



Legislation Text

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A Resolution authorizing funds in the amount of \$75,000 to be used to complete the rehabilitation of two homes (129 Frow Avenue, 110 Oak Avenue) within the MacFarlane Homestead Subdivision Historic District as affordable housing for low- and moderate-income households, to supplement grant funding from the Building Better Communities General Obligation Bond Program (BBC GOB).

The MacFarlane Homestead Subdivision Historic District was locally designated by the City of Coral Gables in 1989, and its boundaries were expanded and contributing and non-contributing properties updated in 1998. The Historic District was listed in the National Register of Historic Places (National Register) in 1994 for its significance in the areas of Architecture, Community Planning and Development, and Ethnic Heritage. It is the only historic district listed in the National Register within the City of Coral Gables.

Many of the original residents of the MacFarlane Homestead Subdivision were Bahamians who worked in service-related occupations. The properties within the MacFarlane Homestead Subdivision, most of which were built during the late 1920s and 1930s were, in most cases, built by their owners without the assistance of an architect. They are considered a “vernacular” architectural type, meaning that they do not reflect the influence of any particular architectural style but rather reflect local building trend. These one-story frame or concrete block bungalows and a one-story “shotgun” homes are unique in the building fabric of the City of Coral Gables. Many of these homes are occupied by descendants of the original builders.

In 2003, the LBW Homeowners’ Foundation of Coral Gables Inc. identified structures within the MacFarlane Homestead Subdivision Historic District in need of restoration. Subsequently two phases of rehabilitation projects were planned utilizing Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds. The work was managed by the County in conjunction with LBW Foundation. Phase I, conducted in 2003, restored three homes at a cost of \$902,079. Phase II was initiated in 2009 with the intention of restoring three additional homes. This phase completed the permitting stage but due to several complications which included funding issues this phase has to date not entered the construction phase. In 2012 the property at 110 Oak Avenue which was slated for restoration under Phase II had deteriorated to the extent that the owner, a single mother with small children, had to move out.

In January 2014 the City updated the 2003 evaluation to identify homes in the district still in need of, and potentially eligible for, additional restoration funding. In 2014 Miami-Dade County allocated \$592,308 in BBC GOB funding for Project No. 294 for the rehabilitation of homes within the MacFarlane Homestead Subdivision Historic District. In order to be eligible for the funding, the homes must be owner-occupied, located within the historic district, and must qualify as a low- or moderate-income household. The owners must also sign a 20-year restrictive covenant guaranteeing that owners of the property will be low- to moderate-income during this time period. The City’s responsibilities included eligibility determination and applicant selection as well as managing the rehabilitation of the homes.

On March 10, 2015, City of Coral Gables City Commission approved a Resolution authorizing the execution of the Interlocal and Grant Agreement with Miami-Dade County in order for the City to receive funding from the Building Better Communities General Obligation Bond Program (BBC GOB) to rehabilitate homes within the MacFarlane Homestead Subdivision Historic District as affordable housing for low- and moderate-income

households.

On September 14, 2015, Miami-Dade County approved the Interlocal and Grant Agreement between the County and the City of Coral Gables. In September 2018 the agreement was amended to include a twelve-month extension.

In October 2015 the City approved an application for the property at 129 Frow Avenue. This property required extensive restoration. In March 2016 the County approached the City asking if the property at 110 Oak Avenue could be included in this grant since the owner was still renting an apartment and the work for their Phase II project not likely to occur in the near future. This home, vacant since 2012 had continued to deteriorate and also required extensive restoration.

The extensive nature of the restoration of these two properties, the unique challenges of the original methods of construction, as well as damage that occurred during Hurricane Irma, require funding above the BBC GOB grant monies to complete the work.