

# Courtesy Public Hearing Mail Notice Comments

08.05.2011 (Application resubmittal date) - 11.22.2011

Revised 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<sup>1, 2</sup>

# <sup>3</sup>	Date Received	Name and Address	No comment	No objection	Object	Comments (Verbatim)
875.	08 11 11	George F. Andrews Gfa322@aol.com			X	<p>From: gfa322@aol.com [mailto:gfa322@aol.com] Sent: Thursday, August 11, 2011 2:11 PM To: Foeman, Walter; Leen, Craig; Menendez, Maria A.; Salerno, Patrick; jmenendez@coralgables.com; Bolyard, Scot; Carlson, Walter; Riel, Eric; Cabrera, Ralph; Anderson, Maria; Kerdyk, William; Quesada, Frank; Cason, Jim Cc: bna-newsletter@biltmoreneighborhoodassociation.com; gfa322@aol.com Subject: Somerset Gables</p> <p>I am extremely concerned about the recommended land use change requested by Somerset Gables for the property occupied by University Baptist Church. I am a long time resident of the City and I strongly oppose having a school for 465 students in this residential neighborhood. Moreover, the reduction of lanes on Segovia Avenue from 4 to 2 will dramatically impact traffic flow around that site, and will lead to traffic back-ups in the streets surrounding the church.</p> <p>Somerset needs to find a more appropriate location for a school of this size.</p> <p>Thank you. George F. Andrews Chairman, Coral Gables Health Facilities Authority</p>
876.	08 29 11	Ana Louise Fulks 717 Santander Avenue Coral Gables, FL 33134 alfulks@earthlink.net			X	<p>From: ANNA-LOUISE FULKS [mailto:alfulks@earthlink.net] Sent: Friday, August 19, 2011 10:38 AM To: Cason, Jim; Kerdyk, William; Anderson, Maria; Cabrera, Ralph; Quesada, Frank; Salerno, Patrick; Kephart, Glenn; Riel, Eric; Olazabal, Carmen; Weiner, Dennis; Hudak, Edward; Reed, Walter; Frevola, Janette Cc: Mike Murphy; Sandra Murado Subject: Academica/SomersetGables charter request for 436 students</p> <p>Good morning ladies and gentlemen:</p> <p>It has come to my attention that Academica/SomersetGables charter school has filed an application with the City of Coral Gables for enrollment of 436 students at University Baptist Church, 624 Anastasia Avenue, Coral Gables, FL 33134. Academica/SomersetGables has decreased their original request of 735 children to 436</p>

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					<p>students when the P&amp;Z board did not accept the original number of 735 students due to the impact of traffic on the residential neighborhood.</p> <p>From what I understand from the new application that Academica/SomersetGables has filed with our City please envision the following:</p> <p>(1) Academica/SomersetGables plans to have (9) mini-vans dropping off and picking up children in the paved angle parking area in the 600 block of Anastasia;</p> <p>(2) Parents who will be driving their children to the charter school will be utilizing Cardena Avenue to drop off and pick up their children and will be exiting onto Anastasia Avenue;</p> <p>(3) Miami Dade Transit has bus stops on the corners of Anastasia/Segovia. . . going East and West and making their wide turns from Segovia onto Anastasia going West and East;</p> <p>(4) Miami Dade and privately owned school buses utilize Anastasia as well;</p> <p>(5) There is a traffic signal at Segovia/Anastasia which will cause traffic stoppage for all vehicles in the 600 block of Anastasia, i.e. Miami Dade Transit, Miami Dade and privately owned school buses, the (9) mini-vans and charter school vehicles entering into the traffic lanes, as well as residents who drive to and from work on Anastasia or chauffeur their children to and from school.</p> <p>(6) Anastasia is not a direct thoroughfare to LeJeune Road which will cause traffic to use residential feeder streets, i.e. Santander, Malaga, Palermo, Catalonia Avenues, etc. to get to their destination.</p> <p>(7) Anastasia is an emergency route and must be clear at all times for fire/rescue/police vehicles.</p> <p>Lastly, since Segovia Street will now be only two lanes (with a bicycle lane on either side) consideration must be given to vehicles also going/leaving the Coral Gables library as well as the Youth Center.</p> <p>Thank you for listening and taking the time to envision what this residential neighborhood would become should the proposal by Academica/SomersetGables come to fruition.</p> <p>Respectfully                      Anna Louise Fulks                      717 Santander Avenue                      Coral Gables, Florida 33134-6524</p>

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						Telephone: 305 446-7420 email: alfulks@earthlink.net
877.	08 31 11	Maria Mtra1998@aol.com		X		From: Maria [mailto:mtra1998@aol.com] Sent: Wednesday, August 31, 2011 11:01 PM To: somerset school comments Subject:  "I support the expansion of Somerset Gables at the UBC location."
878.	09 14 11	Joanne Matthews 636 Camilo Avenue Coral Gables, FL 33134			X	From: joanneMatthews [mailto:joanne_matthews@yahoo.com] Sent: Wednesday, September 14, 2011 4:00 PM To: Olazabal, Carmen; Riel, Eric; Cason, Jim; Kerdyk, William; Anderson, Maria; Cabrera, Ralph; Quesada, Frank; City Attorney Subject: opposition - Somerset Academy/UBC  Content of attachment:  636 Camilo Avenue Coral Gables, FL 33134-7006 September 14, 2011  Ms. Carmen Olazabal, Building and Zoning Director Mr. Eric Riel, Jr., Planning Director  Re: proposed change of land use by Somerset Academy Gables/Academica at UBC  Dear Ms. Olazabal and Mr. Riel,  I am writing to oppose any proposed change of the land use at UBC in Coral Gables.  A City covenant and ordinance was in place when Somerset contracted to lease space for their business at UBC and when the City certified its use, providing for an enrollment number consistent with the neighborhood. Somerset doesn't like that rule, or the judge's ruling that upheld it, and sees financial gain in their arguments to add 625 more students. And now they "offer" a new proposal – which still disregards limitations that don't suit their business plan.  My husband and I have lived in Coral Gables for more than 37 years; and we recently renovated and moved to a home near UBC. We have complied with City zoning rules. We appreciate the City's efforts to stay consistent with its regulations, which uphold our

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					<p>property values and peaceful neighborhoods. If Somerset's business plan is not consistent with the UBC property, why is that now MY problem? And why should we be asked to surrender to their demands? A review of the letters on file in support of their expansion reads like a parent's directory of the school—they are not residents in the close vicinity to this dispute.</p> <p>Much effort is being made to transform Segovia Street into a boulevard "consistent with the City Beautiful." The lane reduction and configurations speak to pedestrian safety; the increased traffic of an over-crowded school does not. The current enrollment is consistent with the traffic allowance. Somerset's description of schematic drop-off and pick-up is their perception of minimal traffic impact. It also excludes what I've seen as a parent: PTA meetings, holiday performances, emergency dismissals and more, which will effect traffic and/or parking for neighbors and for patrons at the youth center or public library.</p> <p>Somerset has now reduced their proposal.. Are we to feel "better" because instead of 110, they are "only" proposing 436, instead of 735 ?! This is not a matter about "feelings" of the neighbors. It is a matter of City governance. Somerset is proposing a larger enrollment than St. Thomas – which sits on two major artery roads in a fashion that creates its own isolation apart from the neighbors, and channels traffic only in and out of a point on Kendall. UBC, in contrast, is very much in the midst of residential flow, with several neighborly streets creating artery veins. The enrollments for St. Philip's and Granada Day, similar to UBC in their settings that are proximate to neighbors, have enrollments of 175 and 158, respectively. A new precedence would not be consistent with those neighborhoods, either.</p> <p>Please do not accept a proposal to change the existing land use restrictions.</p> <p>Sincerely, Mrs. JoAnne Matthews</p> <p>Cc:                      Mayor Jim Cason                      Vice-Mayor William Kerdyk, Jr.                      Commissioner Maria Anderson                      Commissioner Rafael Cabrera                      Commissioner Frank Quesada                      City Attorney Craig Leen</p>
879.	09 22 11 Ileana Queipo 821 Medina Avenue Coral Gables, FL <a href="mailto:Darile1@att.net">Darile1@att.net</a>		<b>X</b>		<p>From: D &amp; L [mailto:darile1@att.net]                      Sent: Thursday, September 22, 2011 8:48 PM                      To: somersetcharterschoolcomments@coralgables.com (planning &amp; zoning)                      Subject: Expansion of the Sommerset Grace Academy</p>

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						<p>Ileana Queipo 3730 SW 60th Court Miami, FL 33155</p> <p>I support the expansion of Somerset Gables at the UBC up to the 8th grade. As a former Coral Gables resident for more than 15 years at 821 Medina Avenue, I believe that Coral Gables need a good Charter school. Coral Gables elementary is the only option or to go to private and expensive schools around the area: Saint Theresa or St. Phillips. or Granada School that goes up to kinder. With all the taxes that Coral Gables residents pay, it is important to give the right to all the kids living in the area to be able to participate and get a good education without to have to commute to other areas for schools.</p> <p>Regards Ileana Queipo</p>
880.	09 22 11	Ileana Queipo 821 Medina Avenue Coral Gables, FL Darile1@att.net		<b>X</b>		<p>From: D &amp; L [mailto:darile1@att.net] Sent: Thursday, September 22, 2011 8:52 PM To: Menendez, Jill Subject: Support the expansion of Somerset school at UBC</p> <p>Ileana Queipo 3730 SW 60th Court Miami, FL 33155</p> <p>As a former Coral Gables resident at 821 Medina Avenue, I support the expansion of the school up to the 8th Grade. It is important for the kids in the area to have an option for another elementary school other than Coral Gables Elementary or private schools.</p> <p>Regards Ileana Queipo</p>
881.	10 04 11	BNA (Biltmore Neighborhood Association)			<b>X</b>	<p>From: BNA Newsletter [mailto:bna-newsletter@biltmoreneighborhoodassociation.com] Sent: Tuesday, October 04, 2011 2:42 PM To: BNA-Info Subject: Planing and Zone meeting in October/Erik Fresen</p> <p>Dear neighbors,</p> <p>I want to thank those neighbors who have sent in checks to help cover some of the costs for the professional planner we hired for the sole purpose of protecting our neighborhood.</p>

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						<p>Somerset/Acamedica continues to push for the expansion and land use change at the UBC site. Recently State Representative Erik Fresen registered as a lobbyist for Academica Inc. in the City of Coral Gables to advance the interest of the school. In order to combat these efforts in the city, we have hired a planner in addition to our attorney.</p> <p>We are going to be entering a very dangerous phase which will require the involvement and support of all concerned residents. Somerset's revised application is expected go in front of the Planning and Zoning board in late October. The BNA will keep you informed of the date of the meeting once city officials inform our attorney, Mr. Gibbs, the exact time and location. In the meantime, we urge you to write our city officials expressing your concern about the outrageous request from Somerset/Acedemica.</p> <p>Once again, your financial support is greatly appreciated. We have hired top notch experts to testify on our behalf. Their reports will be critical to protecting our city and neighborhood. If you have any question please feel free to contact me.</p> <p>Thank you, Carlos Carta Cart@gmail.com</p>
882.	10 05 11	Scott Singleton 3421 Riviera Drive Coral Gables, FL Ssingle123@aol.com			<b>X</b>	<p>From: ssingle123@aol.com [mailto:ssingle123@aol.com] Sent: Wednesday, October 05, 2011 10:54 AM To: Riel, Eric Subject: Charter School</p> <p>I have been a resident of Coral Gables for over 50 years and want to express my STRONG opposition to any zoning changes that relate to the Charter School and University Baptist Church. I live on Riviera Drive, a block from the Church, and the traffic at certain times of the day is so bad now, that I have trouble getting out of my driveway Regards- Scott Singleton(3421 Riviera Drive)</p>
883.	10 09 11	Natalie Tanen 3260 Riviera Dr. Coral Gables, Fl 33134			<b>X</b>	<p>From: NTanen@aol.com [mailto:NTanen@aol.com] Sent: Sunday, October 09, 2011 2:34 PM To: Cason, Jim; Quesada, Frank; Kerdyk, William; Anderson, Maria; Cabrera, Ralph; Riel, Eric; Carlson, Walter; Bolyard, Scot; jmenendez@coralgables.com; Salerno, Patrick; Menendez, Maria A.; Leen, Craig; Foeman, Walter Subject: Somerset Academy at UBC</p> <p>Dear Mr Mayor, Commissioners and City Officials,</p> <p>I know you have much on your plate but I think about Somerset's request to increase the number of students dramatically at the UBC site every time I drive by the church. As a</p>

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					<p>neighbor who lives two blocks down on Riviera Drive and as a 40 year resident of Coral Gables, I feel that allowing the expansion of the school would be detrimental to the immediate community from the perspective of safety, peaceful enjoyment of the neighborhood, traffic, and property values.</p> <p>Moreover, I think it would be detrimental to Coral Gables as a whole in that it establishes that a for profit venture can invade any of our beautiful community's blocks undermining the history of Coral Gables as an exemplary model for a residential environment.</p> <p>Thank you for hearing my concerns and please keep Somerset/UBC at its current level of enrollment.</p> <p>Natalie Tanen 3260 Riviera Dr. Coral Gables, FL 33134</p>
884.	Patty Shillington 731 Malaga Ave. Coral Gables			<b>X</b>	<p>From: Patty Shillington [mailto:psmiami@me.com] Sent: Friday, October 14, 2011 1:14 PM To: Quesada, Frank; Kerdyk, William; Anderson, Maria; Cabrera, Ralph; Riel, Eric; Carlson, Walter; Salerno, Patrick; Leen, Craig; Bolyard, Scot; Jill Menendez; Menendez, Maria A.; Foeman, Walter; Cason, Jim Subject: Comment on Somerset application at University Baptist Church</p> <p>Dear Mayor, Commissioners, City Manager, City Attorney, City Clerk, Planners and Assistants,</p> <p>I am writing to oppose the application of Somerset Academy to open a 400-plus-student K-8 school at University Baptist Church. I live less than two full blocks north of the church/school and I have no objection to it remaining its current size, which does not disrupt the tranquility of the residential neighborhood.</p> <p>However, I strenuously object to an increase in students and a zoning change. I believe it's clear that that property -- with no athletic field or outdoor area for the children to have recess and physical education -- is not suited to be a K-8 school. It's not large enough -- imagine 8th graders in that same small location with young children! There is no conceivable traffic pattern that would not completely disrupt the neighborhood. It would be dangerous for the children, as well. In fact, I have witnessed several close calls as I walk my dogs in the morning, even with only 100-plus students (where cars are pulling in and out of the parking lot on Cardena).</p> <p>The city is doing a great job transforming Segovia into a beautiful, tree-lined and tree-shaded plaza. Thank you and bravo! However, the reduction of lanes on Segovia further</p>

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					<p>complicates the traffic issue at the school -- even now. It's inconceivable to imagine the traffic mess with a school the size Somerset is contemplating. I also do not believe the school and church have been forthright with the neighborhood or the city, especially at the very beginning of this process.</p> <p>My daughter is a freshman at Coral Gables High School. She attended Coral Gables Elementary. The public schools in our community are stellar and there are private school options for families, as well. If indeed charter schools are also needed in Coral Gables -- and I would argue this point, especially given the many documented issues with many charter school companies, including Academica -- please locate these schools in areas that will not destroy our neighborhoods. The Ponce de Leon corridor comes to mind as a better location for a charter school -- still very close to residential neighborhoods but not smack in the middle.</p> <p>I'm a Miami native who moved to Coral Gables 14 years ago to raise my daughter in the best setting I could find for her. I have trusted that the city would protect what is truly important about the Gables neighborhoods. Now, I and my neighbors have had to reach into our own pockets to fight what we truly believe would change the character of our neighborhood, as well as the value of our homes. Please do not allow that to happen.</p> <p>Thank you for your time, service and consideration.</p> <p>Very truly yours,</p> <p>Patty Shillington 731 Malaga Ave. Coral Gables 305-606-9909</p>
885.	Pepi Granat, MD 7800 Red Road, Suite 202 South Miami, FL 33143 pepigrantat@aol.com			<b>X</b>	<p>From: Pepi Granat [mailto:pepigranat@aol.com] Sent: Saturday, November 05, 2011 8:47 AM To: coejack@bellsouth.net; jeffreyf@flanagan-williard.com; robert@behalfont.com; jsalman@c3ts.com; bi@bellsouth.net; patkeon@aol.com; colazabal@coralgables.com; Riel, Eric Subject: Old news newly rrelevant -- until justice is done!</p> <p>We feel the church and the City should abide by the Covenant and Ordinance that was made back in 1977 stating that "the property will be held as one tract, and not be leased or rented (separately)." It was specifically set up as a pre-kindergarten Nursery School and Mother's Day Out Program run by the Church. Somerset/Academica, as you know, went to court against the city to challenge this and lost.</p>

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					<p>Now they want to change the Comprehensive Plan of Coral Gables, giving the property the new and very broad designation of "Community Facility." There is not a single property in all of Coral Gables that has this designation. This designation is so new and so open that even a jail or a utility plant could be built on the property once so designated. This is a terrible precedent. It could even happen to places like the Country Club property or anywhere else in the City.</p> <p>So, obviously I am against this change. It is vitally important that they do not make a zoning change for University Baptist Church.</p> <p>Pepi Granat, MD 7800 Red Road, Suite 202 South Miami, FL 33143 305 661 7609; fax 305 667 8266</p>
886.	11 09 11 Paul Zamek Paul.zamek@gmail.com		<b>X</b>		<p>From: Paul Zamek [mailto:paul.zamek@gmail.com] Sent: Wednesday, November 09, 2011 9:09 AM To: somerset school comments Subject: Fwd: 'Controlled choice' for school admission goes beyond proximity   Gables Home Page</p> <p>Please enter the following article from Gables Home Page into public record.</p> <p>This article demonstrates the harsh reality of why Coral Gables is losing young families to neighboring cities. Coral Gables must face the reality that while public schools exist, they simply do not serve the needs of the community for neighborhood schools. The City of Coral Gables must take timely action and send a message to all current and future residents, " We want you to make Coral Gables your home."</p> <p>Somerset Gables at the University Baptist Church is one solution to this crisis and will improve the quality of life for all neighboring residents.</p> <p><a href="http://www.gableshomepage.com/news/2011/11/08/'controlled-choice'-school-admission-goes-beyond-proximity">HTTP://WWW.GABLESHOMEPAGE.COM/NEWS/2011/11/08/'CONTROLLED-CHOICE'-SCHOOL-ADMISSION-GOES-BEYOND-PROXIMITY</a></p> <p>'Controlled choice' for school admission goes beyond proximity GABLES HOME PAGE BY PRISCILLA GREER / STAFF WRITER NOV 08 2011</p> <p>When George Savage researched where to move from Brickell with his family, he</p>

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					<p>considered Coral Gables, “the city beautiful.” But he learned that even buying a home across the street from Coral Gables Preparatory Academy would not guarantee his children seats there and eventually opted to move south to Pinecrest.</p> <p>In Coral Gables’ controlled choice program for public school admission, parents apply to their top two preferences among Coral Gables Preparatory Academy, Sunset Elementary and G.W. Carver Elementary. But they may actually get their third choice.</p> <p>“We did not feel comfortable with the choices,” said Mr. Savage. “Everyone knows that Gables is overcrowded and Sunset has around 1,200 kids ... With the current economic situation there are a lot more kids coming into the public school system and the crowding of schools will be increased.”</p> <p>An attorney, Mr. Savage supported the opening of Somerset Academy Coral Gables but predicts the city will block expansion as he believes is needed. “The big draw to Pinecrest is its schools and these are solely based on location.”</p> <p>This year the Miami-Dade Public School System reduced the number of schools in the controlled choice program from 14 to eight, including the three in Coral Gables.</p> <p>Through controlled choice, parents meeting the basic admissions requirements who already have a child in the school and live closer to it than the others are given preferential consideration for their child’s application in the random selection process.</p> <p>After that preference is given for a family with a sibling enrolled but no proximity, then a family with only proximity and lastly a family with no sibling and no proximity.</p> <p>Parents should also submit their application as early as the school permits and apply for kindergarten when the controlled choice program begins rather than first grade when most slots are filled, said Miami-Dade Public School’s director of budgets and operations Virna Kaufman, adding that a child who attended a pre-K program offered at Gables Preparatory and Sunset still has to reapply for kindergarten and doesn’t have any unfair admissions advantage.</p> <p>But they can also apply to any of the over 100 magnets around the county as well as to charter schools such as the popular Somerset Academy in Coral Gables or South Miami.</p> <p>Those who don’t want to enroll their children in their assigned controlled choice school can go through the appeals process where officials will look for “alternative options” based on proximity, workplace and other factors. One lesser-known school that children have been reassigned to is the A-rated David Fairchild Elementary near the University of Miami.</p>

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					<p>“They were accepting transfers from parents who appealed in controlled choice but couldn’t get in,” Ms. Kaufman said. “There are some schools that have stayed empty because the neighborhood has aged...there are other options around Coral Gables that are very good, viable options.”</p> <p>While Gables Preparatory and Sunset usually fill up on the first application round, Ms. Kaufman called Carver, with 527 students, “a little more warm and attentive and flexible.”</p> <p>“They have to look at the school. A lot of times parents judge without knowledge...As a parent you need to find what’s best for your kid.”</p> <p>And students who participate in Carver’s extended one hour daily Spanish instruction are given admission priority into G.W. Carver Middle School.</p> <p>“A lot of parents don’t know that students in the extended foreign language program at Carver Elementary articulate to Carver Middle School’s international education program” that involves rigorous, extended foreign language study but is less intense than its international studies magnet program, explained Ms. Kaufman.</p> <p>Sunset Academy also has a popular elementary grade magnet program for international studies in German, Spanish and French. Beginning in first grade, the program is open to anyone in the county and attracts the majority of Sunset’s 1,121 students. But Gables students apply through controlled choice for the non-magnet program for kindergarten and then can apply to transfer into international studies in first grade.</p> <p>For Sunset’s and any magnet program active-duty military families get top preference followed by those with an older sibling enrolled followed by students with dual citizenship in a country being studied in the international studies program.</p> <p>“People who are relocating to Miami for different reasons who have dual citizenship do research and purposefully move around the area,” she said. “You have a lot of siblings and nationals” at Sunset.</p> <p>At Sunset students can get into the first grade of the magnet program as beginners in the language. “From second grade on it’s more rigorous. They need to show a certain level of proficiency. The core courses are delivered in the foreign language. A third of the school day is delivered in the foreign language they may not understand,” said Ms. Kaufman.</p> <p>And Sunset magnet students articulate directly into the “very high demand international studies magnet program” at Carver Middle School and take most slots. “Miami-Dade</p>

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						<p>County wants to ensure that students already enrolled in a program have the ability to continue and that students attending the international studies program at Sunset Elementary articulate to international studies at Carver Middle, as this is the only middle school in the district offering the program,” said Ms. Kaufman.</p> <p>Those seeking nearby public charter school options have a backup choice for Somerset Academy of South Miami. Last year it had a wait list of 1,000 for its student body of 574 students in K-8, said Florida Consortium of Public Charter Schools spokesperson Lynn Norman-Teck.</p> <p>For students who meet requirements it offers admission based on a lottery, and preference is only given for those with a sibling in the school and not on proximity, with about 73 percent living in South Miami and 10 percent in Coral Gables.</p> <p>While anyone in the county can apply to most charter schools, Somerset Academy of Coral Gables does give preference for those in school proximity but is currently capped at 110 students. “During an enrollment period, if you get more applications than student seats then you get a lottery. That is state law,” said Ms. Norman-Teck.</p> <p>Most charter schools have some special focus, with Somerset South Miami offering 10 hours of Spanish or Mandarin weekly. Ms. Norman-Teck argues that charter schools don’t hurt regular public ones but raise the bar for all of them.</p> <p>“It’s more competition. They all have to be better” to get the students, she added.</p> <p>Gables parents should contact their preferred controlled choice schools about individual deadlines in March. But they can also apply earlier to magnets that accept applications from Oct. 1 through Jan. 15 (documents must be postmarked this year by Jan. 14).</p>
887.	11 18 11	Denie HARRIS 625 Puerta Avenue Coral Gables, FL 33143		<b>X</b>		<p>From: Denie Harris [mailto:denie.harris@gmail.com] Sent: Friday, November 18, 2011 1:32 PM To: somerset school comments Subject: supoort for Somerset</p> <p>To whom it may concern: I am writing in strong support of Somerset Academy in Coral Gables. I believe the amended application and reduction of students represents a fair compromise to everyone and we urge you to approve the application. I think this school would be an incredible enhancement to our city.</p> <p>Kind regards, Denie and Mason Harris</p>

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						625 Puerta Avenue, Coral Gables, FL 44143 305-799-2900
888.	11 18 11	Boo Zamek boo@justaskboo.com		<b>X</b>		<p>From: Boo Zamek [mailto:boo@justaskboo.com] Sent: Friday, November 18, 2011 1:38 PM To: somerset school comments Subject: Somerset Gables</p> <p>The amended application and reduction of students represents a fair compromise to everyone and we urge you to approve the application.</p> <p>As a neighbor, parent and 35-year resident of the City of Coral Gables (this neighborhood in particular), I am very sensitive to the problems that some neighboring schools have created in our city. Even though they are great schools, there is no denying the traffic problems that have been created by local educational institutions, private and public alike. Personally I am very proud to be a parent at Somerset Gables, for many reasons. One of them is because of the academic standards the school offers. Another is because of the quality of faculty and staff at the school. And another is because of the caliber of families who choose to educate their children there.</p> <p>Somerset Gables represents a group of highly educated parents who are also warm and genuine. We are a large, loving family. And most of all, we are eager to embrace our neighbors by showing them that once our school is offered the opportunity to educate more kids, we will remain respectful and kind to them and to this (our own) neighborhood. We look forward to showing them that we will NOT create the traffic crunch they so dread, the noise they so fear, or the litter they so envision – but instead will embrace them with the friendship they deserve but sadly, do not expect.</p> <p>On behalf of my friends, my neighbors and our children, I thank you for your kindness in return.</p> <p>Boo (Province) Zamek Boo Zamek, Founder + President</p>
889.	11 18 11	Jennifer and Colby Johnson 622 Velarde Avenue Coral Gables, FL 33134		<b>X</b>		<p>From: Jennifer Schull Johnson [mailto:jennifer.schull@gmail.com] Sent: Friday, November 18, 2011 1:57 PM To: somerset school comments Subject: Comments for Somerset Gables</p> <p>To whom it may concern, As Coral Gables residents and proud Somerset Gables parents, we are very hopeful that the City's Planning and Zoning Board will approve Somerset Gables' amended application. We strongly feel the application represents a fair and balanced compromise with the City</p>

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## Proposed Somerset Grace Academy Charter School Public Hearing Comments

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						<p>and concerned neighbors. Somerset Gables has demonstrated it is an excellent neighbor and member of the Coral Gables community - we urge the Planning and Zoning board to approve the amended application so that our families can have access to this incredible educational opportunity into the future.</p> <p>Sincerely, Jennifer and Colby Johnson 622 Velarde Avenue Coral Gables, FL 33134</p>
890.	11 18 11	Philip D. Floyd, MD 925 Cotorro Avenue Coral Gables		<b>X</b>		<p>From: Philip Floyd [mailto:philipfloydd@gmail.com] Sent: Friday, November 18, 2011 3:04 PM To: somerset school comments Subject: Somerset Gables</p> <p>Somerset is of vital import to our community. The children of Coral Gables need this wonderful school.</p> <p>A key part of a growing, vibrant community is excellent schools. Without such opportunities, the City Beautiful will not continue to grow.</p> <p>Please support this tremendous asset to our community.</p> <p>Respectfully submitted, Philip D. Floyd, MD 925 Cotorro Avenue Coral Gables</p>
891.	11 19 11	Louan Zagarino 731 Anastasia Ave. 305-447-2293 louanzag@aol.com			<b>X</b>	<p>From: Louanzag@aol.com [mailto:Louanzag@aol.com] Sent: Saturday, November 19, 2011 12:31 PM To: somerset school comments Subject: Somerset School</p> <p>Dear All:</p> <p>As a person whose family has lived near University Baptist Church since 1949, I am asking you to please retain it as a church as Merrick gave the land for. The Zoning should NOT be changed as this would hurt not only this neighborhood, but all of Coral Gables. If one parcel could be changed so could any other.</p> <p>Secondly, the neighbors have lived happily with the Ordinance of the 1960s that says that</p>

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						<p>the Church could run a "Mommies Day out" for 110 students with the time from 9-2 This did not affect the traffic, but any larger number would.</p> <p>Thirdly, there are important facts to now consider: a) Segovia is now a 2 lane street b) Anastasia is 2 lane and is an Emergency route c) Anastasia is a bus route with stops both on Segovia and Anastasia at the Church. d) There is a stop light at Anastasia and Segovia which will make the traffic collect d) The traffic would have to cross the newly constructed bike lane.</p> <p>I am a long time resident of Coral Gables and a product of all of the Public Schools. I feel I received a wonderful education as are the students who are attending now.</p> <p>Again, Please vote NO about the Zoning change and maintain the # a 110. Thanking you in advance, Very sincerely,</p> <p>Louan Zagarino 731 Anastasia Ave. 305-447-2293 louanzag@aol.com</p>
892.	11 19 11	Raul R. and Pepi Granat Cuadrado 3250 Riviera Drive Coral Gables, FL 33134			<b>X</b>	<p>From: Pepi Granat [mailto:pepigranat@aol.com] Sent: Saturday, November 19, 2011 1:37 PM To: somerset school comments; Cason, Jim; Quesada, Frank; Kerdyk, William; Anderson, Maria; Cabrera, Ralph; Riel, Eric; Carlson, Walter; Bolyard, Scot; Menendez, Jill; Salerno, Patrick; Menendez, Maria A.; Leen, Craig; Foeman, Walter Subject: Somerset Charter School Comments</p> <p>Here is the comment form filled out. Attached.</p> <p>Here are the comments: <b>CHARTER SCHOOL MUST BE OPPOSED</b></p> <p>The Coral Gables City Commission should NOT grant a change in the LAND USE PLAN requested by Somerset charter school for the church across from the Youth Center. Why not? Because "they" are INVADING our neighborhood --- and, potentially, EVERY Gables neighborhood. We will be betrayed at the hand of our own government. The school has a right to self-interest. But 735 students? That is an INVASION and everyone KNOWS IT.</p> <p>We must FIGHT when we should never have been afflicted in the first place. Fight for peace? Our homes? They have a business (funded by our taxes!!), a treasure chest,</p>

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						<p>money to burn. We scrounge in our non-existent spare time.</p> <p>We residents came to live here based on the land use in effect at the time.</p> <p>If this school increases (now 110 students) it will be a betrayal of the city's 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>Raul R. and Pepi Granat Cuadrado 3250 Riviera Drive Coral Gables, FL 33134 2 blocks from UBC</p> <p>Pepi Granat, MD 7800 Red Road, Suite 202 South Miami, FL 33143 305 661 7609; fax 305 667 8266</p>
893.	11 20 11	Sandra and James Pollack 1025 Anastasia Avenue Coral Gables, FL			<b>X</b>	<p>From: Sandrajimpollack@aol.com [mailto:Sandrajimpollack@aol.com] Sent: Sunday, November 20, 2011 9:04 AM To: somerset school comments; Cason, Jim; Quesada, Frank; Kerdyk, William; Anderson, Maria; Cabrera, Ralph; Riel, Eric; Carlson, Walter; Bolyard, Scot; Menendez, Jill; Salerno, Patrick; Menendez, Maria A.; Leen, Craig; Foeman, Walter Subject: Proposed Increase in Somerset enrollment</p> <p>We have been living at 1025 Anastasia for the past 45 plus years. The traffic has steadily increased over that time and is now almost unbearable certain hours of the day. I recently saw a child try to cross the street and was almost struck by a car. Animals have been killed on our street.</p> <p>TRAFFIC IS SO HEAVY that I feel like I live on a main thoroughfare on Brickell.</p> <p>The bus traffic, ambulances, construction vehicles, go past our home as well as traffic from the Biltmore. The church itself does not have adequate parking now and if you increase student enrollment it will be impossible certain hours of the day not to have cars parking all around our neighborhood. The church is not safe for an increase in students.</p> <p>Keep our city safe as well as beautiful. Street SAFETY is critical in any community.</p>

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						<p>I BEG YOU NOT TO INCREASE THE ENROLLMENT PROPOSAL.</p> <p>We want to live in a city which is safe and quiet and the City Beautiful.</p> <p>Thank you. Sandra and James Pollack</p>
894.	11 20 11	Karen Myers-Schwartz		<b>X</b>		<p>From: Karen Myers-Schwartz [mailto:kmyersschwartz@gmail.com] Sent: Sunday, November 20, 2011 3:32 PM To: somerset school comments Subject: Somerset Academy Coral Gables</p> <p>To Whom it may concern;</p> <p>I am sending this email to show my support for Somerset Academy Coral Gables. We have been working very hard for years to find a compromise with the city and the neighbors so that we can co-exist and our school can continue to benefit the families in Coral Gables.</p> <p>The school is a wonderful addition to the school options available in the Gables and provides parents and children with an option to the existing schools if they so choose. There are hundreds of parents that want this option and are on a wait list to get into the school. They have been waiting for years.</p> <p>Please help us grow our school to an acceptable level for all parties involved.</p> <p>After a lot of hard work by the city and our school, the amended application and reduction of students represents a fair compromise to everyone and we urge you to approve the application.</p> <p>Thank you for your time and consideration, Karen Myers-Schwartz</p>
895.	11 21 11	Robert W. Murray and Barbara Overton 3278 Riviera Drive Coral Gables, FL 33134			<b>X</b>	<p>-----Original Message----- From: Murray, Robert W. [mailto:rmurray@morganlewis.com] Sent: Monday, November 21, 2011 7:25 PM To: somerset school comments Cc: Cason, Jim; Quesada, Frank; Kerdyk, William; Anderson, Maria; Cabrera, Ralph; Riel, Eric; Carlson, Walter; Bolyard, Scot; Menendez, Jill; Salerno, Patrick; Menendez, Maria A.; Leen, Craig; Foeman, Walter; Overton, Barbara Subject: Objection to Somerset's Application #07-10-113-P</p> <p>Attached is my objection to Application #07-10-113-P of Somerset Grace Charter School</p>

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						<p>I strenuously object to application #07-10-113-P of Somerset Grace Charter School of Coral Gables (Somerset) to change the use of the University Baptist Church (UBC) property located at 624 Anastasia Avenue and to quadruple the size of the school located at that property.</p> <p>For more than 18 years, my family and I have lived in the residential neighborhood surrounding the UBC property. Our home, at 3278 Riviera Drive, is diagonally across the street from the UBC property. My family and our neighborhood would be severely, adversely and unfairly impacted if Somerset was allowed to change Coral Gables' future land use map and comprehensive plan for the UBC property and operate the large for-profit school proposed in Somerset's application.</p> <p>The current uses of the UBC property already cause significant parking and traffic problems in our residential neighborhood, which would become unmanageable if a large elementary school were to be permitted on the site. For many years, cars of people attending UBC have illegally parked on the swale in front of my home and the homes of many of my neighbors on Sundays and during other events, often right next to "No Parking" signs posted by the City. For example, on Saturday, October 30, 2010, UBC held an event in its parking lot which resulted in cars illegally parking throughout our neighborhood, which can be corroborated by the many parking violations issued that day by the City's parking department (but only after I called the City). This is not only illegal, but also damages the City's property (the swales) and creates a traffic hazard for the residents of our neighborhood and their children. To permit a large elementary school to be added to a church site that is already heavily used on evenings and weekends would turn the site into a 7 day per week, 12+ hour per day facility that would impose unfair parking, traffic, noise and litter problems in our residential neighborhood.</p> <p>Somerset's application is especially incompatible with the City's ongoing project to reduce Segovia Avenue from 4 lanes to 2 lanes and to invest in lush landscaping, which Somerset's application would turn into a hazard by making it more difficult for drivers to see school children and their parents crossing Segovia and the connecting streets. Quadrupling the amount of children, parents, teachers and staff using the 2 lane roads which now surround all sides of the UBC property is contrary to, and would establish a dangerous precedent which will threaten, the City's stated policies and objectives of controlling traffic, minimizing the impact of development on the City's neighborhoods and ultimately maintaining Coral Gables as the City Beautiful.</p> <p>Somerset's paid traffic consultant will undoubtedly produce the favorable traffic report that it is being paid to produce. In considering the real traffic and parking impact on our residential neighborhood, I urge the Planning and Zoning Board to consider the realities of an elementary school and the real world behavior of elementary school parents, who will understandably want to walk their 5 and 6 year old children into school and often drop off projects and birthday party cupcakes. Back to school night and after school activities will create further problems for our neighborhood.</p> <p>In addition to the parking and traffic problems it would create, the application of Somerset to change the City of Coral Gables long-standing land use map and comprehensive plan for the UBC site is tantamount to an attempted taking and blatantly unfair transfer of wealth to Somerset and to UBC (which will receive annual 6-figure rent payments from Somerset) from the</p>

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					<p>neighborhood residents whose homes will lose significant value as result of being located next to a large school which is not permitted under the current zoning laws and comprehensive land use plan of the City of Coral Gables. When I bought my home 18 years ago and as I decided to keep my family there and not sell it and remain a Coral Gables resident even in the height of real estate craze, I relied in part on the zoning laws and comprehensive land use plan of the City of Coral Gables. To now change those laws and comprehensive plan to allow others to profit at the expense of our neighborhood, would be unfair and a dangerous precedent for all residents of Coral Gables, which I and my neighbors will use all of our legal rights to contest.</p>
896.	11 21 11 Suzette E. Ruiz Principal Somerset Academy Charter School Somerset Academy Middle School 18491 SW 134 Avenue Miami, Florida 33177				<p>From: suzette ruiz &lt;sruiz0520@yahoo.com&gt;            Subject: Somerset Academy            Date: November 21, 2011 9:42:59 PM EST            To: "ERIEL@CORALGABLES.COM" &lt;ERIEL@CORALGABLES.COM&gt;            Cc: Paul Zamek &lt;paul.zamek@gmail.com&gt;, Laura Russo &lt;laura@laurarussolaw.com&gt;            Reply-To: suzette ruiz &lt;sruiz0520@yahoo.com&gt;</p> <p>Mr. Riel,</p> <p>I wanted to inform you that this afternoon a woman was seen photographing cars and children at Somerset Academy located at 18491 SW 134 Avenue without permission or notice to the school. Parents and teachers were alarmed. When confronted by the assistant principal, Ms. Sandra Grau, she was dismissive and not cooperative. When confronted by one of our officers, Officer McManus, she gave her name Molly Hughes and said she was hired by the City of Coral Gables to study traffic. I was surprised to hear that since you or your staff have always called or emailed me to observe traffic even if off site. Please let me know if she was indeed hired by the City so that I may have answers for our parents who were concerned. In today's environment, parents are concerned when they see someone taking pictures of their children from across the street of their school. The safety and well being of our children, teachers and staff is paramount to us on all of our campuses.</p> <p>Thank you for your cooperation on this matter,</p> <p>Ms. Ruiz</p> <p>Suzette E. Ruiz Principal Somerset Academy Charter School Somerset Academy Middle School 18491 SW 134 Avenue</p>

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						<p>Miami, Florida 33177                      Phone: 305-969-6074                      Fax: 305-969-6077                      Somerset Academy Grace at Coral Gables                      624 Anastasia Avenue                      Coral Gables, Florida 33134                      Phone: 305-442-8626                      Fax: 305-442-8627</p>
897.	11 22 11	Suzette E. Ruiz Principal Somerset Academy Charter School Somerset Academy Middle School 18491 SW 134 Avenue Miami, Florida 33177				<p>From: suzette ruiz &lt;sruiz0520@yahoo.com&gt;                      Subject: Somerset Visit                      Date: November 22, 2011 10:53:46 AM EST                      To: "llanes@bellsouth.net" &lt;llanes@bellsouth.net&gt;                      Cc: Paul Zamek &lt;paul.zamek@gmail.com&gt;, Laura Russo &lt;laura@laurarussolaw.com&gt;                      Reply-To: suzette ruiz &lt;sruiz0520@yahoo.com&gt;</p> <p>Hi Rolando,</p> <p>This is the recount from Ms. Grau, my assistant principal:</p> <p>Today, November 21st, 2011, right before our 3:00p.m. dismissal, I was called outside because there was an unfamiliar person taking pictures in front of the school. When I walked over to the women, Ms. Hugh, I asked her how I could help her. She dismissed me quickly. I proceeded to tell her that the Sysco truck she was taking photos of, was there on behalf of the neighbor across the street to deliver turkeys for the poor on Thanksgiving. She rudely said she didn't care who the truck was there for and continued with her clicker and camera. I then asked her if she was a neighbor, new or old, and if she had spoken to our principal Ms. Ruiz. She said don't worry, I know what I'm doing and I have experience on this matter. Ms. Hugh said she was taking pictures of everything going on. She asked me how many dismissals we had and which grades left at the 3:00p.m. dismissal. I replied that 2nd - 5th grade left at 3:00p.m. Ms. Hugh at no time identified herself and was very abrupt and ill mannered during our conversation. She only identifies herself when the police officer approached her. She told him she had been hired by the City of Coral Gables to do a traffic analysis on this school. She states that there was a charter school being built in Coral Gables by a company called America and they wanted to know how traffic would impact that area.</p> <p>She took pictures of the Sysco truck and the cars going around it during our three o'clock dismissal. Please let me know if you need anything else.</p> <p>Thank you,</p>

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					<p>Suzette</p> <p>Suzette E. Ruiz Principal Somerset Academy Charter School Somerset Academy Middle School 18491 SW 134 Avenue Miami, Florida 33177 Phone: 305-969-6074 Fax: 305-969-6077</p> <p>Somerset Academy Grace at Coral Gables 624 Anastasia Avenue Coral Gables, Florida 33134 Phone: 305-442-8626 Fax: 305-442-8627</p>
898.	11 22 11 Rolando Llanes rllanes@civicagroup.com				<p>From: Rolando Llanes [mailto:rllanes@civicagroup.com] Sent: Tuesday, November 22, 2011 12:41 PM To: somerset school comments Subject: Response to Soapbox Letter</p> <p>The following is my response to Mr. Rosenberg's letter to the Miami Herald re: charter school safety:</p> <p>Re: Charter Schools Ignore Safety Rules / MH Neighbors Soapbox / November 20, 2011</p> <p>In his letter regarding the Somerset Academy charter school, Mr Burt Rosenberg makes uninformed and provocative statements about the safety of the educational facility at University Baptist Church, a facility that has been the setting for the educational instruction for school age children and adults in the City Beautiful for over 60 years; and a facility designed to safely accommodate significantly more students than the number the charter school has ever requested. As the architect working with Somerset Academy on its application, please allow me to clarify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Charter Schools (whether new or occupying existing facilities) are held to the SAME life-safety standards as are traditional public and private schools, including those located in the City of Coral Gables. Charter schools are not exempt from any life-safety requirements that are applicable to any school, including traditional public schools.</li> </ul>

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					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The fire and building codes of the State of Florida DO NOT distinguish between the life-safety requirements of a traditional public, public charter or private school. Correctly so, the fire code considers the equitable protection of ALL children, regardless of what type of school they attend, while setting standards that govern newly built as well as existing facilities.</li> <li>• As it had for the decades preceding the opening of the charter school, the City of Coral Gables Fire Department continues to provide annual fire safety inspections of the facility, ensuring that it meets and/or exceeds the requirements that apply to it under the code.</li> </ul> <p>A simple phone call to the City's building and fire departments would have further clarified the fact that Somerset has not "turned its back on the building codes". Instead, Somerset, UBC, and the City of Coral Gables Building and Fire Departments have fully embraced all applicable codes in this case, and will continue to do so in the future.</p> <p>Rolando Llanes, R.A.</p>
899.	11 22 11 Shellie Perdigon		X		<p>From: Shellie Perdigon [mailto:shellieperdigon@gmail.com]            Sent: Tuesday, November 22, 2011 12:55 PM            To: somerset school comments            Subject:</p> <p>November 22, 2011</p> <p>To Whom in May Concern,</p> <p>I'm writing in support of Somerset Gables Academy. The amended application and reduction of students represents a fair compromise to everyone and we urge you to approve the application. This is the second year that my children have been attending Somerset Gables and our family loves it. The quality of education they are receiving is amazing. We were so concerned about where we were going to send our children to school, but were fortunate enough to get in through the lottery. So many public schools are overcrowded and private schooling isn't an option for us at this time.</p> <p>I'm available to answer any questions you may have. Thank you for your time and consideration with our children's future.</p> <p>Thank you,            Shellie Perdigon            305-458-8726</p>

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