



GABLES GOOD GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE



NEWSLETTER

HAPPY THANKSGIVING

NOVEMBER 2015

**GABLES
GOOD GOVERNMENT
COMMITTEE**

Founded February 2009

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GGG Hosts Florida's Lt. Governor, Carlos Lopez-Cantera



Florida's 19th Lieutenant Governor, Carlos Lopez-Cantera was the guest of honor at GGG's Fall membership event. Held at the handsome Bacardi Building in Coral Gables, more than 50 GGG members and guests mingled in the elegantly appointed social room and bar generously made available by Bacardi USA. Many thanks go to Aura Reinhardt, Vice-President, Corporate Relations & Services.

The Lieutenant Governor spoke about the accomplishments of the current State administration under the leadership of Governor Rick Scott. Improved employment numbers and a surplus in the treasury were highlighted.

Mr. Lopez-Cantera, officially a resident of Coral Gables, was appointed as Lieutenant Governor on January 14, 2014. He began serving in this position on February 3, 2014. He is the first Hispanic to hold this position in Florida.

With his degree in Business Administration from the University of Miami, Lopez-Cantera served as a member of the Florida House of Representatives from 2004 through 2012. Over the course of his 8-year term in the Legislature he was a member of the Governor's Property Tax Reform Committee, the My Safe Florida Home Advisory Council and the Miami-Dade County Mayor's Mortgage Fraud Task Force. In the Florida House of Representatives, he chaired the Committee on Business Regulation and the Government Affairs Committee. He was Majority Whip from 2009 through 2010 and Majority Leader from 2010 through 2012.

In August, 2012, the citizens of Miami-Dade County elected him as the Property Appraiser of Miami-Dade County. He had campaigned on a platform to make interaction with the office of the property appraiser easier, increasing community outreach and being more responsive to the need of the residents of Miami.

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.

Making Communities Better Places to Live

I read an article not long ago that really stuck with me. Though penned by a Canadian writer, it pointed to something important that Americans don't talk about very much — the difference between “citizen” and “taxpayer.” “As citizens, we have rights and responsibilities to each other,” Janelle Vandergrift wrote in the Huffington Post. “Paying our taxes is just one part of citizenship.”

That got me thinking about the meaning of “community,” our commitment to our neighbors—and the need to make sure our cities and towns can support the growing number of older residents in the coming years.

A livable community is a place where people of all ages can enjoy secure, healthy lives and stay engaged in civic and social life. Livable communities offer housing choices, transportation, shopping and other services that meet everyone's needs.

These features make it easier for people to stay independent and avoid isolation. A livable community can reflect the rich tapestry of life, in which all generations contribute and interact, and the strength and wisdom of elders are not only respected but embraced.

But communities do not become more livable by accident. Engaged residents can play a critical role in shaping where they live and promoting good decisions on land use zoning, development and public services. In April, AARP introduced an exciting tool to help people get involved in improving their communities. The AARP Livability index allows you to see how well your community is meeting the need of residents and gives scores in varied areas such as health, housing and the environment. You can find the index at livability.index.aarp.org.

The response has been tremendous. At last count, the tool has been featured in at least 270 stories in the media, and roughly 140,000 people have visited the website.

Livability is an issue of growing importance, whether you look at it as an engaged local resident, a taxpayer, or both (as I do, and I suspect most of you do, too).

Supporting efforts to make your community more livable is an exercise in good citizenship and a smart investment of our tax dollars.

This article was written by Jeannine English,
National President of AARP.

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Pumpkins Take Over City Hall



1st Place: Code Enforcement

From: Cathy Swanson-Rivenbark,
Coral Gables City Manager

The creativity and talents of our departments are amazing as evidenced by the 17 submissions in the first annual Great (Employee) Pumpkin contest. From elegantly simple to technologically complex, the submissions showcased the many ways we serve our residents. The City Commission had the difficult challenge of selecting the winners although each entry was worthy of recognition.

First Place went to Code Enforcement with a great display of the many violations they handle as they help keep the “City Beautiful.” There was a 3-way tie for second consisting of Information Technology, Police Technical Services and Building. Congratulations to all who participated.



New City Attorney?

A Letter of Comment Regarding CG Board of Architects and Casa Segovia Project

To The Citizens of Coral Gables:

I attended and spoke at the Architectural Board Meeting and was quite frankly surprised at their decision. Only two members seemed to understand their role via the Zoning Code. The Code clearly requires that the members follow Article 5 that defines what should be considered. This includes harmony with the particular style of the neighborhood plus height, scale, massing, etc. The building, designed by a talented architect, would be good in newer areas of the Gables south of Dixie Highway but is totally out of context with Segovia. There seemed to be confusion between the Preservation Ordinance and the Zoning Ordinance. Both require compatibility. Segovia was planned to be a transition between the commercial and residential neighborhoods. The duplexes resemble single family homes and are mostly occupied and maintained. I hope people will drive down the street to see how amazingly similar the buildings are. The citizens group presented a photographic display of the entire street. Unfortunately, the Board paid little attention to the display. If this building is allowed, you can kiss the special ambience of the street goodbye.

Paseo Goes "Back to the Drawing Board"

The following information is, in part, reprinted from Miami Today, week of Thursday, October 29, 2015.

After a meeting that lasted more than seven hours, the Coral Gables City Commission ordered the developer of the *Paseo de la Riviera* mixed-use complex and neighbors who oppose it back to the negotiating table. Significant issues have to be worked out before the issue comes back before them in November, commissioners said.

"Compromise is possible and we welcome the city commission's directive to the developer to meet with the neighbors to work out a compromise," said Tucker Gibbs, attorney for the Riviera Neighborhood Association, after the meeting.

If there were substantial cuts to the height or density, "We would not be able to offer the high-level and unique amenities that we offer today," said Brent Reynolds, NP International president and managing partner.

The site warrants more than four stories," said Commissioner Patricia Keon. "I hope some of these old buildings are redeveloped but I have concerns about density and size. There isn't anything else that goes to that 142-foot height; event in adjacent South Miami, she said.

I was also surprised that counsel for the petitioner was allowed to badger the citizens. I had never seen that kind of behavior before either. Citizens have always helped keep Coral Gables special. Of course, the Mayor and Commission have also played a key role because they do listen to the people.

In my long study of Coral Gables I came to the conclusion that the Architectural Board and Zoning Code plus citizen involvement have saved what George Merrick called "The Coral Gables Ideal" That is what sets it apart from other areas. George Merrick created the architectural board and a zoning code four years before the city was incorporated in 1925. When he did so, people said no one would buy if they had to deal with these restrictions. Of course, Merrick proved he was correct. Coral Gables remains unique because of the original plan and ideals but especially because of the Architectural Board and Zoning Code. Citizens need to speak out to members of the Architectural Board on their key role in enforcing the Zoning Code.

Arva Moore Parks
Historian, Author, Preservationist

"I will not approve it if you don't bring down the density and height; it needs to be the 120 feet the Planning Department has been talking about."

"Everybody wants to come to Coral Gables, but the residents are sick and tired of having to argue their points," said Commissioner Jeannett Slesnick. "We have a zoning code and we should follow it. I feel like we are rushing." She voted against the project moving forward.

We want to be very careful when we say there's rampant overdevelopment," Mr. Lago said, We don't want to instill fear in people that we're giving away the city. While 42 projects are now in the planning stages, he added, for various reasons not all will be built.

"I want to keep the conversation moving, Mr. Quesada said. "But if the scale is not cut down by the second reading, I will not approve it."



Surprise Settlement with Casa Segovia Project

For the seventh time the *Casa Segovia/Catalonia Project* was brought before the City leaders for a determination of the fate of the project.

At the regularly scheduled meeting of the City Commission on Tuesday, October 27, 2015 an appeal from the Board of Architects was to be heard. The appellant in the case, Ms. Maria Longo, had filed an appeal from the Board of Architect's most recent opinion approving the project to be located at the corner of Segovia Boulevard and Catalonia Avenue.

Very shortly before the Commission meeting was brought to order, the attorneys for the City and Ms. Longo made an announcement that a settlement had been reached.

The agreement, subject to the Board of Architect's approval, states that the Owner agrees to incorporate into final drawings of the project eight specific items. In summary, 3 of the items regard proposed landscape materials and the other 5 are relatively minor adjustments to the architectural design. It was agreed that the changes herein agreed to shall be interpreted by the Owner's architect and further subject to Board of Architects approval. Additionally, it is expressly understood and acknowledged by Ms. Longo that the ultimate decision-maker on the appropriateness of the items listed in the agreement is the Board of Architects and not Longo.

Both parties agreed to cease involvement in any legal actions relative to this project now and in the future.

**A Codina Project, 2020 Salzedo Street,
"comes out of the ground" at a rapid pace.
Both views from the north east corner.**



All computer generated images courtesy of the City of Coral Gables Department of Planning and Zoning and/or Board of Architects. Images and other information related to development projects may be accessed on-line at WWW.CoralGables.com/Department of Planning and Zoning.

The GGG Newsletter is not a publication of the City of Coral Gables. It is a paid political advertisement paid for by the Gables Good Government Committee (GGG) a non-profit organization registered with the State of Florida and the City of Coral Gables.

The following two pages contain information from a memo of October 28, 2015, by Ramon Trias, Director of Building and Zoning to Cathy Swanson-Rivenbark, Coral Gables City Manager

By-right development projects that have received a building permit from the City:

	Project Name (address)	Land Use	Zoning	Building Height	Project Square Footage / Units
1.	1515 Sunset Drive	Commercial Low-Rise	Commercial	77'	157,158 sf No residential
2.	625 Santander	Multi-Family Low	MFSA	40'5"	27,953 sf 10 units
3.	1405 Galiano	Multi-Family Medium	MF2	3 stories	8,800 sf 4 units
4.	635 Almeria	Multi-Family Low	MFSA	36'	15,000 sf 5 units
5.	210 Valencia	Commercial Mid-Rise	Commercial	3 stories	8,180 sf No residential
6.	1091 Galiano	Multi-Family Medium	MF2	83'4"	45,980 sf 27 units
7.	Aloft Hotel 2524 LeJeune	Commercial Low-Rise	Commercial	77'	194,442 sf No residential
8.	135 Grand	Commercial Low-Rise	Commercial Limited	29'2"	2,698 sf No residential
9.	Biltmore Parc Condominiums	Multi-Family Medium	MFSA	55'4"	75,000 sf 32 units
10.	Temple Judea 5500 Granada	Religious / Institutional	Special Use	23'	9,000 sf No residential

Thirteen other by-right projects have been reviewed by the Development Review Committee but have not received permits.

Development projects since 2010 that have requested a Change of Land Use that has resulted in increased height, floor area ratio (FAR), or density.

	Project Name (address)	Requested Change of Land Use	Requested Change of Zoning	Requested Maximum Height Increase	Requested FAR or Density Increase
1.	Paseo de la Riviera (1350 S Dixie Hwy) <i>*approved on 1st Reading 10.22.2015</i>	Commercial, Low-Rise to Commercial, High-Rise	Strikethrough of Site Specifics	72' w/ Med bonus to 190'-6" w/ Med bonus <i>*Project Height: 142'6"</i>	2.0 FAR to 3.5 FAR
2.	Mediterranean Village (2801-3001 Ponce de Leon Bd) <i>*Approved 6.10.2015</i>	Commercial, Low-Rise to Commercial, High-Rise	None	190'-6" to 218'-6" (Hotel Tower); and, 77' w/ Med bonus to 190'-6" w/ Med bonus <i>* Project Height: 34' – 190'6"</i>	3.5 FAR to 4.0 FAR; Additional 7,437 sq. ft. permitted as a result of alley vacation
3.	Shoma Park Tower (1500 Venera Ave) <i>*Approved 11.18.2014</i>	Multi-Family Residential, Medium Density to Commercial, Mid-Rise	MF2; Multi-Family 2 to C; Commercial	None <i>*Project Height: 97'</i>	50 units / acre to 125 units / acre

Development projects since 2010 that have requested change of zoning that did not result in increased height, FAR or density

	Project Name (address)	Requested Change of Land Use	Requested Change of Zoning	Requested Maximum Height Increase	Requested FAR or Density Increase
1.	Ofizzina (1200 Ponce de Leon Bd)	None	MF2; Multi-Family 2 to C; Commercial	None <i>*Project Height: 190'6"</i>	None
2.	Gables Pointe Plaza (280 S Dixie Hwy)	None	CL; Commercial Limited to C; Commercial	None <i>Project Height: 31'6"</i>	None

Development projects since 2010 that have requested an amendment to previously granted approvals or a Zoning Code Text Amendment:

	Project Name (address)	Requested Change of Land Use	Requested Change of Zoning	Requested Maximum Height Increase	Requested FAR Increase/Other
1.	The Collection Residences (4104 Aurora St)	None	None	100' to 120' (habitable) 125' to 190'-6" (architectural elements) <i>*Project Height: 116'4"</i> <i>*Architectural Elements: 175'9"</i>	Additional 56,175 sq. ft. permitted as a result of alley vacation
2.	Columbus Center Phase II (100 Alhambra Cir)	None	None	None <i>*Project Height: 190'</i>	Total PAD approved with 3.3 FAR
3.	2020 Salzedo (2020 Salzedo St)	None	None	Amended Ordinance No. 3608 to increase from 97' to 189' <i>*Project Height: 189'</i>	3.5 FAR to 4.23 FAR (as a result of receiving TDRs)
4.	Merrick Manor (4111 LeJeune Rd)	None	None	77' w/ Med bonus to 87' w/ Med bonus on property designated Commercial, Low-Rise <i>*Project Height: 87' – 100'</i>	3.5 FAR to 4.375 FAR

The following mixed-use projects filed since 2010 that did not request any land use or zoning changes and did not result in an increase in height or FAR:

- 1) Merrick Park 351 San Lorenzo St.,
- 2) 4311 & 4225 Ponce de Leon Blvd.,
- 3) Gables Ponce 4535 Ponce de Leon

GGG Members and Guests Enjoy Bacardi USA Hospitality with Lt. Governor Lopez-Cantera



GGG President Debbie Swain presents commemorative gift to Lt. Gov. Carlos Lopez-Cantera



Newly appointed Coral Gables Police Chief Ed Hudak and former Coral Gables Mayor Dorothy Thomson



Not the three tenors but three former Coral Gables Mayors: Raul Valdes-Fauli, Dorothy Thomson, Don Slesnick



Yes, he is a charmer...Nicholas Cabrera and friends: the *girls* left to right: Aura Reinhardt, with Bacardi USA; Shannon Perez, former GGG Board Member; City Commissioner Jeannett Slesnick and GGG Board Member Dorothy Stein.



The Grand Wizard of Organization & GGG Board Member, Susi Davis



Raquel Regalado, our District 6 School Board Member; Craig Leen, Coral Gables City Attorney and GGG President, Debbie Swain

HOW TO JOIN GGG

Send a letter to: Gables Good Government
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