours with Ralph Rodriguez from Public Works.
7. Althea’s Garden Brigade – Six volunteers attended the first event. Ms. Orr noted that she attended as well.
8. Veteran’s Day Concert – Sunday, November 11th. This is a “bring your own blanket” event but chairs will be ready for the older attendees. The popcorn machine will be in operation.
9. Placemaker Poet – Ms. Meagher waiting for a date to schedule a viewing of the Placemaker Poet at the Coral Gables Museum as a board.
10. Antique Doorknobs – Ms. Burke will be returning these items to the House. Staff will try to reach out to the Boston Historical Society.

11. Venetian Pool Mermaid – There is a picture of a Mermaid at the Venetian Pool from the 1920s Annette Tillerman. Ms. Orr found a movie about this actress and also found the mermaid outfit she had on for the Venetian Pool picture. The mermaid outfit is located at Weeki Wachee Spring State Park. Ms. Orr also suggests a movie viewing night in 2025.
12. Docents – Ms. Meagher would like the docents trained on the Defibrillator.
13. Maximum Attendance at Events – Staff noted that attendance at events inside the House must not exceed the maximum number of persons allowed (50).

DISCUSSION ITEMS: None.

CITY COMMISSION ITEMS: None.

ITEMS FROM THE SECRETARY: None.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 10:25 AM.

Respectfully submitted,



Anna Pernas

Historical Resources and Cultural Arts Director