



**GABLES  
GOOD GOVERNMENT  
COMMITTEE**



**NEWSLETTER** **APRIL 2016**

**GABLES  
GOOD GOVERNMENT  
COMMITTEE**  
*Founded February 2009*

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**Tracking The Votes of Our City Commission**



**Gay Bondurant, GGG Newsletter Editor / [Janebond@Comcast.net](mailto:Janebond@Comcast.net)**

The recent “town hall” meetings organized and conducted by Commissioners Jeannett Slesnick and Vince Lago have clearly shown that a significant number of Coral Gables residents are concerned about what they consider to be “over development” and the ensuing potential negative impact on the quality of life in the City Beautiful. Cited is the fundamental issue of site specific building and zoning changes in apparent disregard of the existing master plan when new projects are presented to the Commission for its review and approval.

The City has had a “Master Plan” which has evolved over our 90 year history but which has stayed true to

the over all vision of George Merrick. This plan has undergone periodic analysis by staff and expert consultants followed by public debate to insure its relevance to changing times while at the same time protecting the principles upon which this community was founded. The philosophy of having such a plan is to provide consistent direction for the Commission in its deliberations relative to building and zoning issues. The goal being to achieve and maintain the unique look and feel that identifies Coral Gables as a thoughtfully planned community which protects the needs and functionality of both residential and commercial areas.

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**Gables Good Government Committee was organized to support issues and causes that preserve and improve the quality of life in Coral Gables and promote the effective and efficient management of its government.**

# Tracking the Vote (From Page 1)

We still have a Master Plan (within the Zoning Code) which addresses, in detail, the often very technical and complicated points of density, height, foot-to-area ratio (FAR), set-backs, parking, traffic impact and a myriad of other critically important issues relating to the design and construction of commercial and residential structures. Incumbent upon the decision makers is that the choices made insure that commercial projects do not intrude on residential neighborhoods and do not degrade the supporting infrastructure, i.e., open space, roads, sewers and water supplies.

Your Commission spends many long hours working to comprehend and sort through the building and zoning code. It is our expectation, as the citizens who elect those

who sit in positions of discernment, that these deliberations will result in a balance between the best interests of the citizens, the future well being of the community and those who seek to bring commerce and vitality to the City.

An important key to understanding the actions of our city's governing board and its individual members is following the voting records of each elected official on key issues. Since we have recently focused on commercial development, we have examined the Commission's voting records to determine which officials show a sensitivity for the problems and challenges of growth as opposed to a desire to build more and bigger projects. In future elections, a Commissioner's voting record becomes one of the factors to be considered by the citizens in choosing future leaders.

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SHORT STATEMENT OF SELECTED ISSUES & RESULT OF TOTAL VOTES	PROJECT/LOCATION					
January 1, 2015 through March 15, 2016	Selected Issues	KEON	LAGO	QUESADA	SLESNICK	CASON
Lot split. <a href="#">Approved</a>	Gables Estates	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Change of boundaries between zones of rise & intensity. <a href="#">Approved</a>	Mediterranean Village	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Change of text re: comprehensive plan-Future land use. <a href="#">Approved</a>	Mediterranean Village	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Change of text to CG Zoning Code. <a href="#">Approved</a>	Mediterranean Village	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Approve PAD Mediterranean Village. <a href="#">Approved</a> Alley Vacation near Mediterranean Village. <a href="#">Approved</a>	Mediterranean Village	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Approving Development Agreement for Mediterranean Village. <a href="#">Approved</a>	Mediterranean Village	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Increases in height in Mixed use overlay districts. <a href="#">Approved</a>	Mediterranean Village	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Request for alley way vacation by private party. <a href="#">Approved</a>	Mediterranean Village	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mixed use site plan review. <a href="#">Approved</a>	Mediterranean Village	Absent	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Change of text: Zoning Code from Comm. Low rise to Comm. High rise. <a href="#">Approved</a>	Paseo de la Riviera	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Request to remove certain site plan restrictions. <a href="#">Approved</a>	Paseo de la Riviera	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Change of text in Zoning Code: remove height restrictions Crafts Section. <a href="#">Approved</a>	311-315 Santander Ave.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Reduction in shared parking standards. <a href="#">Approved</a> Money for Master Plan consultants.	311-315 Santander Ave.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Re: US1 from <u>about</u> Ponce to Red Rd. <a href="#">Approved</a>	Motivated by Paseo	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

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## Tracking the Vote (From Page 2)

The information regarding voting records of our Commissioners has been gleaned from the City's public records including Commission meeting minutes. The items considered for this report were selected because they related, for the most part, to the major building developments which have recently been considered. It should be noted that an estimated 75% of current projects are "as-of-right" projects and do not go in front of the Commission for a vote. An example is the Aloft project which was approved for zoning change from Multi-family to Commercial thus it is allowed under the Code. The time period covered in the voting summary is from January 1, 2015 through March 15, 2016.

## To Contact Your Commissioners:

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## ABA Honors GGG Founder, Don Slesnick

The American Bar Association's Solo, Small Firm and General Practice Division has awarded former Mayor of Coral Gables and GGG founder, Don Slesnick, its 2016 Lifetime Achievement Award.



In private practice since 1976, Slesnick is managing partner of Slesnick and Casey in Coral Gables where he has represented public sector employee organizations. He also held labor relations management positions with Miami-Dade County Public Schools and Miami-Dade County Police Departments.

In addition to being former president of the College of Labor and Employment Lawyers, Slesnick is a member of the ABA's House of Delegates and Vice-Chairman of the Labor and Employment Law section. He is president-elect of Miami's Orange Bowl Committee.

Slesnick, a retired U.S. Army lieutenant colonel, is a Vietnam veteran and former military adviser to NATO forces in Germany. He was founding chairman of Team Miami, which led efforts to relocate the U.S. Southern Command headquarters to Miami and save a U.S. military presence at Homestead Air Force Base after its destruction by Hurricane Andrew.

## Casa Antilla Brings Plans For More Apartments

Early February 2016, the Development Review Committee saw a request for consideration by the project, Casa Antilla. It is to be located at 10-20-28-36 Antilla Ave. The plans call for a five story, multi-family building consisting of 44 apartments. Proposed are 12 units per floor from the second to fourth floor and eight units and amenities at the fifth floor.

Parking is available on 2 levels, one semi-basement and one half level over the street.

Eight different configurations are offered, ranging from 1,200 - 2,123 sq. ft. Choices also include 2 bedrooms with 2½ baths and 3 bedrooms with 3½ baths.



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No public funds were expended for this document. It may contain errors and/or omissions.



## Adult Activity Center Moves Ahead

Located directly opposite The Palace at 2 Andalusia Avenue, the new Coral Gables Adult Activity Center is taking shape. The Center is scheduled to open in June. The pictures were taken April 7, 2016. According to our City Manager, Cathy Swanson-Rivenbark, there is a plan for the Senior Center to have some access to The Palace swimming pool.



## Giralda Place Begins Construction

On April 1, 2016, no fooling, ground was broken in a virtual ceremony at the working address of 2222 Ponce de Leon Blvd. This striking edifice was designed by well respected Coral Gables architect, John Fullerton, seen in the photo at left. In the rendering below, we see the site is located between Ponce de Leon Boulevard on the east side and Salzedo Street on the west. The building faces south, sitting on the north side of Giralda Ave.



Mayor Cason, praised the development as the “kind we like to see in Coral Gables,” pointing out the virtues of living in the heart of the City and being able to access most of the amenities the Gables has to offer without having to use ones car.

### THE GIRALDA COMPLEX CORAL GABLES , FLORIDA



#### HOW TO JOIN GGG

Send a letter to: Gables Good Government  
1825 Ponce de Leon Blvd., Box #448  
Coral Gables, FL 33134 or  
Email: [GablesGoodGov@Gmail.Com](mailto:GablesGoodGov@Gmail.Com)

#### ANNUAL DUES LEVELS

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# "White Way Lights" Marked

Designed by Denman Fink, the uncle of Coral Gables Founder, George Merrick, the 75 plus, unique, historic street lights are commanding our attention again. In 1924 the Fink and Merrick Families were consumed with the construction and decoration of our City Beautiful. These street lights, whose bases reveal the faces of the Four Seasons as well as images recalling the Spanish regions of Castile and Leon, i.e., a castle and a lion, which adorn the Seal of the City to this day, are tangible pieces of our heritage. ( Images Right)



**Unveiling the marker: on the right: Mayor Cason. Far left: Lisa Bennett, Karelia Martinez-Carbonnell, President of HPACG and Jane Maranos, Vice-President of HPACG**

Spearheading the project to have the street lights restored and replaced in their original locations, the **Historic Preservation Association of Coral Gables** and the **City's Department of Historical Resources and Cultural Arts** have relentlessly persevered. The marker, located at the intersection of Riviera Drive and University Drive, and unveiled on April 14, 2016, tells the story of the lights and honors those who have made this happen.

But the marker is not the end. At the present time the lights have come back into the possession of the City having been purchased from FP&L. The City will undertake to restore and relocate the lights, marking what was known as the "White Way"... and history will light up the night in Coral Gables.



**Some of the dedicated Coral Gables preservationists who helped make it happen: Left: Sallye Jude, Dolly McIntyre, Connie Crowther, Tim Crowther and Arva M. Parks**

**TELL YOUR FRIENDS ABOUT  
GGG**

# Parks Planned for Residential Areas

Six residential properties, primarily in the area north of US 1, have been selected as "park parcels" to be developed in the near future. Four are vacant lots, two have structures on the sites. The occupied parcels are now in the process of forfeiture.



The targeted properties range in size from 5,000 to 24,000 square feet. Adjacent property owners will be asked to weigh in on these proposed "passive parks." Conceptually, these will be neighborhood, walk-up parks. They will not necessarily contain any dedicated sports areas or equipment.

The funds are coming from the extension of retired debts which were ear-marked for street lights, side walks, trees and fountains.



**Left: Barely visible under many layers of paint one can see the Castle on the left and the Lion on the right of the small sculpted face.**



**At right is a restored example of the beauty and detail for which the founders and artists are still known today. Note the lion and the relief banner which says "Coral Gables, Miami Riviera."**

# Oolite, Coquina or Stone?

**W**hile you are out and about, take a run by the Library at University Drive between Riviera Drive and Segovia Blvd. Under the cool shade of the great Banyans you will note three parking areas that are marked with some small signs. The areas are part of an "experiment" to determine which kind of surface material the City might choose to use on swale areas where it is too shady for grass to grow. You can help make the selection. There are three choices: 1) crushed Oolite 2) crushed Coquina and 3) crushed stone. You can email your choice to the City. [AHernandez@CoralGables.com](mailto:AHernandez@CoralGables.com)