



**Cocoanut Grove Village Council**

Gary Hecht - Chair  
Martin Zilber - Vice Chair  
David Collins  
Liliana Dones  
Felice Dubin  
Michelle Niemeyer  
Lotte Person  
Alyn Pruett  
Susan Weintraub

*Mailing Address*

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

**Cocoanut Grove Village Council  
December 4, 2007  
Meeting Minutes**

On December 4, 2007, a quorum of duly elected Directors of the Council met to discuss and decide issues relevant to the business of the corporation. The following discussions took place, including the enactment of resolutions as described herein:

**Attendance:** Gary Hecht, Alyn Pruett, David Collins, Lili Dones, Susie Weintraub and Michelle Niemeyer were present.

Gary thanked the Council and the Community.

1) Announcement of Chairman Elect Michelle Niemeyer.

Martin, Vice Chair.

Felice, Treasurer.

2) By-Laws Amendments

Alyn questioned whether the three newest members would be up for election.

David moved all amendments which were discussed at last meeting. Susie seconded. Passed.

Michelle moved committee chair / council chair issue. David second. Passed.

3) Committee Reports:

- a. Children's Committee, Susie Weintraub. One idea was to post needs of community organizations on our website. Need for kids to experience fun things. Museum of Science interested in being involved and developing long term programming. Junior Crime

- b. Watch, Junior Tree Watch, Book Club for children in the Grove.
- c. Zoning Committee, Alyn Pruett. Focus on Miami 21 and NCD-3, particularly in R-1 zoning. No resolution yet. There was a first reading of Miami 21 that went well into the night. Most people who spoke had many concerns. The commission asked five architects to independently review Miami 21. Results not yet public. MNU has just issued a paper with summary of their items of concern about Miami 21 and the Comprehensive Plan. Question whether Miami 21 will be adopted at all, or what form it will take. NCD-3: question about McMansions being constructed in Grove. Did analysis of homes built. About 12. Discovered all but one were permitted before NCD-3 was adopted in 2005. Will continue to follow up and see if modifications of NCD-3 will be suggested. Michael Butler, resident, had a question on the zoning. First, has the City responded to the request to expand the NCD-3 as written to other density zoning. Alyn said they have not moved forward with the R-2 component. Second, is there any limit to how long a permit for construction is valid? There are continuances allowed. Suggested there be a limitation on that.
- d. TreeWatch Committee, Liliana Dones. The TreeWatch Committee was formed at the suggestion of Bob Fereirra. After Katrina and Wilma and lots of development causing loss of trees. Now more than 100 reports the committee has responded to. They follow up with the special master. City has gotten a lot tougher on enforcement and the committee has excellent communication with the City. Calling 311 is fast but do so, or call the NET office. TreeWatch has successfully appealed several tree incidents. One before Commission next week. Lili will open up the opportunity for more involvement of volunteers. [CoconutGroveTreeWatch@aol.com](mailto:CoconutGroveTreeWatch@aol.com). Michael Butler asked about how Tree Watch works. They have met with the so-called "offenders" to reach an agreement. Either the people backed off or found common ground to find ways to keep the tree. TreeWatch does not receive any money. Fines come through code enforcement and are put into a tree fund. TreeWatch learned ongoing fines have not been going into the tree fund. Michael is aware of a circumstance where there would be a \$5K fine and the money wouldn't go to the tree fund. Because of incidents in the Grove we had the impression money was going into the tree fund, and have learned it is not. With regard to the Post Office, at the last televised Village Council meeting Lili suggested we ask for mitigation in the form of money to plant trees. USPS has responded regarding tree mitigation. They now claim they are not able to get the trees. Also sent letter to Ileana Ros Lehtinen. She has not responded, nor has her staff.
- e. Playhouse committee, Martin Zilber. There will be a public planning process beginning in January. They are looking for an educational partner for the theater. State of FL was repaid for the improperly used grant, and the State will now accept applications for grants.

- f. Waterfront Working Committee, Michelle Niemeyer. Waterfront plan may be up for approval in January. Will be need for continued involvement to make sure the improvements are made. Miami got a \$300K grant to dredge Dinner Key from FIND. If the City Government takes money from FIND the money from the marina should go to the marina.
- g. Village West Committee, Gary Hecht. Grand Avenue will be purchased by another entity. When that happens, a lot of things will change on that street including new retail. Finally there is some unification in the Village West to get something done. Three groups have come together. Kiosk program planned, retail with the farmer's market, up-lighting to enhance Grand Avenue. Pierre Sands, President of HOATA, very involved.

David Collins thanked Gary Hecht for a great year as Chair. Also acknowledged Bob Ferreira for shaking the tree and getting people involved in the village Council. David announced the BIC is providing professional musicians on the street corners in the Grove during the holiday season. This Saturday forward if you spend \$50 you can get 3 hours free parking in a couple of garages, December 17 on MPA is giving a one-hour grace period. Pay a quarter for an hour and a quarter.

Lili Dones mentioned Chamber Holiday Party is at Cielo 5:30 – 7:30. Toy drive for children infant through teen. If you purchase the item in the Grove it is your "get in for free card."

Lottie arrived; congratulations to Michelle; thank you to Gary for all his accomplishments.

Bob Ferreira, resident of Loquat Avenue. At one time Village Council almost disappeared. The Council should be congratulated. Huge amount of time to do the things we do. One of the reasons the By-Laws have this problem brought up by Michelle was that all the committees would have overlapping chairmanship to preserve institutional memory. Originally there were overlapping co-chairs on four committees. Should give consideration to institutional memory. Also, we have another problem with reference to trees that should be addressed. Eight districts have been identified by City for historical preservation. The Civic Club raised the money to pay for consultants in case something is done about the districts. Bob brought up the question of what happens when streets are widened and the canopy disappears. County strategy is to widen the main corridor and divert traffic into the lesser arteries. Look at how much canopy is in the swale. If there is no historical preservation district there will be nothing to say about what happens. Consider using historical preservation districts as a new way to protect the canopy. City could widen street to 37 ½ feet from the center of the street. Also, Bob mentioned Bicentennial Park, discussion of needing a Central Park. We should take small properties to make parks. When this council started the idea was for a grassroots forum, a bottom up process. We are not here to send messages from the Commission, it is to provide a forum for our Commissioner to know what is going on. We need to get in front of him what the grassroots wants because otherwise he won't have time to learn about it. The BIC. The downtown grove is the most neglected part. The BIC is vital to the survival of the Grove. Bob is a great advocate of small events. What will bring the Grove back is every weekend you come upon something unexpected

happening in the downtown grove. The downtown Grove cannot fail. The BIC will be the answer. Biederman is one of the best consultants in this area. Whole Grove needs to be behind it. Residents need to shop in the grove. There is a disconnect.

Adjourned.

Dated: 1/18/08

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Michelle M. Niemeyer, Secretary