

**Cocoanut Grove Village Council**

Gary Hecht - Chair  
Martin Zilber - Vice Chair  
David Collins  
Felice Dubin  
Ron Nelson  
Michelle Niemeyer  
Lottie Person

*Mailing Address*

2910 Emathla Street  
Coconut Grove, FL 33133  
Telephone  
305-607-8360  
Facsimile  
305-860-6057

**Cocoanut Grove Village Council  
January 02, 2007  
Meeting Minutes**

On January 02, 2007, a quorum of duly elected Directors of Firm met to discuss and decide issues relevant to the business of the corporation. Council Members Person, Nelson, Dubin, Hecht, Niemeyer, Zilber and Collins were present and voted. The following discussions took place, including the enactment of resolutions as described herein:

1. December 16 Minutes approved.
2. Treasurer's Report approved.
3. Officer Carpenter, Resource Officer from Miami Police Department, gave review for December. 17 stolen vehicles in November, in December only 4. 25 thefts reported in December, down 4 from November. Robbery totals 12 in December, includes armed or strong-arm. Cocowalk false alarms resulted in need to respond there 29 times. Decoy vehicle set to be moved tomorrow to the Center/East Grove. David Collins commented that in December the BIC hired an off-duty police officer to walk the beat in Coconut Grove. Only cost a few thousand dollars to get the protection they felt they needed. Felice Dubin asked who paid; it was the BIC.
4. Village Council vacancies. 15 people applied. This week, the committee, Gary, Felice and Sue McConnell, will review, interview, and present briefs to the Council. At the final stages the finalists will come before the community at the televised meeting in February to tell us why they want to be council members.
5. Marjory Stoneman Douglas Estate: Village Council acted promptly, got people's attention thanks to Ron Nelson and others who moved quickly on the issue. The City and the State are agreeable to keeping the house in the Grove. Jim McMaster came to speak on the issue. He indicated the VC should also reach out to the County, as it is his understanding they were to help fund the moving of the house. Ms. Juanita Greene, VP of the Friends of the Everglades, came to ask for our support to not move Marjory's house. Not all the neighbors are unhappy. Some had good reason for being unhappy initially, because the grounds were not

6. kept up and yard people were dumping on the property. Also, the land trust had plans for a large building on the adjacent lot, but that is not happening now. If we form a citizens group like the Barnacle has, we could get the State to keep the house. Small house, would have to be carefully maintained. Bringing children into the everglades is a better way to carry out Marjory's wishes. This is a very unique house. The neighborhood is part of that. The State is eager to get rid of the house because they don't want to spend money on it. Jim McMaster is educator for Friends of the Everglades; this house would not make a good destination for field trips. Jim asked that the issue be put on the February televised meeting agenda. Jim will bring more info to the mid-month meeting.
7. Coconut Grove Playhouse. Martin Zilber addressed the update. Commissioner Sarnoff announced that the Playhouse has agreed to withdraw its appeal of the historic designation. The Playhouse is vital to the success of Coconut Grove, and that's how his office sees it. Shelly Spivak, Chair of the Playhouse Board, read a statement about the historic designation. Thanked Commissioner Sarnoff for making the Playhouse one of his priorities. With help of M-D Government they have assembled team to address long and short term strategies. Key issue to gain support is the historic designation. When the time is right they are ready to move forward to explore plans that maintain the character of the building and compliment the character of the Grove. Martin gave update regarding the work of the Playhouse Committee and the Village Council's efforts to address the issues related to the Playhouse over the last year. Goal for more community involvement as the reorganization moves forward. David Collins indicated he is delighted with the progress with Commissioner Sarnoff. Asked if the people on staff who were not paid will be paid? Ms. Spivak said yes. Not sure about ticket holders. Projected timeline for playhouse being back in business is uncertain. Mr. Collins noted with concern that the City of Miami Film and Entertainment office had not been invited to the meetings; Ms. Spivak indicated there isn't any reason that couldn't happen. Felice Dubin asked when they expect a report from the consultants. Ms. Spivak said the consultants have been working with them 60 days. She does not know when they will have a report. Mr. Spring indicated the team includes pro bono lawyers, accountants, and a communications firm. They are working in an action oriented process to address issues. One of the first actions was to withdraw the appeal. They hope to have similar action oriented announcements over the next several months. This is a complicated situation with financial, legal, and moral ramifications. He will be happy to come before us as often as we'd like to update us. Felice asked if the a/c is on and if there is pest control. Ms. Spivak said they've had someone go in who has said it is under control. They have also made arrangements with off-street parking to patrol around the building and to keep the grounds cleaned up. David Collins asked who the NET officer should call to offer her team to cover up the graffiti. Ms. Spivak gave permission right now. Jim McMaster indicated concern about the GI zoning. It may be possible to create a historic overlay district on top of the site. Has that been considered? There was discussion, but there are so many steps before thinking about the property and improvements they haven't gotten to that yet.

8. Gentrification of the Village West. Lottie Person addressed the issue. Attorneys on the Council looked at the plan for Grand Avenue and had serious questions about the proposal. The plan was contrary to NCD. Mr. Hecht complimented Ms. Person, Mr. Will Johnson and Yvonne McDonald for the accomplishment of a change in mindset about the Village West. Ms. Person pointed out the Grand Avenue streetscape, the banners, beautification of the Grand Avenue Post Office. Painted inside and outside. They are supposed to pave the parking lot and install a new fence. HOATA newsletters and regular meeting for regular discussion of Village West concerns. Every year they have a holiday celebration, meetings 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of every month. Black History Month, Women's Month (March). Virrick Park Library is now under construction. Crime prevention. Lots of accomplishment in the Village West. Thank you to Village Council for support.
9. Related Group / Mercy Hospital project. First time they came before anyone else. Michelle Niemeyer gave update about the Mercy project. Issues related to zoning. Ideas to put an R3 ribbon around the property. Also idea to do a covenant to require Related Group to build this project only if it gets R4 zoning. Felice Dubin pointed out that she disagrees with the project and she thinks there should be an assisted living facility or other medical facility. Nina West mentioned they are trying to get a small street cut through Glencoe. Also, when Mercy went to the zoning board they mentioned they don't have a Class 1 emergency room. The reason they were given the first expansion they were supposed to build one. As far as GI zoning there is a big hole in the ordinance. Basically, government/institutional means a government or institutional building. Office building would only be allowed as an adjunct to the hospital. Hospital paid the first time for its expansion to close Bay Heights and Natoma Manors to close their streets. They are happy to agree to anything the Related Group has to say now that their security is funded for another 10 or 20 years. Related Group is not honest about street improvements; they have earmarked their impact fee for improvements that were already funded by the County. Nina would like us to ask Comm'r Sarnoff to re-write the zoning ordinance. Nina asked for us to discuss the Glencoe issue and revisit the project at that time. Nina asked that Michelle look into the plan for the baywalk.
10. 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue Metrorail Project. Felice Dubin. The project will be voted on January 24. She has met with Pete Hernandez; once County votes it will go to the City Commission. A letter from the City to the County supported the 35 stories. The City's recommendation is probably going to be 250 feet in height. This means if there is affordable housing they could build higher to incorporate affordable housing. Ms. Dubin urges the public to write to Commissioner Sarnoff, the Mayor, the City Manager, and the other Commissioners to ask that it not be more than 150 feet. Nina West commented that if they are allowed to build 250 feet that will set the context for US-1. Also opportunity if the Science Museum is moved for more intermodal at that location by the Vizcaya station. City looking at adding jobs in the downtown core and Dadeland, but not looking at protecting neighborhoods in between. County Transportation plans are plans, without funding. We need infrastructure. David Collins commented that

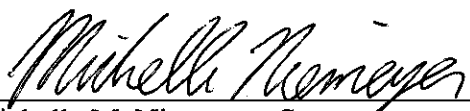
Commissioner Sarnoff's campaign addressed the issue that you can't just pile on people without infrastructure.

11. Home Depot. Gary Hecht read a statement by one of the plaintiffs in the lawsuit against the City of Miami. Alleges the City improperly issues a permit to retrofit the K-Mart space. Large scale retail establishment needs a special permit per zoning requirements. Response to the suit due mid-January. Code violations on the site for illegal signage, illegal fencing, illegal trailer. In terms of Key West design, there should be a hearing soon on the appeal of the Zoning Board's denial of a special permit.
12. 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue Beautification Project. Village Council asked that there be a charette. County has agreed to come in March. Michelle Niemeyer updated on the charette. Mr. Collins mentioned there was a large crowd. Residents and businesses on 27<sup>th</sup>, people who live on adjacent streets, especially Day. Mr. Collins was concerned about Ms. Morales's comment that the traffic should go through the neighborhoods. This is a good project that we should take advantage of; Mr. Collins left with a queasy feeling that what they come back with in March will be etched in concrete. We should use this website to discuss the issue.
13. Coconut Grove Business District. David Collins. CG Business District is in extreme crisis. Possibility for hope this year. Groups that have been uncooperative are cooperating, such as Chamber and Grove Merchants Group; Sasaki study with hotels and people who live on boats. David has whole document you should go to the website and read. People used to say they had the panacea and that never worked. David is the Executive Director of the CG BIC. Residents have a role in the future of the downtown commercial core. David's job is to dream the downtown commercial core and to encourage others to participate in visioning to make it a reality. Whether it succeeds or flounders will directly affect our property values. If the core flounders, it will reach a point where the tipping place cannot be stood back up. We've gotten used to places that close. Business models that work elsewhere do not work in Coconut Grove. The City of Miami may continue to be helpful but they can't carry Village burden for us. Two years ago Commissioner Winton formed the BIC as a transition to Business Improvement District. Comm'r Haskins supported it, as does Comm'r Sarnoff. Residents have not been brought in on this process but are about to be. They will be asked what will make the business district more appealing. There will be a survey about what they want to see in the core. Choices will be made with the residents. Flowers planted in the Grove, additional security, signage, a bookstore, musicians on sidewalks, easels on sidewalks, regular surveys of the residents. Marketing year round. Paid clean up of the sidewalks. There will be a six or seven month process where businesses and residents will have a conversation about the BID. This freight will be paid by the merchants through the landlords. We're bringing the top guy in the country down to work with us. Dan Biederman, who did Times Square, formed Bryant Park. Ms. Dubin mentioned she goes to the BIC meetings and we as a community need to support our merchants. Mr. Zilber asked how we officially get involved. Should we have a working committee, or have someone report regularly? When Dan Biederman comes David will try to involve the Village Council in the first meetings with

him. Bob Ferreira stated a BID is for the community to give huge amounts of input so we can define our place. About the community finding itself and expressing itself as a sense of place. There's something special here because the people here have something special going on. Need to move forward to the BID to get out of the inertia we are in.

14. Waterfront Master Plan. Please go to the public input meetings. Michael Butler spoke. Michael mentioned that Dinner Key Marina did a survey; 25% of the people who responded mentioned parking is a concern.
15. HEP Board approved South Bayshore Beautification Project. First Phase should be completed before the Super Bowl.
16. Martin mentioned we have established tree committee, gotten funding from County and City. Marc, Lili, many others have done a great job. Tree Watch has both gotten money to plant trees and has done a great job as a watchdog for the canopy. Mr. Hecht mentioned that builders and developers are approaching tree watch before looking for construction permits.
17. David Collins congratulated the King Mango Strut. 10,000 people attended. It was rude and uncalled for and marvelous.
18. Chamber of Commerce sponsoring Great Taste of the Grove. January 14. Not far behind will be the Art Festival.
19. Gary announced we will meet next 6:30 on January 16 at the NET office in the Glass House.

Dated: 3/21/07

  
Michelle M. Niemeyer, Secretary