



GABLES GOOD GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE



NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2016

Coral Gables Police Chief, Ed Hudak, Speaks at CG Forum

GABLES
GOOD GOVERNMENT
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Founded February 2009

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For us, the very good news which Chief Hudak announced is that he is not retiring any time soon.

At his talk to the Coral Gables Forum, the Chief talked of his 26 plus year career with the Coral Gables Police Department. On the auspicious date of September 11, 2015 he was promoted to the rank of Chief after acting as Interim Chief for some months.

As a young man, Hudak arrived in Coral Gables to attend the University of Miami and to play football. While in attendance he earned both Bachelor's and Master's Degrees. He is a member of Iron Arrow and has remained active at the University. He has received the U of M Sports Hall of Fame Committee's Distinguished Service Award. Additionally, he is a graduate of the FBI's National Law Enforcement Executive Academy.

Speaking extemporaneously and answering questions from the group, which filled the room to capacity, the Chief touched on several topics from murder to jaywalking. A bright point, according to police records is that crime in the City, overall, is trending downward. However, our citizens can continue to do much better about keeping both houses and cars locked. In vehicle burglaries some 70% are due to the car being left unlocked. Interestingly enough and with a focus on all of us, Hudak reported that the majority of pedestrian accidents are the fault of the pedestrian...and in Coral Gables, jaywalking is a "ticketable" offence. In our city the primary cause of death not due to natural causes is traffic fatalities.

Chief Hudak summed up his presentation with a note about his personal philosophy as Chief and as a public servant which he wants to impart to all of his officers. The job is that of *Service First*. When a citizen remembers his or her encounter with the police it should be looked on as positive one.

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.

New Public Safety Building Project On Track

On June 16, 2015 the Coral Gables City Commission authorized Staff to study options for renovation, replacement or relocation of the Public Safety Building now located at 2801 Salzedo Street. The City Manager was requested to pursue the best solution and return to the Commission with an implementation plan to be considered at a future date.

During the December 8, 2015 City Commission meeting the latest information and recommendations from Staff were presented. The current building was constructed in 1973 and now reveals the need for significant repairs. The Stantec Corporation identified situations including multiple leaks due to lack of waterproofing and major problems with the floor structures in the apparatus truck areas, including “slabs and joists (that) are likely inadequate for present needs...” They further found that the building’s “deterioration is progressive and structural systems may weaken over time.” Additionally, “...the basement...is below flood elevation levels, making it susceptible to flooding.” According to a professional real estate appraiser the present site is valued at approximately \$19,000,000.

During a recent interview with Coral Gables Police Chief, Ed Hudak, he expressed his excitement about this project for the City and for his officers. He is grateful to be in a position to leave a legacy of what will undoubtedly be a state of the art facility. In addition to this new structure, continued plans for a system of substations throughout the City are being implemented. The Chief noted that one of the substations will be located in the new Agave Project on Ponce de Leon Blvd.



City Parking Lot #6: the most probable location for new Public Safety Building.



“Fit Test” indicating areas of intended function as well as proposed building configuration on the site.



Second “Fit Test” option if site is modified due to changes in adjacent property acquisition.



Commissioner Jeannett Slesnick

Invites you to attend her

CITIZENS FORUM: *CRANES, CODES & COLLABORATION*

Thursday, Feb. 18, 2016

Biltmore Hotel, 1200 Anastasia Avenue, Country Club Ballroom

Coral Gables, FL 6-8 pm

Please RSVP: Commissionersvp@CoralGables.com

Ponce de Leon Homeowners Group Energized

On January 30, 2016, a perfect Chamber of Commerce “winter” day in Coral Gables, the Ponce de Leon Home owners Group (PdLHG) under the leadership of neighborhood resident, Gordon Sokoloff, was invigorated and focused on their mission. The mission, according to Sokoloff, is to organize the community and create awareness of possible moves by real estate developers who would seek to change the building and zoning codes in their neighborhood. This effort was the second time that Sokoloff spearheaded this endeavor. In the early 2000s, developers were targeting the Ponce corridor with an eye to affecting zoning changes.

PdLHG partnered with the Riviera Neighborhood Association (RNA) because as Sokoloff puts it, “our organizations are fighting the same war, just on different battlefields.” The PdLHG sprang into action after this issue was one of the bullet points in Commissioner Jeannett Slesnick’s town hall meeting in October 2015. The Ponce Group wants to be ready to try to prevent any zoning changes from ever occurring along Ponce

de Leon Boulevard from Bird Road to Camillo Avenue. Sokoloff points out that the apparent plan of developers is to “connect the dots,” that is to rezone the stretch of duplex and single family homes into commercial and/or townhome development.

In the festive atmosphere of the beautiful day, music and food, it was clear that the undercurrent was the serious issue of continued neighborhood integrity relative to life style and quality of life.



PdLHG Involved members
Barbara VanHusen &
David Hays



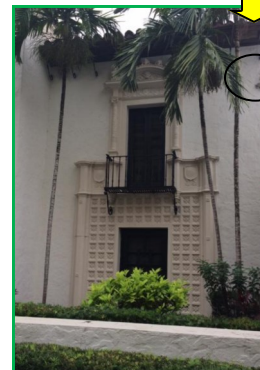
Marlin Ebbert from RNA
& CG Officer Kelly

City Buys Historic H. G. Fink Studio

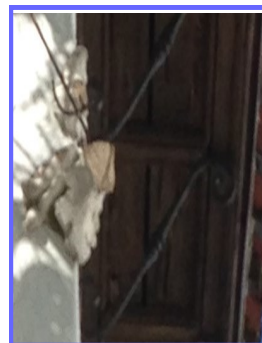
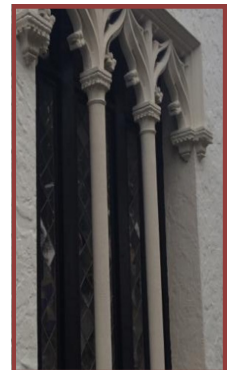
When the sale of the Fink Studio is finalized, the purchase of the property at 2506 Ponce will put this iconic building in safe hands. At a cost of 2.6 million dollars, the City of Coral Gables will undertake ownership of the building. This property has for years been managed by the Dabby Group of realtors who are located in the building. The last recorded sale was in 1977 at a cost of \$155,000.

Built in 1925 and used as the architectural office of H. George Fink, first cousin to Coral Gables founder, George Merrick, this structure is known for its very distinctive decorated façade with Gothic windows, wrought iron balcony railings, ornate door surrounds and the unique addition of a gargoyle. It is considered an exceptional example of the Mediterranean Revival style. Adding to the exterior ambiance is the inviting green area adjacent to the city sidewalk. The interior is virtually pristine, revealing original tile and a wrought iron balustrade on the stair case to the second floor.

According to Dona Spain, Historic Preservation Officer, the interior is to be decorated with original Granada Shops Mediterranean style furniture. This was the type which was seen in the lobby of this very unusual structure from its opening in the mid-1920s.



2506
Ponce
De
Leon
Blvd.



*Has the City's Only
Gargoyle Escaped...
Been Destroyed...
Been Kidnapped?*

What has happened to him?

Coming Soon to a Traffic Circle Near You



Renowned New York artist Alice Aycock was chosen by the City Commission to create the first major public artworks since Coral Gables founder George Merrick's day. The two sculptures depicting passion flowers, which celebrate Coral Gables' roots as a Garden City, will grace the Segovia Traffic Circles at Coral Way and Biltmore Way in 2016. Aycock is a nationally known public artist whose sculptures are on display at major museums and public spaces across the country, including a recent installation on Park Avenue. For Coral Gables, Aycock's artworks include a large sculpture with fountain features at the intersection of Biltmore Way and Segovia and a smaller piece at Coral Way and Segovia.

Left: Artist concept. Segovia and Biltmore Way

Aycock was chosen after a panel of arts experts reviewed 181 submissions from around the world. To learn more about the artist go to www.AAycock.com.

The compositions are asymmetrical and "fantastical." Visually, the shapes are taken in part from the passiflora (passion flower) species and the burst of lights that fireworks create. Scaled to a gigantic size, the work references satellites, antennas and mechanical robotic floral objects. The intention of the work is to catch the attention of the viewer from a distance as they travel by car and move through the roundabout and to operate as a signature piece announcing the visitor's arrival in the Coral Gables community.



Above: Artist concept. Segovia and Biltmore Way

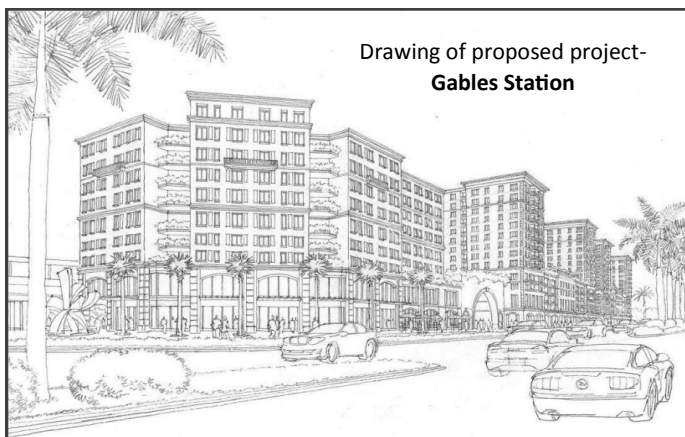
New Condo Towers Proposed Near Merrick Park

According to *The Real Deal*, which provides real estate news to South Florida, a mixed-use project proposes 168 hotel rooms, 554 condo units and 87,000 square feet of retail space. This even as the Miami condo market seems to be slowing down. **Gables Station** complex is planned to be located on the north side of the 200 block of South Dixie Highway.

The developer, NP International, is seeking a number of revisions to current land use and zoning regulations according to government records. Our research shows that the developer of this

project, NP International, is the same developer who is proposing the *Paseo de la Riviera* construction just a short distance to the south on Dixie Highway. *The Real Deal* reports that the Coral Gables area now has 17 new condo buildings with 1400 units announced in South Florida since 2011.

There is some confusion in the information provided in that the papers filed with Coral Gables Building and Zoning Department indicate the proposal of three towers not just two as the headline of *The Real Deal* states.



HOW TO JOIN GGG

Send a letter to: Gables Good Government
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Coral Gables, FL 33134
Email us at DSwain@MilianSwain.Com

ANNUAL DUES LEVELS

\$50 Individual / \$75 Household
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