



CORAL GABLES MERRICK HOUSE GOVERNING BOARD MEETING
Meeting Minutes of March 14, 2022, 8:30 a.m.
Coral Gables City Hall, City Commission Chamber
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, Florida 33134

*Historical Resources &
Cultural Arts*

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MEMBERS	M 21	A 21	M 21	J 21	J 21	A 21	S 21	O 21	N 21	D 22	J 22	F 22	M 22	APPOINTED BY
Ana Lam	P	P	-	P	P	E	E	P	P	N O M E E T I N G	P	P	P	Mayor Vince Lago
Barbara Reese	P	P	-	P	P	E	E	P	E		P	P	P	Vice-Mayor Michael Mena
Bonnie Seipp	P	P	-	P	E	P	E	P	P		P	E	P	Commissioner Rhonda Anderson
Carmen Cason	P	P	-	A	P	P	P	P	P		P	P	P	Commissioner Jorge L. Fors, Jr.
Mary Beth Burke	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		P	P	P	Commissioner Kirk R. Menendez
Alexis Ehrenhaft	P	P	-	P	P	P	P	E	P		P	E	P	City Manager Peter Iglesias
Joanne Meagher	P	P	-	P	P	P	P	P	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: Warren Adams, Historic Preservation Officer, Kara Kautz, Assistant Historic Preservation Officer, Colette Worm, Docent Coordinator.

RECORDING SECRETARY/PREPARATION OF MINUTES: Nancy Kay Lyons, Administrative Assistant

The meeting was called to order by Chair Meagher at 8:38 a.m. and attendance was stated for the record.

OPENING STATEMENT

Chair Meagher said that Colette Worm made a presentation to the DAR at their meeting at the Merrick House about Ethel Merrick’s life. Ethel was the first daughter, born two years after George Merrick. Chair Meagher went on to read a snippet from the presentation (Ms. Worm had taken on the persona of Ethel): “When I got back home there were many eligible bachelors in South Florida (Ethel had gone to Rollins Preparatory Academy). Finally, however, I was courted and, at age 20, married a man 24 years my senior. Guess what my husband’s name was? George. George Amsden. Mama got her dream house built in 1910 just in time for my wedding to be held in the family room in front of that gorgeous fireplace with my sister Almeda as my maid of honor. Of course, the local press, The Miami Metropolis, covered my wedding stating it was one of the prettiest weddings ever held. My husband was a successful, wealthy landowner and rogue yachtsman. We lived on prestigious South Bayshore Drive. Through the years I lived in several houses in Coral Gables, University Drive, as well as 800 South Greenway, until I was back living here at the Merrick House.” (That is when she opened the Merrick House as Merrick Manor, and it became a boarding house).

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A motion was made by Ms. Lam and seconded by Ms. Burke to approve the minutes of February 8, 2022, with corrections.

The motion was unanimously approved.

DOCENT COORDINATOR REPORT:

Ms. Worm provided updates on: boys fishing in grotto pond; persons using the Merrick House parking lots as a valet lot; trash; police being called for the homeless; leaks in Solomon’s Office; cleaning of janitor’s closet; padlocks for the garage; cleaning of rust and paint on garage; work on Toledo; walkthrough with Public Works; presentation to the DAR; cataloging of doilies and tablecloths; internet listing; cleaning of sidewalks; display board; pest inspection; doorbell; fire system; professional photography; Sweethaven Antique Book Tour; donations by Garden Club and DAR.

Ms. Worm also gave an update on her ongoing projects: expiration of fire extinguishers; upgrade of security cameras; dirt in the swale; phone lines; trash not resolved; public works repairs; upcoming May 4th event; transfer of files; docents. She also reported the following:

1. Statistics for February: 53 Visitors and \$274 collected.
2. From the soft opening in October 2019 through last month there were 2121 visitors.

Ms. Worm said her goodbyes and thanked everyone. She offered to Zoom with her successor. Chair Meagher thanked Ms. Worm and commended her on her attention to detail, her positive attitude, and good sense of humor. All the board members thanked Ms. Worm and expressed their sentiments and wished her good luck.

FAREWELL PARTY FOR COLETTE WORM:

1. Chair Meagher said that they should do something the week after the tea. A dinner on the Merrick House porch on March 28, 2022 at 6pm was confirmed.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. **Email to the Villagers:** Chair Meagher read the thank you email she had sent to The Villagers. Ms. Worm had sent an email also and Ms. Kautz will be sending a letter.
2. **Display Case:** Chair Meagher said that the display case looked great.
3. **Booth at the Makers Market at Brewery 13:** Chair Meagher said they would be able to participate once it was up and running.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. **Victorian Tea Party – Sunday, March 27th, 2-5 p.m.:**
 - a. **Table Set up:** Ms. Burke said the vendors, food and tables would be set up in the garden.
 - b. **House Open Hours:** 2:00 pm until 3:30 pm.
 - c. **Displays:** Some will be set up in the house. There will be displays of the Merrick House linen collection, sewing artifacts and tools. In the guest bedroom there will be a combination of embroidery and crewelwork. In Althea's bedroom there will be a historic quilt made in the 1920's by a black woman who cared for the children of Denise Wort's family. Everything in the house will be labeled so that people can see a different aspect of the Merrick House and have a better look at everything that makes up the Merrick House. Ms. Cason had many crocheted items, and they will be displayed on the porch.
 - d. **Tea Served:** Tea will be served at 3:30pm.
 - e. **Demonstrations:** Demonstrators will take their position on the porch at about 3:30 pm and will demonstrate embroidery, quilting and other kinds of crafts. Nancy Martini will be doing the demonstration on the antique sewing machine.
 - f. **Speakers:** While tea is served Colette Worm will speak about Southern Tea traditions and Laura Barker will speak about the history of knitting.
 - g. **Tickets:** Ms. Burke said they needed to get people to buy tickets. Ms. Seipp asked if someone could send her the link to EventBrite so she could put on social media. Chair Meagher distributed a list of where the tea had been advertised including, Great Gables Guide, The Villagers' Newsletter and Jeannett's Journal, Gables Insider, and Gables Chamber. Ms. Ehrenhaft said she had someone that wanted to come but did not want to buy their ticket on EventBrite, so she suggested that they print tickets to hand out. Chair Meagher said they can pay by check at the door, and wrist ribbons will be distributed. In answer to a question, Chair Meagher said that people can buy from the vendors even if they have not bought a ticket, but only the people with ribbons will have access to food, tea, and the house. Ms. Seipp said that she had reconfigured the notice for the garden tea and put it on St. Philip's site, but there was no live link to EventBrite. She suggested that they have a clickable link for all future events. Chair Meagher encouraged everyone to get 5 people to come, and they would have their numbers. Currently 6 tickets have been sold.
 - h. **Caterers:** Chair Meagher said she received quotes from Sarah Sharpe and R Catering. Ten other caterers had been contacted and did not respond or were not available. For 50, people R Catering was \$1,840 and Sarah Sharpe \$2,097. Ms. Burke said that they would try and get a third estimate and go with the lowest bid. Ms. Kautz said if they could document that they had tried it should be sufficient.
 - i. **Numbers:** Ms. Kautz asked if there is a point at which they will cancel the event if attendance does not rise. Ms. Reese said that if they only had 25 people, they could cater themselves. Chair Meagher said she will have a conversation with the caterer to see when she would have to decide.

- j. **Type of Food:** Ms. Reese asked if a menu they had decided on a menu. Chair Meagher said there were three different finger sandwiches, three different pastry sweets, and a scone. Ms. Seipp asked if they were doing boxes because of COVID. Chair Meagher affirmed. Ms. Burke said they also wanted to make sure that food is equitably distributed.
 - k. **EventBrite:** Chair Meagher explained to the board how to share the event link on EventBrite.
 - l. **Games:** Chair Meagher asked if anyone would like to help her demonstrate the game of Graces and that croquet would be in the yard.
 - m. **Music:** Quiet period-appropriate recorded music will be played.
 - n. **Work plan:** Chair Meagher will send an email with “run-of-show” details.
2. **Coral Rock Wall:** Ms. Cason said she had received an email from Jose Oliveros, Assistant Public Works Director/Capital Improvements, notifying her that they would begin construction of the Coral Rock Wall the week of the March 28th. She said that it would be like the original wall. Mr. Adams said it would go along the front and curve at the corner.
 3. **Air Conditioners:** Chair Meagher reported that the installation of the air conditioners has not yet happened. Ms. Worm said they had not been delivered. When asked, Mr. Adams said he did not have an update.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Chair Meagher and the board members offered their assistance to help organize the garage.

CITY COMMISSION ITEMS: None

ITEMS FROM THE SECRETARY: None.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:43 am.

Respectfully submitted,



Warren Adams
Historic Preservation Officer