



Cocconut Grove Village Council

Marc Sarnoff-Chair
Yvonne McDonald-Vice Chair
David Collins
Felice Dubin
Gary Hecht
Ron Nelson
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Cocconut Grove Village Council

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

On August 1, 2006, a quorum of duly elected Directors of the Cocconut Grove Village Council met to discuss and decide issues relevant to the business of the corporation. Council members Sarnoff, McDonald, Collins, Dubin, Hecht, Nelson, Niemeyer, Person and Zilber were present and voted. The following items were discussed:

1. Crime report.

- a. Commander Whitehead. Several neighborhood officers were present. There have been a lot of arrests. Crime Watch efforts and that partnership with the police can be helpful. Many suspects are misleading, look clean cut and drive nice trucks. There is a clear correlation between the increase in daytime break-ins in the Center Grove and the construction activity there. Contractors hire workers from job lots who are people they don't know and pay them cash at the end of the day; often they do not know who they are and would not be able to find them if they were asked. There was discussion about the fact that workers gather to be picked up at Home Depot parking lots, and if Home Depot comes into Cocconut Grove it is likely to bring more of these anonymous workers with it. Strategy for preventing crime – crime watch. Information through associations. Community eyes and ears are a central part of the police department. How do we stack up locally and nationally. We do not compare with the major cities as far as crime. We are also the smallest NET area in the City for crime statistics. Can't answer whether we are adequately staffed in the Grove compared with other parts of Miami-Dade County. If we could merge all the associations to one crime watch it would be helpful. Discussion about day workers being a significant source of crime.

- b. Robert Loupo of the All-Grove Crime Watch. Wednesday, August 9 is their annual planning meeting. Everyone invited. Virrick Park. Mentioned shooting of tourist Mr. Gentile and gave numbers for tips. 305-471-TIPS. Thanks for coming to the Take Back the Night event. Report suspicious activity and ask for a marked unit to come to your neighborhood. 305-579-6530 homicide. 305-471-TIPs crime stoppers. Non-emergency 305-579-6111. Report all crimes. Call neighborhood resource officer Tom Braga, cell (786) 486-1488 to get someone to your house to give a report if there is a crime. Also report to grovecrimewatch.org. Loupo 305-448-3245. Mr. Loupo read a letter from Marci Weber about the tourist shooting. David Collins suggested we do an assessment to pay for private security for the residences and commercial core of Coconut Grove.

MOTION: Michelle Niemeyer made amended motion, Felice Dubin second: that the Village Council request that All Grove Crime Watch consider and discuss with the police the idea of requesting the City Commission initiate legislation requiring an impact fee related to building permits to fund additional security in communities where construction is being conducted and to require that background checks be done on construction personnel. Vote: Passed unanimously.

- c. Felice suggested that the All Grove Crime watch should be part of the Village Council. This was not a motion and was not voted on. Yvonne McDonald pointed out that the All Grove Crime Watch should discuss that first.
- d. Will Johnson, President of the HOATA, commented on the crime issue. They are deeply affected by the tourist shooting Saturday. Inviting everyone, and is putting up \$500 for the apprehension of the thug who committed the crime.
- e. Lottie Person suggested that it is important we get to know our neighbors and help each other. Community is what keeps away crime.

MOTION: Martin Zilber made motion that the Village Council match the HOATA's \$500 contribution to the reward, Lottie Person seconded. David, Yvonne and Michelle indicated they'd rather discuss it when we make the budget. Called to vote. Motion passed.

2. Status of tree ordinance. Now with new Commissioner Haskins. Marc Sarnoff understands it may see some movement will happen in September. David Collins had a comment; 6 months ago Arquitectonica came to the Village Council about a building, Mr. Collins asked are there any trees on that property, Lucia Doherty said no trees. Mr. Collins walked past the property, there were 9 trees on the property 20 or 30 feet in height. Those are most of the trees left on that block. Ron Nelson made a comment about the tree ordinance. He stated this is not a new

issue. Two or three years ago the tree man trust wrote a new ordinance and at that time the higher fines were taken out by the City, too.

3. 27th Avenue Metrorail Project.

- a. Felice Dubin asked Council if any questions. 27th Avenue Committee had meeting involving Commissioner Linda Haskins, Diane O'Quinn, Planning and Zoning Director of Miami-Dade County, Alicia from Golden Pines and Felice Dubin. Also met with Mayor Alvarez' staff. Discussed the process at both meetings. Suggested we send our questions. Mr. Rua requested a postponement of the Rapid Transit Impact Committee meeting. Project RFP was originally approved to be a 10 story bldg, 14 story bldg, and a supermarket. Signed lease contract ultimately had two 19 story buildings and a market. Now seeking 1.5M square feet, two 35 story buildings, and a 24 story building, and "he doesn't know what else." Martin asked what it is Felice wants us to do tonight. People were given two minutes to speak. David Collins commented this is a committee of the Village Council, which Mr. Collins remembers was formed to address the lack of public input and maximum height. Doesn't know of any other area we asked the Committee to explore. The committee has stopped an August 2 morning meeting that would have precluded public comment, which was a great accomplishment. Felice also informed the Council that Mr. Rua said the condo units that are part of the project would not be charged property tax.
- b. Public comment. Jim McMaster heard about the project. Learned project had changed from before. Jim came to VC not knowing what would be happening. Came back and said they understood in 1999 previous VC approved two nineteen story buildings and a one story building. In 1998 there was an RFP on 10 stations. Coconut Grove had four responses to the RFP. The response was a 14 story office, 10 story residential, and a one story bldg, approx. 240K square feet. One other respondent appealed this to the County Commission, and a decision was made this was the best proposal. Then before lease signing the buildings got bigger, 19/19/1. Now the proposal is 32/32/1. Whole question of process. Mr. McMaster asked for a resolution at the last meeting that was not the appropriate resolution because he didn't have all the facts. At last Wednesday's meeting, neighbors came and they would like something different.
- c. Janice Tarbert, Silver Bluff. Asked us to rescind resolution and go back to original project from 1999. Doesn't believe anyone was notified about this project. Spoke for Grace Solares, Roads President, they can see another project in the Vizcaya station.
- d. Daniel Legaro, SW 30th Avenue. People are being kept out of the loop. He lived there in 1999 and was never asked about this project. People are not in the position to move and have no idea how far this developer has gone on this. Only notice they got was a flyer a couple of weeks ago. He is against the project and is concerned about impacts to the community beyond the project. His house is about 500 feet away.

- e. Ana DeFord, SW 28th Court. Also asked we change resolution to uphold original plan. She has been hit twice on 27th Avenue. Never notified of anything. Terrazas will be 19 stories.
- f. Lilitana Ortega Menendez, SW 30th Avenue. Bought house there two years ago. Didn't know there is a neighborhood association. Just found out about the association from County's notice.
- g. Judy Sandoval, Silver Bluff. She was informed by the Golden Pines Homeowners Association about a meeting at their President's home. Rudolfo Arias, PR person for Comm'r Jimenez, showed plans for 35/25. At that meeting they were told it was County land and the best they could do was lower the height. Met with Lourdes Slazik (sp.?), Lourdes said the City is in favor of the project. Said Terrazas and the project where Latin American was will be 22 stories.
- h. Marguerite Gonzalez Rodriguez, Golden Pines Ass'n. Concerned about traffic and school population. Our schools already overpopulated. Gentleman from SW 27th Terrace. Speaking for Ass'n. They would like to stick to the 10/14. Problem with their neighborhood is they are closed off from the rest of the neighborhood. Mr. Rua told him once the project is approved there will be a zoning change in the area for road expansions, etc.
- i. Linda ____, lives directly adjacent to the metrorail station. 25 years ago there were many meetings. She gave flyers personally. Mr. Rua came to the close neighbors, but the meetings were not public. Original proposal is on the website for the metrorail leasing. Neighbors want something there that will bring ridership to metrorail and not cars. She is in favor of the currently proposed plan.
- j. Resident of SW 31st Avenue. Says ask this lady if she was offered \$1M for her house to support this project. Against all projects there.
- k. Luis Herrera, President of Vizcaya Homeowners' Association. Suggests waiting until Miami 21 is done.
- l. Jim McMaster urging us to rescind resolution and approve a new one.

MOTION: Motion by Ron Nelson to ask the County to revert to the original RFP of 14/10 and 1 story supermarket. Felice seconded. Most asked that we defer decision. Felice asked that we provide her with questions to be posed to the County. Mr. Nelson asked that his motion be voted upon. Council voted in favor, by one vote.

RESOLUTION: The Cocconut Grove Village Counsel requests that Miami-Dade County revert to the original Request for Proposals, which was approved with public input, and not permit the larger development either as described in the lease or as recently requested by the developer.

- 4. Home Depot's zoning appeal is scheduled for hearing before the City Commission on September 27.
- 5. Our meeting on August 15 will be dedicated to the budget.

6. Discussion regarding the status of the Chair during the campaign for City Commissioner. A resident/activist has raised concern to Mr. Sarnoff about his acting as Chair of the Village Council while running and indicated that because he does not raise motions or vote people do not know what his positions are on the issues. Mr. Sarnoff asked the Council to discuss this matter. The conclusion was that none of the members saw any reason for Mr. Sarnoff to step down as Chair, nor did members see any reason why Mr. Sarnoff should not vote and/or raise motions and discuss issues.

RESOLUTION: Motion by David Collins, Second Lottie Person. The Chair shall be allowed to express his opinion and vote routinely. Passed unanimously.

Dated: *August 18, 2006*



Michelle Niemeyer, Secretary