

Planning and Zoning Board and City Commission Public Hearing Comments

06.01.2011 - Present

Proposed Somerset Grace Academy Charter School - Change in Land Use, Conditional Use and Site Plan Review Applications -
624 Anastasia Avenue (University Baptist Church), Coral Gables, Florida

	Date Received	Name and Address	No comment	No objection	Object	Comments (Verbatim)
859.	06.09.11	Burt Rosenberg				<p>Dear Mr. Riel,</p> <p>I thank you and the city of Coral Gables for letting all residents go on record with their comments in the issue of Somerset Grace.</p> <p>I would like to reiterate my comments of yesterday, at the Zoning and Planning Board meeting, and object, that the UBC church is not constructed to the requirements for a Miami-Dade public school.</p> <p>The M-DCPS General Considerations Design Criteria on page 7, January 2004 edition, states: H: Corridors shall be based on NFPA 101 units of exit width and be at least 6 feet wide except as follows: 1. Corridors serving classrooms shall be at least 8 feet wide. 2. Double loaded corridors serving 6 or more classrooms shall be at least 10 feet wide, except at PLCs. 3. Hallways in office or service areas shall be at least 44 inches wide.</p> <p>The District rules bring the Florida minimum standards up to standards found in other states, such as North Carolina, Virginia, and New Jersey.</p> <p>According to documents provided by Academica, the corridors in the upper hallways of UBC, serves 6 classrooms and is only 6 feet wide, thereby are not according to code.</p> <p>That charters are exempt from the certain state requirements for public schools, and are not obliged and cannot be made to be obliged to district codes, see http://www.fldoe.org/edfacil/charters.asp, is a matter of Florida public policy, 1002.33(19)a.</p> <p>However, in this open process, parental awareness should be focused on responsible charter school operators that they act mindfully of the fact that in the case of emergencies, their facilities will not function as efficiently as parents expect, due to narrower hallways and lower ceilings.</p> <p>Sincerely, -burt</p>
860.	06.15.11	Alicia Vidal			X	<p>From: GreenPaperMoon@aol.com [mailto:GreenPaperMoon@aol.com] Sent: Wednesday, June 15, 2011 1:07 PM</p>

¹ Comments are duplicate comments provided to various parties.

Proposed Somerset Grace Academy Charter School Public Hearing Comments

	Date Received	Name and Address	No comment	No objection	Object	Comments (Verbatim)
						<p>To: Cason, Jim; Kerdyk, William; Anderson, Maria; Cabrera, Ralph; Quesada, Frank; Salerno, Patrick; Riel, Eric Cc: GreenPaperMoon@aol.com Subject: FrontDoor's Top 10 Dreamy Neighborhoods : HGTV FrontDoor Real Estate</p> <p>FrontDoor's Top 10 Dreamy Neighborhoods : HGTV FrontDoor Real Estate See #5 on link below. http://www.frontdoor.com/Neighborhood/FrontDoors-Top-10-Dreamy-Neighborhoods/54554</p> <p>We have a great residential neighborhood with good schools now. Please: do not ruin it (and all our City) by granting UBC/ Somerset's request to change the land use from "religious/institutional" to "community services and facilities". Alicia Vidal</p>
861.	06.21.11	Anna Louise Fulks 717 Santander Avenue Coral Gables, FL 33134-6524 alfulks@earthlink.net			X	<p>From: ANNA-LOUISE FULKS [mailto:alfulks@earthlink.net] Sent: Tuesday, June 21, 2011 9:18 AM To: Commissioners; Olazabal, Carmen; Riel, Eric; Salerno, Patrick; Superintendent's office@dadeschools.net Cc: Mike Murphy Subject: Re: Fw: A Neighborhood School???</p> <p>Ladies and Gentlemen:</p> <p>I bring to your attention an email that was forwarded to me regarding a request from a parent for transportation of their child from Kendall Drive to Coral Gables (SomersetGables Academy) located at University Baptist Church, 624 Segovia Street, Coral Gables, FL 33134. Please note that Academica/Somerset Gables touts itself as a "neighborhood" school but in fact many of the supposed "neighbors" are coming from as far as Homestead, the Redlands, the Roads, Westchester, the NW section of Miami, Kendall (east and west), and so forth.</p> <p>At the last Public Hearing, which was held on June 8th, 2011, I gave some of the street addresses from a list of supposed "neighbors" from an article that was published in the Neighbor's section of The Miami Herald who were in support of the charter school. Of the (165) listed names in the article that I researched of Coral Gables property records and tax rolls. . . only (53) of those "neighbors" listed were residents of Coral Gables and only (7) were residents within close proximity to University Baptist Church.</p> <p>We are fortunate to have wonderful and available schools in the City of Coral Gables. Miami-Dade School Superintendent, Alberto Carvalho, recently established three new schools in our City providing our children with an excellent public school education.</p> <p>I would appreciate it very kindly if you would keep the above in mind when the changes that have been proposed by Academica/SomersetGables to accommodate a charter</p>

¹ Comments are duplicate comments provided to various parties.

Proposed Somerset Grace Academy Charter School Public Hearing Comments

	Date Received	Name and Address	No comment	No objection	Object	Comments (Verbatim)
						<p>school in our City is brought before you. Coral Gables has always been a City of Neighborhoods.</p> <p>Thank you for listening.</p> <p>Respectfully Anna Louise Fulks 717 Santander Avenue Coral Gables, FL 33134-6524 Telephone: 305 446-7420 email: alfulks@earthlink.net</p> <p>Subject: Neighborhood school</p> <p>I thought you would all find this interesting – it's a posting from a Mommy blog (Just Ask Boo) that appeared today.</p> <p>Private School Van Needed for My Child From Gina Ralph: Reply I need help finding a private school van service from Kendall Drive to Coral Gables (Somerset Academy Gables). Please Reply above if you can recommend a company. Thank you.</p>
862.	06.21.11	Louan Zagarino			X	<p>From: Louanzag@aol.com To: Jimccason@yahoo.com, wkerdyk@coralgables.com, fquesada@frvf-law.com, whatmeworry535@gmail.com, rcabrera@coralgables.com BCC: sandra@muradolaw.com, albert@mkt-focus.com, ccarta@gmail.com, alfulks@earthlink.net Sent: 6/21/2011 7:29:36 A.M. Eastern Daylight Time Subj: Change for "Neighbors" ???</p> <p>I found it very interesting that the following was sent to me and others in the blog Just ask Boo.</p> <p>Are we now trying to have a huge school, (which is privately run, but takes our public tax dollars away from the Public schools,) in a Neighborhood, and change the Zoning of Coral Gables for these many people who live outside of Coral Gables? They claim to be our "Neighbors" but actually are not. I find this absurd.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration. Louan Zagarino</p> <p>Private School Van Needed for My Child</p>

¹ Comments are duplicate comments provided to various parties.

Proposed Somerset Grace Academy Charter School Public Hearing Comments

	Date Received	Name and Address	No comment	No objection	Object	Comments (Verbatim)
						From Gina Ralph: Reply I need help finding a private school van service from Kendall Drive to Coral Gables (Somerset Academy Gables). Please Reply above if you can recommend a company. Thank you.
863.	06.21.11	Sandra Murado Law Offices of Sandra I. Murado, P.A. 901 Ponce de Leon Boulevard, Suite 504 Coral Gables, Florida 33134 www.muradolaw.com			X	<p>From: Sandra Murado [mailto:sandra@muradolaw.com] Sent: Tuesday, June 21, 2011 10:38 AM To: Commissioners; Olazabal, Carmen; Riel, Eric; Salerno, Patrick; Superinetndent'soffice@dadeschools.net; ANNA-LOUISE FULKS Cc: Mike Murphy Subject: Re: Fw: A Neighborhood School???</p> <p>Well done my friend! Sandra I. Murado, Attorney Law Offices of Sandra I. Murado, P.A. 901 Ponce de Leon Boulevard, Suite 504 Coral Gables, Florida 33134 Tel. (305) 448-4300 Fax (305) 448-0600 www.muradolaw.com</p> <p>--- On Tue, 6/21/11, ANNA-LOUISE FULKS <alfulks@earthlink.net> wrote:</p> <p>From: ANNA-LOUISE FULKS <alfulks@earthlink.net> Subject: Re: Fw: A Neighborhood School??? To: Commissioners@coralgables.com, colazabal@coralgables.com, eriel@coralgables.com, "Pat Salerno" <psalerno@coralgables.com>, Superinetndent'soffice@dadeschools.net Cc: "Mike Murphy" <mike@murphylawfirm.com> Date: Tuesday, June 21, 2011, 9:18 AM Ladies and Gentlemen:</p> <p>I bring to your attention an email that was forwarded to me regarding a request from a parent for transportation of their child from Kendall Drive to Coral Gables (SomersetGables Academy) located at University Baptist Church, 624 Segovia Street, Coral Gables, FL 33134. Please note that Academica/Somerset Gables touts itself as a "neighborhood" school but in fact many of the supposed "neighbors" are coming from as far as Homestead, the Redlands, the Roads, Westchester, the NW section of Miami, Kendall (east and west), and so forth.</p> <p>At the last Public Hearing, which was held on June 8th, 2011, I gave some of the street addresses from a list of supposed "neighbors" from an article that was published in the Neighbor's section of The Miami Herald who were in support of the charter school. Of the</p>

¹ Comments are duplicate comments provided to various parties.

Proposed Somerset Grace Academy Charter School Public Hearing Comments

	Date Received	Name and Address	No comment	No objection	Object	Comments (Verbatim)
						<p>(165) listed names in the article that I researched of Coral Gables property records and tax rolls. . . only (53) of those "neighbors" listed were residents of Coral Gables and only (7) were residents within close proximity to University Baptist Church.</p> <p>We are fortunate to have wonderful and available schools in the City of Coral Gables. Miami-Dade School Superintendent, Alberto Carvalho, recently established three new schools in our City providing our children with an excellent public school education.</p> <p>I would appreciate it very kindly if you would keep the above in mind when the changes that have been proposed by Academica/SomersetGables to accommodate a charter school in our City is brought before you. Coral Gables has always been a City of Neighborhoods.</p> <p>Thank you for listening.</p> <p>Respectfully Anna Louise Fulks 717 Santander Avenue Coral Gables, FL 33134-6524 Telephone: 305 446-7420 email: alfulks@earthlink.net</p> <p>Subject: Neighborhood school</p> <p>I thought you would all find this interesting – it's a posting from a Mommy blog (Just Ask Boo) that appeared today.</p> <p>Private School Van Needed for My Child From Gina Ralph: Reply I need help finding a private school van service from Kendall Drive to Coral Gables (Somerset Academy Gables). Please Reply above if you can recommend a company. Thank you.</p>
864.	06.28.11	Pepi Granat Cuadrado and Raul R. Cuadrado 3250 Riviera Drive Coral Gables, FL 33134 pepigranat@aol.com				<p>From: Pepi Granat <pepigranat@aol.com> To: eriel <eriel@coralgables.com> Cc: jimcason <jimcason@coralgables.com>; wkerdyk <wkerdyk@coralgables.com>; fquesada <fquesada@coralgables.com>; manderson <manderson@coralgables.com>; rcabrera <rcabrera@coralgables.com>; eriel <eriel@coralgables.com>; wcarlson <wcarlson@coralgables.com>; sbolyard <sbolyard@coralgables.com>; jmenendez <jmenendez@coralgables.com>; psalerno <psalerno@coralgables.com>; cleen <cleen@coralgables.com>; mjimenez <mjimenez@coralgables.com>; wfoeman <wfoeman@coralgables.com> Sent: Tue, Jun 28, 2011 10:52 pm</p>

¹ Comments are duplicate comments provided to various parties.

Proposed Somerset Grace Academy Charter School Public Hearing Comments

	Date Received	Name and Address	No comment	No objection	Object	Comments (Verbatim)
						<p>Subject: Your kind returned phone call -- thank you -- But will ANYONE really read this???</p> <p>Dear Mr. Riel:</p> <p>My Hungarian grandmother taught me ONE PHRASE in the beautiful Hungarian language, to equip me (as a young girl) for life. She said it would serve many purposes. It was: (phonetically): "keer-nee suh-butt, odd-nee nem moo-sah-ee". It means: YOU CAN ASK FOR IT, BUT I DON'T HAVE TO GIVE IT TO YOU. ;-)</p> <p>A change in the LAND USE is being asked for. You (in Planning & Zoning) & the Commission do NOT have to give it. Why not? Because "they" are INVADING our neighborhood --- and by proxy in future, potentially EVERY Coral Gables neighborhood. This nice neighborhood that we depended on our fair city maintaining with us and for us will be betrayed at the hand of our own government. Yes -- they (the school powers) have a perfect right to their own self-interest, & can apply & try to INVADE (800 students? & prospects for 15% more every year if they maintain their ratings?????) That is an INVASION & everyone KNOWS IT.</p> <p>They have invaded our lives, forcing us to FIGHT for something we should never have been afflicted w/ in the first place. Fight for peace? our homes? Why? They have a business, a treasure chest, money to burn. We are scrounging in our pockets in our non-existent spare time to fund a fight that is like a steam-roller out of nowhere.</p> <p>At a time when the Middle East is rife w/ conflict we are being reminded of the tragic city of Hama -- in Syria. Do you remember what happened in 1982? By their own government, the people of the city were betrayed -- they were mowed down, a massacre -- killed. Our spirit will be killed here in our neighborhood. This is a tragedy about to happen (but only if you let it happen). I am sorry to be melodramatic but it is so.</p> <p>And there is a MORAL issue here -- it's not just rules & regs & did their legal department, & ours, cross the t's & dot the i's. Actually, 2 moral issues. 1) How can the Baptist Church betray the very neighborhood that tolerated them & allowed them to thrive for so many years this way? (I was laughed down at our meeting: "don't go there" -- too Pollyanna for anyone -- no one thinks this way any more!!!!) and 2) How can our own Commission in good conscience foist this upon us, knowing the chaos it will surely bring, & the precedent it will surely set????</p> <p>You, Mr. Riel, have said that they (the Commission) must follow the conditions laid out -- fine. But in the end, it boils down to OPINION -- of each Commissioner. How can he or she reach any other conclusion? Ms Keon herself said in the part of the Zoning meeting i was able to attend: "The queuing never works the way it's supposed to." (or something like that -- don't want to misquote her, but that's what she said -- & we KNOW that will be so). There is NO reason to change the LAND USE designation. It should NOT be changed, at all. This is the wrong place for such a school.</p>

¹ Comments are duplicate comments provided to various parties.

Proposed Somerset Grace Academy Charter School Public Hearing Comments

	Date Received	Name and Address	No comment	No objection	Object	Comments (Verbatim)
						<p>I appreciate your interest & your return call. You have asked me to put something in writing. I've done so -- this, & the attachments. Attached pls find the comments I was not given time to present at one of the first commission meetings (picture: that's me in the red, w/ my husband, Raul, back row). But I was able to read part of the limerick (also attached) on TV-- channel 6, which played that night, since just by chance as my husband & I left the meeting, we ran into a reporter & cameraman on the sidewalk who wanted to know "what happened in there."</p> <p>Right now though, we are faced w/ CHANGING THE LAND USE designation. The MAIN ISSUE is that we residents came to live here based on the land use in effect at the time (even if it was slightly modified later).</p> <p>If this school is allowed to increase even by one more than the 110 students present now it will be a betrayal of your covenant with us-- clearly designated on the Land Use Map --- to allow us in peace to enjoy the fruits of the labors of our lives: our dear, enduring, quiet, peaceful homes here in lovely Coral Gables.</p> <p>Respectfully submitted for your careful consideration. I would be pleased to talk w/ anyone who can shed light on this desperate situation.</p> <p>Pepi Granat Cuadrado e-signed</p> <p>Pepi Granat Cuadrado and Raul R. Cuadrado 3250 Riviera Drive Coral Gables, FL 33134 305 444 6408; 305 206 1044</p> <p>Pepi Granat, MD 7800 Red Road, Suite 202 South Miami, FL 33143 305 661 7609; fax 305 667 8266</p>

¹ Comments are duplicate comments provided to various parties.

Proposed Somerset Grace Academy Charter School Public Hearing Comments

	Date Received	Name and Address	No comment	No objection	Object	Comments (Verbatim)
						<p>Rather than argue over a hot-button, polarized issue, then become emotional and then unreasonable, I have decided to reason calmly & coolly with all those who might want to open their minds to some interesting & really important questions.</p> <p>There are 7 salient questions:</p> <p>#1 - Why, in one of the most influential, admirable & productive public school environments (our fair city of Coral Gables), would we want to dilute the population of those excellent schools by adding an unknown entity, whose reputation rests (so far at least) on paid advertisement & marketing publicity (very believable - but that's talented publicist activity), not on solid, demonstrable achievement? thereby taking away resources from our own cherished public school system here? But not only resources, but the excellent students themselves, whose parents may be misled that the new, shiny school will be better than the old, well-proven ones, those wonderful Dade County public schools, of which I & all my children are products, which of course have no budget for fancy, corporate advertising?</p> <p>#2 - Why -- although they have a perfect right to try to do business & make money -- should 2 self-interested parties, the UBC to sell its church & the Somerset Academy to buy and establish a profitable school -- be permitted to overtake prior zoning designed for religious entities that also have a sideline educational mission? Zoning established w/ calm neighborhoods in mind? And both acting for purely commercial reasons only, at the expense of all the rest of us -- we, acting not only on commercial interest such as property value, but mainly on quality of life issues such as meaningful daily life routines, & calm, quiet, safe, personal neighborhoods?.</p> <p>#3 - Why -- should we allow a prior project, The Greening of Segovia, to be delayed or changed in any way to accommodate a school, whose presence is not assured? Let's put aside any prior disagreements over points of fact which have recently been clarified by our City Staff, to everyone's appreciation.</p> <p>#4 - Why -- would we want to jeopardize the activities of the Youth Center & the Library, whose universal access by others residing all over Coral Gables will definitely be affected by the crowded activity engendered by a school of 700 - 800 students.?</p> <p>#5 - Why -- would we want to undermine the intent of the whole charter school movement which was meant to give a true choice to neighborhoods with failing schools? Governor Jeb Bush, I am sure, never intended this, when he championed the idea, & would be appalled at its subversion. (I know Jeb from when he appeared on our doorstep on Riviera Drive at age 20 or so, in 1980, for Raul to help his father, George Bush in his campaign against Ronald Reagan in the primaries. I typed Jeb's speech which he gave in fluent Spanish to Los Viejos Utiles (Spanish elderly) on my old Smith Corona. Jeb marched to Tallahassee with us doctors in 1986 for the malpractice issue. Jeb would not favor such misuse of the charter school intent.)</p> <p>#6 - Why -- does anyone think that, once their foot is in the door, this or other companies would not go round to all failing churches in Coral Gables, establishing more & more schools? What a concept!!! Why not?</p> <p>#7 - Why -- would anyone think that this is only a NIMBY issue (not in my back yard)? No -- this is a battle for the soul of Coral Gables. For the very character of Coral Gables. And there will be no going back. This must be nipped in the bud, right here, right now, or all the dire consequences will come down upon us!!</p> <p>I ask you all -- those for & those against -- to consider these questions. Especially the parents who really believe this unknown school will be better for their kids than the excellent public schools in our city -- think again!!! It's not too late to come over to the right side of the dispute. Thank you very much.</p> <p>Pepi Granat Cuadrado 3250 Riviera Drive Coral Gables, FL 33143 -- Since June 8, 1968. July 19, 2010.</p>

¹ Comments are duplicate comments provided to various parties.

Proposed Somerset Grace Academy Charter School Public Hearing Comments

	Date Received	Name and Address	No comment	No objection	Object	Comments (Verbatim)
						<p>A GABLES FABLE</p> <p>Once a city they called Coral Gables Nearly turned into one of its fables Nearly grew a big school That would bend every rule Of good sense, but was saved by the neighbors.</p> <p>Who turned out to point out the folly Of traffic much worse than the trolley Near Youth Center and Library That seemed awfully contrary To neighbors who now were not jolly.</p> <p>So after a bit of a fuss Each side showing minus and plus The school went elsewhere Leaving neighborhoods there Realizing life ever was thus.</p>

¹ Comments are duplicate comments provided to various parties.

Proposed Somerset Grace Academy Charter School Public Hearing Comments

	Date Received	Name and Address	No comment	No objection	Object	Comments (Verbatim)
						
865.	06.28.11					<p>From: WICON [mailto:wicon@bellsouth.net] Sent: Tuesday, June 28, 2011 7:09 PM To: Cason, Jim; Riel, Eric; Quesada, Frank; Carlson, Walter; Salerno, Patrick; Leen, Craig; Bolyard, Scot Subject: Proposed changes to changes in the Comprehensive Land Use Plan at University Baptist Church</p> <p>We strongly oppose to any changes in the Comprehensive Land Use Plan at University Baptist Church. Traffic will be severely affected at the hours of delivery and pick-up of students as well as it will be detrimental to the quality of life to surrounding neighbors. Actual capacity in number of students is more than enough. There are sufficient public and private elementary, middle and high schools located in appropriate areas.</p> <p>Walfredo & Alicia Consuegra 829 Palermo Avenue.</p>

¹ Comments are duplicate comments provided to various parties.

Proposed Somerset Grace Academy Charter School Public Hearing Comments

	Date Received	Name and Address	No comment	No objection	Object	Comments (Verbatim)
866.	06.28.11	BNA Members				<p>Coral Gables 33134</p> <p>From: BNA Newsletter [mailto:bna-newsletter@biltmoreneighborhoodassociation.com] Sent: Tuesday, June 28, 2011 4:43 PM To: BNA-Info Subject: Summary of June 27 meeting; call to action.</p> <p>Dear BNA member,</p> <p>Last night more than 25 members attended the BNA General Assembly. Tucker Gibbs, the attorney for the Association, gave a summary of the issues to date and his recommendations for moving forward. The meeting culminated with a lively Q & A session which helped to provide clarification of the Association's legal stance.</p> <p>At the last Planning and Zoning Board meeting, Somerset Gables was given a continuance to respond to traffic concerns and scale back expansion plans before submitting an amended application. No date was set for the next meeting. The process could take anywhere from three to six months.</p> <p>The recent actions of lawmakers in Tallahassee, including those of our state representative who has family ties with Academica, has made the ability to chose your community's future much more difficult. It is unfortunate that "schools of choice" have resulted in moving choice away from communities, to a small number of for-profit charter school operators, instead of improving educational opportunities.</p> <p>The site at UBC is not the proper location for a school of this size. Our resolve will only help to strengthen education by keeping its focus on the children; our future.</p> <p>We are asking that ALL members become active participants in the BNA in the coming days and months. We need your time, talent and treasure. This is really our last opportunity to win this once and for all!</p> <p>It is vitally important that every resident in Coral Gables who is opposed to a change in the Comprehensive Land Use Plan at University Baptist Church voices his or her concerns to our city officials. Letters and emails should be addressed to the Mayor and Commissioners, the Planning and Zoning Board, the City Manager, the City Clerk and the City Attorney. In a future email we will summarize yesterday's meeting in a set of talking points that can be used to garner support throughout Coral Gables for our cause.</p> <p>The Commissioners might refuse to discuss this matter with you. However, your opinions do go on record and a large number of letters in opposition will show our strength and determination to protect our neighborhood at all costs!</p> <p>We ask for your generous financial support to continue the services of our superb legal</p>

¹ Comments are duplicate comments provided to various parties.

Proposed Somerset Grace Academy Charter School Public Hearing Comments

Date Received	Name and Address	No comment	No objection	Object	Comments (Verbatim)
					<p>counsel. It is a forgone conclusion that the school would have already begun operating last year with 675 students without Tucker's legal representation. Our legal options also increase with more financial stability.</p> <p>Thank you in advance for your support.</p> <p>Best, Carlos Carta President 305-794-9543</p> <p>Tina Scott Vice President 305-962-2094</p> <p>Andrea Moschetti Treasurer 305-321-8986</p>

¹ Comments are duplicate comments provided to various parties.

Proposed Somerset Grace Academy Charter School Public Hearing Comments

	Date Received	Name and Address	No comment	No objection	Object	Comments (Verbatim)
867.	07.14.11	Sonia M. Blair 2920 Segovia Street Coral Gables, FL 33134			X	 <p style="text-align: right;">July 13, 2011</p> <p>The Honorable James Cason and Mr Eric Riel Planning Mayor of the City of Coral Gables Director City of Coral Gables 405 Biltmore Way Coral Gables, FL 33134 jimcason@coralgables.com</p> <p>RE: UNIVERSITY BAPTIST CHURCH SOMERSET ACADEMY SCHOOL</p> <p>Dear Mayor Cason:</p> <p>I am writing you this letter as a concerned citizen who has been living in the City of Coral Gables since 1948. My parents have owned homes here in Coral Gables and have raised two children who attended Coral Gables High and University of Miami. I am now a registered real estate broker in the State of Florida and all of my business is concentrated in the beautiful City of Coral Gables wherein I reside and work.</p> <p>I live at 2920 Segovia St., Coral Gables, FL and my residence is exactly three blocks from the proposed charter school that the University Baptist Church wants to house some 735 children at their church. The purpose of this letter is to recite the many reasons that I am <u>absolutely opposed</u> to this school invading my neighborhood. Some of the other reasons myself and the other property owners are objecting to this invasion of our neighborhood is as follows:</p>

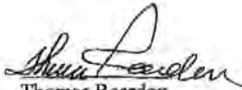
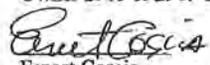
¹ Comments are duplicate comments provided to various parties.

Proposed Somerset Grace Academy Charter School Public Hearing Comments

	Date Received	Name and Address	No comment	No objection	Object	Comments (Verbatim)
						<p style="text-align: right;">The Honorable James Cason Page 2 July 13, 2011</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mr. Eric Riel, our Planning Director, made it very apparent at the last meeting which was held at the Coral Gables Youth Center that in view of all of the traffic studies which were researched that it was his conclusion that it will be a <u>travesty</u> for this area for 735 parents to drop off and pick up their students at the University Baptist Church twice per day. As it is, the City is now in the throes of construction of the median for the planting of trees in the middle of Segovia St. This in essence will convert a four lane Segovia St. to a two lane and it will just be perfect to accommodate the traffic that will traverse Segovia St. north and south. 2. It has already been determined and rejected by a Circuit Court Judge that a school of that magnitude should not be allowed at the University Baptist Church, and further this is a residential neighborhood and the zoning does not allow a school to be here under any circumstances. 3. I am appealing to you as our new mayor and to all of our commissioners to vote against a land use change which will allow Somerset School to have 735 students. I, and all my neighbors, purchased our homes to have quiet enjoyment, and for that, we pay high real estate taxes, high insurance, and we want to be here until the "end". 4. Having all those students and their parents' cars will create traffic jams, on Segovia St. and the side streets which abut the University Baptist Church. All of the neighbors who live in Santander and Anastasia will never be able to come out of their driveways at certain hours. 5. This increase and the number of students from 110 to 735 will be a betrayal of the City of Coral Gables designated land use map. The land use map clearly does not have a zoning status which will permit a school and our quiet neighborhood.

¹ Comments are duplicate comments provided to various parties.

Proposed Somerset Grace Academy Charter School Public Hearing Comments

	Date Received	Name and Address	No comment	No objection	Object	Comments (Verbatim)
						<p>The Honorable James Cason Page 3 July 13, 2011</p> <p>6. There are plenty of schools already in existence that can accommodate children of all ages and it is not necessary to change a church to a school. Parents from outside the limits of Coral Gables want to bring their children here to attend UBC and that is bringing chaos to our quiet neighborhood.</p> <p>7. THEREFORE, I AM APPEALING TO YOU ONCE AGAIN TO EXERCISE YOUR OPINIONS AND THE VOTES OF ALL OUR COMMISSIONERS TO DO THE RIGHT THING FOR THE CITIZENS OF CORAL GABLES AND THE RESIDENTS OF THE BILTMORE AREA.</p> <p>Thank you once again for all your continued support and courtesies in this very, very important issue.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p> Thomas Reardon Owner 2915 & 2909 Segovia St.</p> <p> Ernest Coscia Owner 2915 & 2909 Segovia St.</p> <p> SONIA M. BLAIR</p>
868.	07.17.11	Vic Hyder 701 Camilo Ave Coral Gables, FL 33134			X	<p>From: Vic Hyder <vichyder@gmail.com> Date: July 17, 2011 9:58:16 AM GMT-04:00 To: jimcason@coralgables.com, fquesada@coralgables.com, wkerdyk@coralgables.com, manderson@coralgables.com, rcabrera@coralgables.com, eriel@coralgables.com, wcarlson@coralgables.com, sbolyard@coralgables.com, jmenendez@coralgables.com, psalerno@coralgables.com, mjimenez@coralgables.com, cleen@coralgables.com, wfoeman@coralgables.com Subject: Opposition to Proposed Change of Land Use - University Baptist Church</p> <p>Dear City of Coral Gables,</p> <p>I strongly oppose the change of land use being sought by Somerset Academy Gables / Academica at the University Baptist Church property on Anastasia. This land use change is</p>

¹ Comments are duplicate comments provided to various parties.

Proposed Somerset Grace Academy Charter School Public Hearing Comments

	Date Received	Name and Address	No comment	No objection	Object	Comments (Verbatim)
						<p>in direct violation of the 1968 Covenant that runs with the land, as well as its subsequent 1977 Ordinance. In addition, the UBC site is not the proper location for a school of more than 110 students. I question if the City needs a school of this size and type; and whether or not our current public schools will benefit or be adversely affected by such an addition to the educational system. Either way, an establishment of such a large school should be part of a plan to better our City vice a private, for-profit venture that will significantly affect residents, community facilities, and the City as a whole.</p> <p>Please vote against the proposed change. It will not improve the City of Coral Gables.</p> <p>Sincerely, Vic Hyder 701 Camilo Ave Coral Gables, FL 33134</p>
869.	07.22.11	Vic Hyder 701 Camilo Ave Coral Gables, FL 33134			X	<p>Dear City of Coral Gables,</p> <p>I strongly oppose the change of land use being sought by Somerset Academy Gables / Academica at the University Baptist Church property on Anastasia. The company has reapplied for the change of land use with an application requesting the school open with 465 students vice the original 700+. This changes nothing. Please vote against the proposed change. It will not improve the City of Coral Gables.</p> <p>Sincerely and thank you, Vic Hyder 701 Camilo Ave Coral Gables, FL 33134</p>
870.	07.22.11	BNA Members Carlos Carta, President Biltmore Neighborhood Association 305-794-9543				<p>From: BNA Newsletter [mailto:bna-newsletter@biltmoreneighborhoodassociation.com] Sent: Friday, July 22, 2011 11:53 AM To: BNA-Info Subject: Somerset Gables reapplies with 465 students</p> <p>Dear Biltmore Neighborhood Association Members,</p> <p>We hope that you are enjoying your Summer and obtaining some well-deserved rest.</p> <p>We wanted to take this opportunity to bring you up to speed regarding the Somerset issue. Our attorney, Tucker Gibbs, has informed us that Somerset Gables will be reapplying for the change of land use with an application requesting the school open with 465 students. They have also asked to meet with representatives of the BNA again in an effort to come to an agreement about the enrollment number.</p> <p>The BNA will continue to oppose the change in land use. Our position has not changed since we first met with members of University Baptist Church and Academica Inc.</p>

¹ Comments are duplicate comments provided to various parties.

Proposed Somerset Grace Academy Charter School Public Hearing Comments

	Date Received	Name and Address	No comment	No objection	Object	Comments (Verbatim)
						<p>Please take the time to write letters to our mayor, city manager, and commissioners expressing your concern with the recommended land use change and your opposition to having a school for 465 students in this residential neighborhood. This issue will be coming before the Planning and Zoning Board, as well as the City Commission, in the coming months. Our attorney continues to meet with city officials and officials of the BNA attend public hearings that address this topic to monitor the progress in the City. Updates will continue to be sent via email to all BNA members.</p> <p>We must continue to be vocal and express our opposition to the land use change. And please ask your family and friends who live throughout Coral Gables that we need their backing in order to prevent this from occurring throughout our beautiful city.</p> <p>Thank you for your continued support, Carlos Carta, President Biltmore Neighborhood Association 305-794-9543</p>
871.	07.22.11	Lisa Hyder lisah@MdSportscare.com			X	<p>Dear City of Coral Gables,</p> <p>The intent of this email is to voice my opposition to the proposed change of land use being sought by Somerset Academy Gables.</p> <p>You have heard all of the arguments made against Somerset's application, so I will not repeat them here. One of my neighbors, however, made a very poignant point that I would like to repeat-- why is the burden of proof to preserve the city's master plan on us, the neighbors and residents of Coral Gables?</p> <p>My husband and I purchased our home three years ago just one block away from University Baptist Church. We did our due diligence before we made a major investment into this specific piece of property and the City of Coral Gables in general. We knocked on neighbors' doors and drove the streets at various times of the day to see what the neighborhood was about and what it would be like living so close to the church, library and youth center. Many have lived on our street for 25+ years and said that the street is quiet and the church a great neighbor. This is what we bought into, what we have enjoyed for the past three years.</p> <p>We have also donated a lot of money to help with the attorney-- many of our neighbors have donated even more. Somerset/Academia has much deeper pockets than the neighbors. Many of us have had to give up vacations or sending our children to summer camp. It has been stressful and frustrating for all of us neighbors, but it seems we have no choice if want to preserve our quality of life, our investments, and the City of Coral Gables in general.</p>

¹ Comments are duplicate comments provided to various parties.

Proposed Somerset Grace Academy Charter School Public Hearing Comments

	Date Received	Name and Address	No comment	No objection	Object	Comments (Verbatim)
						<p>When I read the newspaper, I see more and more stories about neighborhoods fighting against school expansions, whether they are charter, traditional public or private schools. There was also a recent interview on Fresh Air on NPR about charter school scandals in Philadelphia. There is a larger problem with our education system that the City of Coral Gables cannot solve. In fact, by allowing the school here, it seems to me we are perpetuating the faltering system. If our city is really in need of a school, then the proper steps must be taken to find land that is workable for everyone, have proper infrastructure including fields and a library, and the proper space for traffic. There should be a plan in place that benefits all constituents, not just a for-profit company.</p> <p>We realize the city wants us to sit down with Somerset and agree on a number that will work for us. We attended the City Council meeting last year when the number 210 was offered to Somerset and turned down. That is a number that my husband and I would personally agree with, but we just got word that Somerset reapplied for 465 students. 465 is still a ridiculously large number that will bring up many of the same concerns about traffic, parking, after school hours, use of library and youth center, noise, trash etc. The number might be in keeping with Somerset/Academica's financial model and have a positive impact on their bottom line, but 465 students plus staff will have a negative impact on our neighborhood. Along with changing the land use designation, the overall situation will have a negative impact on the City of Coral Gables as well.</p> <p>Thank you for the work you do and we hope you will take our voice into consideration when it comes time to vote on this important issue.</p> <p>Sincerely, Lisa Hyder Camilo Avenue</p>
872.	07 25 11	Anna Louise Fulks 717 Santander Avenue Coral Gables, Fl 33134			X	<p>From: Anna Louise Fulks [mailto:alfulks@earthlink.net] Sent: Monday, July 25, 2011 9:56 AM To: Louanzag@aol.com; sandra@muradolaw.com; pepigranat@aol.com; Rita Oates; Gablesgrrl@aol.com; flascotts@bellsouth.net; Superintendent'soffice@dadeschools.net; Riel, Eric; Olazabal, Carmen; Commissioners; Michael Murphy Subject: Charter school money: Florida charter schools get \$55 million for construction, others get zilch - Orlando Sentinel</p> <p>Please note the breaking news not only from the Orlando Sentinel but also Channel 10 as regards the traditional public schools being left out of the budget while charter schools are the beneficiary of \$55M.</p> <p>Anna Louise Fulks 717 Santander Avenue Coral Gables, Florida 33134-6524 Telephone: 305 446-7420 email: alfulks@earthlink.net</p>

¹ Comments are duplicate comments provided to various parties.

Proposed Somerset Grace Academy Charter School Public Hearing Comments

	Date Received	Name and Address	No comment	No objection	Object	Comments (Verbatim)
						<p>http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/2011-07-24/news/os-charter-school-construction-dollar20110724_1_traditional-schools-john-pavelchak-charter-schools</p> <p>Charters get \$55 million for upkeep, other schools get zero</p> <p>July 24, 2011 By Dave Weber, Orlando Sentinel</p> <p>Traditional public schools in Florida will get no money from the state this year for additions or needed repairs to thousands of aging buildings, but charter schools will score big.</p> <p>All of the state cash budgeted for school construction and maintenance is going to the independent, tax-financed charters favored by the Republican-dominated Legislature and Gov. Rick Scott.</p> <p><i>Act by Google</i></p> <p>Case Study: Closing Gaps National stories of schools turning tide against achievement gaps www.nespriorityschools.org</p> <p>Preschool - Miami Best Preschool in Miami in the heart of Brickell www.k12schools.com</p> <p>The charter school operated for children of employees of The Villages, the Republican stronghold in north Lake County frequented by Scott and former President George W. Bush, is expected to receive about \$1 million.</p> <p>School district officials across Florida are bemoaning the Legislature's decision to cut traditional public schools out of PECO — the Public Education Capital Outlay program. The state's 350 charter schools will share \$55 million, while the approximately 3,000 traditional schools will go without.</p> <p>"Every cent allocated for school construction went to charter schools," complained Lee Swift, a Charlotte County school board member who heads the Florida School Boards Association.</p> <p>Swift said lawmakers should focus on "properly funded traditional schools" instead of pressing for more charters that drain resources from the traditional schools.</p> <p>But Sen. David Simmons, a Maitland Republican who chairs the Senate's subcommittee on school appropriations, said the reason the traditional schools aren't getting any PECO cash this year is simple: They don't need it.</p> <p>"We did a whole lot of building a few years ago," Simmons said. "Growth has stagnated, and there has been some overbuilding of schools in some areas."</p> <p>He pointed to Seminole, which has more than 9,000 vacant seats after a decade of school construction. The School Board recently closed Longwood Elementary in an economy move and is considering closing other schools next year.</p> <p>But Seminole Superintendent Bill Vogel counters that Seminole and other districts still need cash for roofing and air conditioner repairs, painting, plumbing work, carpeting and other maintenance projects.</p> <p>"We desperately need the PECO money," Vogel said. "It is essential for maintenance of our buildings."</p> <p>And not all districts have stopped growing and needing more classrooms, either. While overall enrollment in Florida public schools fell by 19,305 students over the past five years, districts such as Lake and Osceola have continued to grow.</p>

¹ Comments are duplicate comments provided to various parties.

Proposed Somerset Grace Academy Charter School Public Hearing Comments

	Date Received	Name and Address	No comment	No objection	Object	Comments (Verbatim)
						<p>The state has never been overly generous with money for school repairs, forcing school districts for the past 30 years to raise local property taxes to cover maintenance expenses.</p> <p>Ads By Google</p> <p>Florida Virtual School FT Full-Time, Accredited, Grades K-12. 100% Tuition-Free, Enroll Now! www.connectionsacademy.com/FLVSFT</p> <p>St John's Military School Voted #1 Private School by Parents Amazing 10:1 Student-Teacher Ratio NowEnrolling.SJMS.org</p> <p>But each year every school district in the state got a modest sum from the Legislature for school repairs, and many years there was an extra allocation toward school construction.</p> <p>This past year, for example, Orange County schools got about \$8.7 million for maintenance and repairs, and Seminole schools received \$2.4 million.</p> <p>"This year we get nothing," said John Pavlichak, finance director for Seminole schools for the past 20 years. "This is the first time I remember getting nothing."</p> <p>Lack of PECO money will pinch school districts whose other main sources of revenue for repairs — property taxes — have dwindled because of the poor economy.</p> <p>Lake schools had hoped to get about \$1 million in state maintenance funds toward an estimated \$6 million in needed repairs such as school air conditioning units that maintenance director Mike Corr has characterized as "just a heartbeat away from catastrophic failure." Officials are considering borrowing money or bumping other projects to cover costs of the air conditioner repairs.</p> <p>PECO funding for traditional schools varied from year to year, peaking in the 2007-08 school year at just over \$600 million, with more than half for new construction.</p> <p>But for the last three years, the state has given no money for construction, and maintenance money has fallen off. The traditional schools shared \$122 million for maintenance in the school year that just ended in June.</p> <p>At the same time, separate PECO funding for charter schools has grown as their numbers have increased. The initial allocation in 1998 was about \$350,000, with only five charters qualifying for the cash based on student enrollment and other criteria.</p> <p>This year nearly every charter will qualify for a share of the \$55 million.</p> <p>That will include the Choices in Learning charter school in Seminole. It's located in the First Baptist Church of Longwood just a couple of blocks from the shuttered Longwood Elementary. By early next year, however, the school is expected to move into a new \$10 million facility under construction next door to Winter Springs High School.</p> <p>School directors plan to use their annual PECO allocation — it was about \$233,000 this past year and went for rent — toward repaying construction bonds for the two-story, 50,000-square-foot building.</p>
873.	07 25 11 (provided to the Dept. on 07 27 11)	Alicia Vidal			X	<p>From: GreenPaperMoon@aol.com To: jimcason@coralgables.com, wkerdyk@coralgables.com, manderson@coralgables.com, rcabrera@coralgables.com, fquesada@coralgables.com, psalerno@coralgables.com, mmenendez@coralgables.com, eriel@coralgables.com, cleen@coralgables.com, lalfonsin@coralgables.com, colazabal@coralgables.com CC: eaizenstat@coralgables.com, rbehar@coralgables.com, jflanagan@coralgables.com, pkeon@coralgables.com, jsalman@coralgables.com, greenpapermoon@aol.com Sent: 7/19/2011 1:14:03 A.M. Eastern Daylight Time Subj: It is called "Intimidation".</p>

¹ Comments are duplicate comments provided to various parties.

Proposed Somerset Grace Academy Charter School Public Hearing Comments

	Date Received	Name and Address	No comment	No objection	Object	Comments (Verbatim)
						<p>It was last Tuesday, July 12, 2011. While I am not normally outside, I was on the sidewalk that day waiting for a person who was bringing something to my property which is located exactly across the Youth Center (from its original address of 400 Anastasia Avenue). There were cars double-parked on the street with the drivers' inside the cars but this sight is common at the 400 block of Anastasia. The drivers of the double-parked cars are either waiting for a person to come out through the yellow gate or waiting for a street parking space to be available (we must remember that the Fitness Center is there also).</p> <p><u>As I looked towards the Youth Center, I saw several young women walking around the courtyard, all were wearing the same green color top I have been watching on TV.</u> Thinking that I was maybe missing a City meeting, I called the Youth Center to ask if there was a meeting regarding the U.B.C.</p> <p>The answer shocked me: No, there is no meeting; <u>"there are young women who always come to the Youth Center wearing the green top"</u> (advertising the Somerset Gables). If you do not think that is intimidation I then do not know the meaning of the word. Furthermore, I think that on June 22, 2011, some of the Board members were intimidated by the women in the "green color tops". It's only human but this is not about feeling sorry for those women.</p> <p>I suggest that <u>whenever there is a meeting involving the U.B.C., please make it at "closed doors". Let us all watch it live on Coral Gables TV.</u> <u>This is not about one neighborhood. Our City Beautiful is in danger!</u> <u>Vote No To The Change In Land Use And Vote No To Any Student Increase At UBC!</u></p> <p>Respectfully, Alicia Vidal</p>

¹ Comments are duplicate comments provided to various parties.