



Coconut 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

**Coconut Grove Village Council
February 06, 2007
Meeting Minutes**

On February 06, 2007, a quorum of duly elected Directors of Firm met to discuss and decide issues relevant to the business of the corporation. Council Members Zilber, Collins, Niemeyer, Hecht, Dubin, Nelson, and Person were present and voted. The following discussions took place, including the enactment of resolutions as described herein:

1. Roll Call.
2. Minutes. The last two meetings' minutes were circulated and will be voted upon at next meeting.
3. Treasurer's Report. Same status as last meeting. Pro bono attorney Matt Ogurick will be putting together the paperwork for the 501(c)(3).
4. Change of Police Command. Chief Timony, Deputy Chief Fernandez, Commander Guzman, Officer Braga, (help me here) were here. Commander Whitehead was thanked for his service to the Grove and he commented on his time in the Grove and welcomed the new commander.

Welcome to Commander Martin, our new commander. He was with the Secret Service prior to the Miami Police Department. Prefers to show us by action, bring us good service in the Grove; strong believer in community policing. Felice Dubin asked if he is giving out his phone number as Commander Whitehead did. Martin Zilber commended Commander Whitehead. Lottie Person thanked Commander Whitehead and welcomed Commander Martin. She is in the process of getting a meeting together with the senior citizens. David Collins said thank you to Commander Whitehead and Welcome to Commander Martin. David said we continue to have concerns about the density of patrol and bicycle officers in the Grove. We wish there were four at most hours and not two. He hopes there is a way to return us to at least on weekends consideration at the top level in the police department to looking at the special events detail we used to have. Commander Martin assured David we will look into everything. Convening liason between police and business owners. February 8 meeting at the Glass House at 9:30 a.m. Gary pointed out that Officer Braga and Officer Carpenter, our NROs, are not just beat officers they are neighbors.

Deputy Chief Fernandez commented on the positive image Commander Whitehead left here. Commander Martin was specifically chosen by Chief Timony. He met with Gary Hecht about resources about a week ago. They never go below minimum staffing. 400 SW 2nd Avenue or on-line you can apply to be an officer. 18, HS diploma, minimum requirement.

Robert Loupo and Yvonne McDonald, Co-Chairs of the All-Grove Crimewatch, presented a certificate of recognition to Commander Whitehead to commemorate his service in the Grove.

5. Robert Loupo gave a presentation on crime statistics from the Crime Watch. Over the last five weeks there have been purse snatches that also involved violence near the business area of the Grove. It sounds like there is a pattern here. Happy there will be a business/police meeting coming up to discuss these issues. Also, at their last meeting, they devised a plan to get more community participation. Divided map of the Grove into 15 districts and are looking to involve neighborhood association leaders, COPs, etc. at a meeting March 14 to be held either at City Hall or the Glass House. Info on www.grovecrimewatch.org. NRO Braga cell 786-486-1488; Carpenter 786-556-7646. There will be COP training Tuesday Feb. 13 followed by next AGCW meeting. 6:30 tentatively scheduled for Virrick Park. David Collins commented about Crimewatch that he thinks it is the most important organization in the Grove. It crosses every cultural line. The only thing respected is finding out who is doing the crimes and protecting people. David is in favor of us providing resources to help Crimewatch. Martin Zilber asked about Robert's feelings about there being a more official relationship between the Crimewatch and the Village Council. Robert answered they discussed it among their core group. As much as they appreciate the generous offer of becoming a formalized committee, to be viable as their own independent group it would be best for them to remain independent. Yvonne McDonald thanked David for his comments. Mission is safety for residents and businesses in this community. Evidence our work is taking place because we are living in the safest part of the City of Miami. On Crime Watch staying independent, Village Council serves the community and all its organizations. As a council one of the fundamental roles is for organizations to get their message out. She thinks it would be more of an advantage to encourage organizations to take the ball and run.

6. Gary presented Commissioner Carlos Jimenez who came with the giant cardboard check. Felice thanked the Commissioner for the incredible job that was done on South Bayshore Drive. Commissioner Jimenez offered his help on anything we need.

7. Marjory Stoneman Douglas house relocation. Ron Nelson invited the interested parties to let us know what is happening with the house. The home is owned by the State. There is a land trust that is to take care of the home and its property. We invited the land trust. The discussion was to move the home to Fairchild, so we invited them. The Friends of the Everglades are here to speak on behalf of Marjory. Kathleen Kaufman of the City of Miami is here to let us know where it stands with the City. The Division of State Lands will not be here tonight. There has been a change and the interim acting

director is not prepared to meet with us tonight. Jane Caprielli and Bruce Brockhouse of the Land Trust of Dade County and "Hands on Miami." For 8 years they have been trying to succeed in having the house become a museum. They have not had much success with the neighbors. They came to the conclusion there would be a more appropriate place. Marjory's life was about saving our environment. Fairchild Tropical Garden is a great place. About 30K children went there last year, total 400K people. Marjory was the first secretary of Fairchild Tropical Garden. Prior to the change in governorship they had worked with the State. It was their intention to move the house but it's up in the air at this point. After working with the neighbors and Fairchild they found that Marjory's legacy ... she received the Presidential Medal of Freedom, nice to have a local hero, difficult in current location. David Collins asked for explanation about the land trust. They have a lease with the State of Florida to maintain the house. Gary Hecht mentioned he received a call from a resident on Stewart who is forming a committee to keep the house on their street. This person said there was a fundraiser some time ago. They contributed money with the understanding the trust would maintain the house. They said the Land Trust used those funds to purchase the contiguous property, the Cole property. They say their problem is in the contiguous land and if it will become museum state. They are concerned that property has been rezoned. They want the house maintained. Ms. Caprielli answered the fundraiser was at Marjory's 105th birthday party. That was to be an educational center, and the house to be restored. At that time Mrs. Cole's residence was standing. The properties are zoned residential but there is a historical preservation overlay on both properties. Opens door to a museum being built. Felice Dubin asked if the house is in good condition. It has been improved since Marjory lived there. Foundation improved. Roof replaced twice, electrical updated, alarm system added. Hands on Miami has been keeping the grounds up.

Bruce Greer, President of the Board of Trustees of Fairchild Tropical Garden. They do not have a position. Marjory was an original founder of Fairchild. Most important thing for us to decide is why are we going to spend money and what are we going to spend it for? What he has heard so far is people marching down the street saying they knew Marjory and she wouldn't want this. He thinks we need to take a step back and decide what part of Marjory's legacy we want to put forward. The right ideas should win. Fairchild offers help in landscaping to bring the home back to what it was. They have thousands of pictures in their archives. Her house used to be one of the largest and now looks like a gardner's cottage or garage. Message: 1) environmental preservation message, and 2) great things can be done by people who live in small houses.

Friends of the Everglades. Juanita Greene. Past President and Conservation Chair. They have copies of the invitations to the fundraisers which said they would go to Marjory's house and the proposed education center. Their position is the house does not need to be moved. What happened to this house is a matter of concern to people all over the state and the nation. The Everglades Coalition passed a resolution against moving the house.

Kathleen Kaufman, Historical Preservation Officer for the City of Miami. The City has no position currently. Kathleen respectfully disagrees with the assessment that the house is architecturally insignificant. It is a designated historic site in the City of Miami, and no

one can move it without the HEP Board's approval. They have been trying to correspond with the Division of State Lands. They requested a representative come to the HEP board today but they were not ready to do so. Distributed copy of letter. Ron raised concern that they come to the public before there is a plan. Kathleen indicated the invitation was to come to the preservation board to use the HEP Board as the public facilitation of the process. Martin asked Kathleen if tonight is the right time for us to take action on this. From the City's point of view it is premature before hearing the different opinions. That doesn't mean the Village Council should not act separately. She will let us know as soon as she hears anything.

Theodora Long, Executive Director of Marjory Stoneman Douglas Nature Center on Key Biscayne, which was founded by Marjory at 95 years old. By moving Marjory's house she's not sure this is the best way to tell children this is the way to protect and preserve our environment.

Glenn Terry. He was astounded to learn there was a plan to move the house. The idea came from a disagreement that occurred 8 years ago when the land trust made a plan to put in an educational center without consulting the neighbors. A house loses its importance, its historic value, when it moves. It is possible to let it live in the neighborhood. We need to let the air clear a bit. Glenn has talked with every neighbor on that street.

Lili Dones. Occasionally you come upon a house that says someone was born there or lived there. Those houses weren't moved and they didn't have to become museums. She appreciates the gentleman at Fairchild wanting it to be an educational effort. Why can't we build a little replica of the house at Fairchild? Children don't need to see the house.

Jim McMaster. His job is to go into schools. He was in the Everglades with kids last Saturday. M-D County preservation board met and made a decision that the house is not historic. We were not notified in the Grove. If there had not been an election the house would be moved as we speak. We have a new governor, the brakes have been put on this. Jim says we need to put on the record today a resolution. Michelle Niemeyer asked if there is someone who has stepped up to take responsibility. The Friends of the Everglades are working on putting together a committee and hope the neighbors will be involved. She has been talking to the State, which is making definite plans to make sure the house is kept up and preserved.

Martin Zilber commented there are things in the resolution that need to be addressed. He would be happy to move for some sort of language supporting keeping the house here. He does not think the resolution is the correct resolution. Martin is also concerned about who will take responsibility for taking care of the house. Mrs. Green said the State is talking about putting a park ranger in the house. Martin wants to put out a motion for 90 days against moving the house out of the Grove and to come back to us about a plan to keep it in the Grove in a healthy condition. Felice Dubin mentioned meeting with Sally Jude. Maybe for 8 years nobody stepped forth but maybe now it's time to step forward and work it out.

Jim McMaster indicated the “until further notice or 90 day” language needs to be open ended because a set timeframe may not work.

David Collins indicated we should pass a motion tonight that makes it clear we have an opinion. He would rather have a motion for reconsideration. He would say the will of the people is not for moving the house.

Martin, motion: for resolution strongly against the moving of the house out of Coconut Grove, but within 30 days to one year we would like a plan to see the house will be preserved and taken care of. Lottie Person seconded. Mr. Greer suggested Fairchild does not want to be involved in this. They will not agree to negotiate with the State or the Trust until the City takes a position. For 8 years they have been negotiating and no one has stepped up with the dollars. Talk is cheap but maintaining the house is not. Give it a chance to cool off. There’s no one who wants to move this house if it can be preserved. Gary thanked Mr. Greer for the assurance. Gary is definitely opposed to moving the house but he is bothered by the way we make resolutions. Gary considers Mr. Greer’s assurance to stop this thing in its tracks. Asked Gary if he would withdraw his motion. Martin appreciates Fairchild’s position and commends their desire to help. Motion unanimously passed.

7. Presentations of the finalists for the two vacated seats:

Tom Cobitz: CG resident 21 years. Originally from Chicago. Has lived here his entire adult life. Criminal defense attorney. Happy to tell position on the issues. Ran for Village Council. Has been involved ever since then. Believes in what we do. The neighborhood needs something like this. Believes the Playhouse should reopen as soon as possible. Business is vital; need the BID. Waterfront is integral to CG. Wants to see the Sasaki plan and would like to see beaches in CG. Crime is important. Believes 27th Avenue metrorail project is out of scope. Thinks there should be preservation of landmarks in Village West.

Liliana Dones: Resident of Yacht Harbor. Family from Cuba. Grew up in Miami. First heard jazz here; first exhibited art here; first saw a play that was not a school production; saw first John Waters film. Won a prize for a poem called “Banyon Voice” in protest of tree loss. Moved to NY and now lives in the building that inspired the protest poem. After finding dog and taking him out regularly was appalled by conditions in the park, got involved in Friends of Peacock Park. Joined One Grove Alliance, Quality of Life Coalition and Waterfront Working Committee. Have made sure to have a good relationship with the City for the good of the community. After Katrina raised 11 trees in our parks. Co-Chair of the Treewatch committee. Invited by Arriola to use some of the money from tree fines to replant trees in the Grove. Wants to see the community thrive. VP of Chamber. South Bayshore tree planting in conjunction with the City and the County. Also involved with the BIC. Professionally in marketing and advertising.

Patrick Goggins: Lawyer by profession, but a person as well. Plays 12 musical instruments and has written 600 songs. Community of artists, sailors. Still thinks there is a nut in Coconut Grove. The character of the Grove is so important to the people who live here. We live here because we love what we have. Knowing growth is inevitable it should be consistent with the unique character of the Grove. He is active in opposition to the Mercy project. Vizcaya recently voted to investigate the impact the project would have on it. County Commission will decide on that question. This project is indicative of the struggle for the soul of the Grove. There is a way to come to consensus to preserve and advance the interest of development and of the spirit of the Grove.

Nathan Kurland: BA in Communications and Masters in Rhetoric and Public Address. Actor, private investigator, also owned clothing and design firm in Philly. Also a realtor. Ran in 1966 for public office. Then an activist and a baby boomer. Relevance, clarity and a sense of humor are qualities he brings. Active in ongoing fight against Home Depot invasion. Fight is not over. Serves on 27th Avenue Metrorail Committee. Participated in protest against Mercy project. Vice Chair of VCOG. On Bayfront Park Management Trust. Art Stroll Committee. Volunteered for Sarnoff's campaign and election. Regardless of outcome will continue to be involved. Clarity. Expressing thoughts and ideas clearly and succinctly. Issues require in depth discussion. We have all been guilty of hearing our own voices. Importance of sense of humor in both public and private discourse. Challenges in the future. Business district. Sailing. Waterfront. For those of you who say it ain't what it used to be, so what, nothing is. It's still a great place to live.

Alyn Pruett: Lives at 2901 South Bayshore Drive with wife, Janice. First came to Grove in 1975 where the Marriott Residence Inn is now. Worked in a green building that was across from Monty's. Moved away and then back in 1983. Bought house on Irvington Avenue. Many friends and neighbors from Irvington are here. Son and daughter grew up there and son still lives there. Active in the sailing club. Three categories of issues: land use and zoning – waterfront, Mercy, Home Depot. We need to end up with a group that will continue the dialogue between the City and the people. Mercy, doesn't know all the particulars and can't imagine those three towers impact on Vizcaya. Community may need GI facilities. Home Depot has design and land use issues. C-1 zone. Disappointed we do not have good input from Miami 21 for these issues. Design issues. Looking at it to maximize transit oriented development. 27th Avenue street improvements. Concerned about peanut shape of traffic circle. Question about whether what they have would work. Operation management and maintenance issues. Trash, crime, noise. Thinks Council searching for what it can do for the community. Participation in CGWWC has raised awareness. Key to insuring positive change is to be ahead of the curve. Being on the defensive is not the best position to be in. Goal to help Council to be more proactive.

Jay Windsor: Remembers when he was in the Village Council before they would sit on the dais with no one there and talk to each other. Came to Grove 11 years ago with intention to stay for three years. Was GM of Streets of Mayfair. Came from Dallas. Mother was an artist, father businessman. Majored in business, accounting, and music. Took a break on Grove involvement. Was on Chamber Board, CG Parking Advisory

Trust. One thing he learned is you really need to be part of the community. Need to look for ways to work together. Consensus building. Important aspect he can bring to the Council. Business, residents, and visitors all need to be catered to. Need to look for responsible development. Loves the waterfront. Whatever they do there is key to making this community thrive and prosper. Noticed Mercy project will create a sidewalk along the water. Why not curve the buildings the other way and make a plaza to make more of a public space? There's no place else he would ever want to live. He likes it here, believes in this community. Looks forward to the opportunity. We have a jewel in the Grove that just needs some polishing in certain areas.

Gary mentioned we would have lengthy discussion at the next meeting.

8. 27th Avenue Metrorail. Gary said it was one of those meetings where he felt like people on appointed boards should be given IQ tests. Felice has codified the information that came out of that meeting. She just got today the new standards. They are a little confusing. She gave them to David Smiley. We should all be really upset and vigilant. There is nothing in the code that once this becomes a site plan the County does not have to do anything. We need to make sure the Code is changed so we have a say in the decision. We should all contact the County Mayor and Commissioners. The standards that were created and approved do not specify there needs to be residential on the property. The board struck "maximum" from the standards because Lourdes Slayzk requested that. The board went against their own director to vote for the version with "maximum" stricken. The Miami City Commission has final say, according to Gary.

9. Trina Collins. Last spring the dog walkers were kicked out of Kirk Munroe Park. Conflict between someone who lived on Florida Avenue and the director of the tennis program. They would like to go back in the park with their dogs. Petition signed by 175 residents. How do we go about this? David Collins suggested speaking to Commissioner Sarnoff. Before dog walking there was a lot of drug activity at the park. Now little activity. Felice Dubin suggested we invite Ernest Burkeen on the issue.

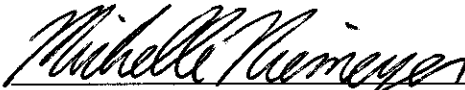
10. March 11 12:00 is Gifford Lane Art Stroll. 305-445-9698.

11. Lottie Person announced Village West HOATA Black History Month, Feb 26, 7:00 p.m. at Frankie Rolle Community Center, the "Pullman Porter Extravaganza." Jazz and Blues music. Fashion Show.

12. February 13 Chamber Lunch regarding South Bayshore Beautification.

Adjourn.

Dated: 3/21/07


Michelle M. Niemeyer, Secretary