Planning and Zoning Board and City Commission Public Hearing Comments

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)
837.	04 27 11	Carlos Carta 150 Alhambra Circle Suite 950 Coral Gables, FL 33134 ccarta@gmail.com			X	From: carlos carta [mailto:ccarta@gmail.com] Sent: Wednesday, April 27, 2011 3:16 PM To: Cason, Jim Cc: Cabrera, Ralph; Anderson, Maria; Quesada, Frank; Foeman, Walter; Salerno, Patrick; Kerdyk, William Subject: City of Coral Gables Public Hearing notice- Good afternoon Mr. Mayor, I have been fielding countless emails and calls in the last two days from our Coral Gables neighbors and Biltmore Neighborhood Association members who are very concerned and some even scared about the Public Hearing notice that has been placed on their door (attached), one side has the official City notice and the other side has Somerset Academy Gables information promoting the so called benefits of this school. Is this a City endorsed notice? If so, I would like to request a meeting with you and the City Attorney as soon as possible to discuss this serious matter in more detail. You can contact me directly either via e-mail or by phone. Your prompt response will be greatly appreciated since many concerned residents feel that today's planning zoning meeting is a lost cause after receiving this "city" notice. Respectfully yours, Carlos Carta President Biltmore Neighborhood Association 150 Alhambra Circle, Suite 950 Coral Gables, Fl 33134 305-794-9543
838.	04 27 11	Linda Kries 748 Catalonia Avenue Coral Gables, FL lpkries@aol.com			X	At the last minute, I will not be able to attend tonight's meeting but I want everyone to know how very, very much opposed to the expansion of the charter school at University Baptist Church I am. My husband is also opposed and has sent his comments. I oppose the school on many levels, but recognize that charter schools are legal and am letting you know, what seems to me to be quite evident, that such an increase at this location will have an immense, negative impact on our community -- traffic, safety, neighborhood ambience -- and for what? So that a few people (most of whom are not even Coral Gables residents) can have their private school at public expense. We live in the neighborhood and love the area. Please protect Coral Gables and don't let this happen. Linda Kries 748 Catalonia Ave.

1 Comments are duplicate comments provided to various parties.

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839.	04 27 11	(13 Letter of Support – Attached)		X		From: Jessy Pineda [mailto:jessy@laurarussolaw.com] Sent: Wednesday, April 27, 2011 11:37 AM To: Bolyard, Scot Cc: Laura Russo Subject: Somerset - Letters of support Hi Scot: Attached are 13 letters of support for the Somerset Academy Grace Charter School. Should you have any questions, or if I may be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to call. Thank you, Jessy Pineda Assistant to Laura L. Russo, Esq. LAURA L. RUSSO, ESQ., LLC 2655 LeJeune Road, Suite PH 2-B Coral Gables, Florida 33134 Tel: 305-476-8300 ext. 17 Fax: 305-476-8383 Email: jessy@laurarussolaw.com (SEE ATTACHMENTS)
840.	04 28 11	Carolyn Voigt 503 Catalonia Avenue Coral Gables, FL 33134 cmvoigt@msn.com			X	Please add attached to your list of comments regarding Somerset Charter School. Thank you. Would open endless possiblities for future commerical development ont his property by changing "Religious/Institutional" to "Community Services and Facilities". It is such a broad, general term that could even put a medical faclity in my neighborhood! We already have much parking & traffic congestion from Sunday services. It will be the same or worse for evening school activities with parent parking or even Youth Center Sports functions that occur during school hours. School population 5 days a week will be probably 900.
841.	04 28 11	Kendell Turner catkst@aol.com				From: catkst@aol.com [mailto:catkst@aol.com] Sent: Wednesday, April 27, 2011 5:15 PM To: Salerno, Patrick Subject: Fwd: Photo Hi Mr. Salerno: I received a video earlier today that showed the sign that is depicted in the attached photo. I'll send you the video, although it is my guess you have already seen it. As a frequent user of the library I had to return books today and saw that same sign that

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						was in the video. The head librarian, Ellen Book, and I walked over to the church and I used her cell phone to take a picture of it. This upsets me as a citizen, but also as Chair of the CG Library Board I can tell you that parking has been a huge issue. Even students at CG Sr. High park their cars there early in the morning and walk to school. The board worked with administrators of the school who were and are most cooperative. Would this be a Code Enforcement problem for the church and Somerset school to have that sign there that tells people to park at the library, the youth center and grassy areas? Thank you, Kendell

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842.	04 28 11	Kendell Turner				From: catkst@aol.com [mailto:catkst@aol.com] Sent: Wednesday, April 27, 2011 5:17 PM To: Salerno, Patrick Subject: Fwd: Video re notice to park at the library by an outside organization FYI - Kendell -----Original Message----- From: catkst <catkst@aol.com> To: Louanzag <Louanzag@aol.com> Cc: dkeys <dkeys@CoralGables.com>; booke <booke@mdpls.org> Sent: Wed, Apr 27, 2011 2:42 pm Subject: Video re notice to park at the library by an outside organization Hi Louan: Thank you for bringing this to our attention. Parking is a problem and I find the video alarming. I cannot forward this to the board due to Sunshine, but am copying Dan Keys, the secretary to our board, asking him to do so. I will also copy the head librarian as since she is not a city board member I am not governed by Sunshine in her case. Thank you, Kendell -----Original Message----- From: Louanzag <Louanzag@aol.com> To: catkst <catkst@aol.com> Sent: Wed, Apr 27, 2011 2:37 pm Subject: Fwd: Tomorrow! Wednesday. Meeting! Dear Kendell: I thought you and the Library Board would be interested in this short video. In it there is a picture of a sign saying park at the Library. I know you all have been having issues with this, so wanted you to see it. Thanks, Louan From: bna-newsletter@biltmoreneighborhoodassociation.com Reply-to: info@biltmoreneighborhoodassociation.com To: info@biltmoreneighborhoodassociation.com Sent: 4/27/2011 12:42:05 A.M. Eastern Daylight Time Subj: Tomorrow! Wednesday. Meeting! Dear BNA Members, The BNA needs your support by your presence tomorrow April 27th at 6:00 pm at the Coral Gables Youth Center for the Planning and Zoning Board hearing concerning the requested land use change by Somerset Gables. Please arrive early in order to reserve a seat and fill-out a speaker card to speak on behalf of the neighborhood.

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						Below is a link to a YouTube video showing the traffic impact that is created by an Academica operated charter school with a similar enrollment to what they are requesting. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wk5HQQkT5kY Warm Regards, Biltmore Neighborhood Association
843.	04 28 11	Burt Rosenberg Burt.rosenberg@gmail.com				From: burt rosenberg [mailto:burt.rosenberg@gmail.com] Sent: Wednesday, April 27, 2011 11:01 PM To: Riel, Eric Subject: Possible math error in Garcia's presentation tonight Dear Eric Riel, I enjoyed your presentation tonight. Honestly, I don't know how you manage to stay so calm. I made notes of Mr. Garcia's presentation tonight, in which he claimed that 154 plus 674 add up to 768. They do not, they add to 828, and as a result he continues to overestimate the acceptable enrollment. Actually, what immediately struck me is that 154 and 674 were supposed to be 20% and 80% of X .. some number, doesn't matter which, and therefore they should be in ratio 1 to 4, which they are obviously not. I really didn't have to do any math. I approached Mr. Garcia to check that it was 674 that he was working with, but he didn't understand this 1 to 4 thing, and just claimed I didn't know how to multiply. Which might be true. As I said, I detected the error without needing to multiply. Not wanting to debate my arithmetic skills, I used a calculation to get the correct number of 614. Whether it was him or me, one of us made the error of changing a "1" to a "7". I'm sure he has deposited his new presentation with you, and we can check this. Whatever that may be, going with the suggestion of 28 car stack, and three dismissals, the new equation is: 614 * 84 / 97 = 531 Now, you may not know that in the past two years Somerset schools had to be evacuated for bomb scares. The details, if you care, are available by googling "Somerset hand grenade". I am not a civil engineer or a city planner, I have an undergraduate in electrical engineering and advanced degrees in computer science, but I would imagine one would

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						want to derate the 531 number in consideration that after an evacuation, or for a hurricane, you will have a rare but foreseeable event where you do not achieve staggered dismissal. What amount one should derate, I don't know. But 80% sounds about right, giving a number of about 425. I know that you have your experts to rely on for these numbers, but the wrongness of these numbers just popped out at me. Also the failure of Mr. Garcia to deal with Doral's staggered dismissal in the first place was quite a shock to me. Thanks. Burton Rosenberg Associate Professor of Computer Science University of Miami
844.	04 28 11	Albert Sanchez 619 Camilo Avenue Coral Gables, FL albert@mkt-focus.com				From: "Albert Sanchez" <albert@mkt-focus.com> Date: April 28, 2011 1:48:35 PM GMT-04:00 To: "'Riel, Eric'" <eriel@coralgables.com> Subject: Inquiry Eric, First of all, many kudos for your excellent and thorough presentation last night. I particularly thought that the traffic study was superb. And, btw, you are a very good presenter. I am curious about an issue that I hope you could shed some light. The hearing notice was sent to households within 2000 feet of the UBC location. How did you arrive at 2000 feet? Is that distance meant to represent something? Thanks for your help. Sincerely, Albert Sanchez 619 Camilo Ave.
845.	04 28 11	Cristina Maristany 8760 SW 108 Street Miami, FL 33176 cavino@85@hotmail.com		X		To Whom It May Concern, I support the expansion of somerset gables at the UBC location. Thank you for your time. Sincerely, Cristina Maristany 8760 SW 108 Street Miami, FL 33176

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846.	04 29 11	Natalie Tanen ntanen@aol.com			X	From: NTanen@aol.com [mailto:NTanen@aol.com] Sent: Wednesday, April 20, 2011 8:48 PM To: Olazabal, Carmen; Riel, Eric; coejack@bellsouth.net; jeffreyf@flanagan-williard.com; reception@beharfont.com; jsalman@c3ts.com; ebi@bellsouth.net; patkeon@aol.com Cc: ntanen@aol.com Subject: Coral Gables home owner response to UBC/Academia request for zoning change To the Members of the Planning and Zoning Board, It had been my hope to attend the meeting scheduled on April 27 to voice my opposition to changing the zoning at the current site of the University Baptist Church so that Somerset/Academia Charter School can increase the size of the student enrollment at their school at that location. I am unable to attend the meeting as I have been called out of town on that day for a family matter. I am writing to you so that I can express my thoughts on this matter. My husband and I have owned our home down the street from UBC at 3260 Riviera Dr., for over 30 years. It has been a joy to live in Coral Gables and particularly on this beautiful street. We have lovingly invested our time, energy and finances in improving and maintaining our home in a way that is always consistent with the rules and regulations of the city of Coral Gables. We have played by the book and have felt deep gratitude to the city for keeping our standard of living so lovely here. Now we are being faced with the possibility that the UBC site will house a school of over 700 children if Somerset/Academia gets their request to change the zoning in a way that would allow a dramatic increase in the approved size of the school. I find myself asking why this should be allowed when there are so many facets of the change that would work to the detriment of the community at large. The first and most obvious issue is that of traffic. I am sure that the school will be able to pay their experts to come up with a traffic study that will downplay the issue of traffic, but it defies logic to think that having over 700 children dropped off and picked up daily will not lead to an increase in traffic that will potentially be hazardous. The traffic will most certainly be a nuisance. And, of importance to me and the surrounding neighbors, will definitely decrease the value of our homes. Next is the issue of what a change in zoning for this piece of property might mean in the long term future. Apparently the requested change can open up that location to occupants that are terribly contrary to the peaceful enjoyment the neighborhood now shares. The thought of a fire station or electric station down the block from our house is most unpleasant. How can it be fair that we purchased our home knowing exactly what was

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						here in our long established neighborhood and then we get the rug pulled out from under us with this potential change? I also don't understand how it is allowable that the area residents will be made to suffer with the opening of a for profit charter school in Coral Gables when most of the student body of the school is from outside of Coral Gables. And, Coral Gables already has three public elementary schools, some of which are under enrolled. The addition of all of these children to this area will most certainly lead to a greater use of the nearby community facilities built for Coral Gables residents. We greatly enjoy going to the library and using the Youth Center and welcome others using these wonderful facilities. However, it seems reasonable to assume that these facilities will experience a large increase in use from children attending Sommerset Academy at school dismissal time because of the proximity of the school to these facilities. There will not be a way to stagger the numbers as they are now with children coming from all over. Last, I see the whole concept of charter schools as worthy of long term evaluation and potentially greater implementation. But, charter schools are for profit businesses. Given that fact and the previous location of such schools in non-residential neighborhoods, why shouldn't Somerset pick a spot that does not harm the community? Real estate is at low point. There must be another spot where this school can be successfully located. University Baptist has assured us that they are financially solvent without Somerset and that wonderful church will hopefully continue to thrive with or without a 700+ student school. Somerset should not be allowed to change the zoning and should continue to function at its current numbers for the benefit of our community. Thank you for allowing me to voice my concerns and opinion and I sincerely hope you concur. Very truly yours, Natalie Tanen
847.	05 02 11	Biltmore Neighborhood Association			X	From: BNA Newsletter [mailto:bna-newsletter@biltmoreneighborhoodassociation.com] Sent: Sunday, May 01, 2011 12:50 AM To: BNA-Info Subject: Summary of zoning board meeting; membership drive Dear Neighbor, A big thank you to all who attended Wednesday night's meeting! We had a great turnout. We certainly showed Goliath that this David is not going away! The hearing will continue on May 11th at 6:00 PM at the Youth Center Auditorium. Please come and hear our attorney, Tucker Gibbs, tell our side of the story. Please mark your

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						calendars and try to arrive before 5:30 PM for adequate seating. Public comments will also be heard at the next meeting. This is your opportunity to express your reasons for opposing the zoning change. To speak you must fill out a speaker card that are available before the meetings starts. We were generally pleased with the outcome of last night's meeting. City Staff recommended against the requested increase in student numbers. They seem to fully share our concerns in this matter. Eric Riel, Planning Director, showed clearly the disastrous impact of a larger school to the neighborhood and surrounding areas. The images presented spoke volumes: traffic, trash, safety issues, and degradation of the swales. Also, the Coral Gables traffic consultant refuted the traffic report put forward by Academica. Although no alternative numbers were given, we are hopeful that now everyone one knows what has been obvious from the start: this location cannot accommodate more students than St. Phillips or Granada Presbyterian. However while recommending against the requested increase in student numbers, City Staff recommended in favor of the comprehensive plan amendment that would change the zoning of the property from "Religious/Institutional" to "Community Services and Facilities". It is very important for protecting our neighborhood to argue persuasively against this change. The BNA legal position that will be presented at the next hearing by Mr. Gibbs is to deny any amendment to the comprehensive plan. We are ready and willing to fight this to the end in order to preserve the integrity of our neighborhood. Your support is necessary. Academica is well funded for this fight, sadly by your tax dollars! They are well connected, with friends and relatives on important legislative committees. We need your contributions in order to turn aside this disaster. We have a membership drive, for $75, and request you contribute to our legal fund, a donation of $250. Please contribute today to preserve your homes and the unique peace and tranquility that we enjoy in our beloved City of Coral Gables . Your real neighbor, Biltmore Neighborhood Association BCC: PZ
848.	05 04 11	tation down th Burt.rosenberg@gmail.com				Dear Eric, I was hoping to run by you my understanding of the traffic studies. Also I have entered the traffic data into a spread sheet. By a more complete graph of the data, superimposing car arrival, departure, dismissal and queue data, I believe I have found support for the Coral Gables expert's interpretation of the data.

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						To review: What is transpired is that the traffic study by Mr. Garcia was refuted by the Coral Gables' expert. It appears that Mr. Garcia: (1) accepted that his study was flawed and (2) presented a new analysis at the first planning meeting. The power point slides of the new analysis have been posted, but (3) there is no in-depth analysis submitted as a formal document to support Mr. Garcia's new conclusion? * Did I correctly understand on those three points? Moving forward from that: Mr. Garcia says (1) he now employs the area under the curve method. He also claims on the power points that (2) the data does not corroborate that the surrogate has three dismissals. His power point provides only for two dismissals. He as given without a full written report a new capacity number of 585 students. * Will Mr. Garcia be filing a full report to justify the 585 number? There does seem to be at least corroborations in the data of the 2:30 PM dismissal (the missing dismissal according to Mr. Garcia): 1. The curve of queue length bends from approximately 30 degree rise to 70 degree rise at about 2:38 PM, marking some new regime, possibly the end of the second dismissal and the increased arrival rate of cars for the third dismissal. 2. There is a cluster of cars leaving the site starting precisely at 2:30 PM and extending to 2:40 PM. I have copied the data provided for the Doral Academy site into a spread sheet and made additional calculations, allowing me to graph not just the stacking but the cumulative cars-in and cumulative cars-out numbers, shown as a fraction of their total, that causes the stacking. At 3:01 PM the fraction of cars that have left the site (red line) is equal to the fraction of students that have been dismissed prior to the 3:00 PM dismissal (green line). By and large those cars left the site with students dismissed prior to the 3:00 PM dismissal and therefore the stacking at that point is by and large only cars waiting for students in the last dismissal. This is supportive of the Coral Gables expert's opinion that uses 484 as the number of students responsible for the stacking of 97 cars. There is significant number of cars leaving the property between time interval Mr. Garcia marks at 2:14 PM and the peak stacking at 2:58 PM; in fact, 20% of the cars leave during that period, and 20% of the student population is about 150 students. It seems that Mr.

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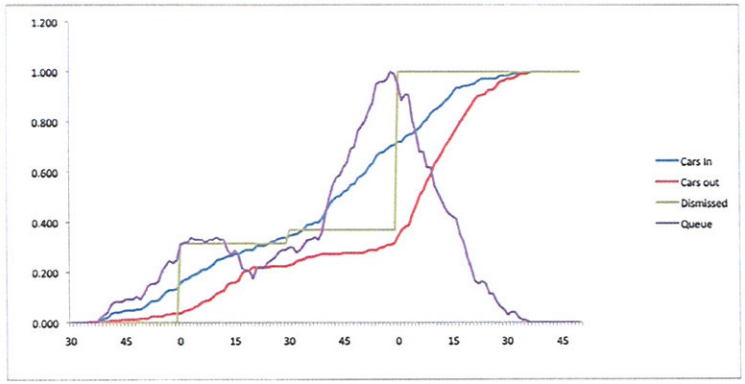
						Gracia's method assumes those students participate in the 3:00 PM stacking even though they have already left the premises. Furthermore, given (1) the large flutations in the final number that are made by small differences in assumptions, (2) the possibility that stacking will be less efficient in the confines of the Somerset Gables parking lot, which will most likely be single lane, (3) the stochastic nature of the stacking process and data collection, (4) general and standard engineering prudence; and (5) that a number once given cannot be reduced after a negative experience but can easily be increased by positive experience; I would apply a factor of 70% to any derived number. 
849.						

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City of Coral Gables Courtesy Public Hearing Notic e Comment Form	
Applicant:	Somerset Grace Charter School of Coral Gables
Applicatio n(s):	Change in Land Use, Conditio nal Use and Site Plan Review
Property:	624 Anastasia Avenue(University Baptis t Church)

Date: April 14, 2011

I, or We, Emily and Travis Curtin

Mailing address: 340 Alcazar Ave 33134

Email emilyandtravis@mac.com@

Please provide any applicable comments below (attach additional pages as necessary):

☐ Have no comment, or

☒ Do not object to this application, or

☐ Do hereby object.

(Signature)

Return this form to somersetcharterschoolcomments@coralgables.com
or the Planning Department, 405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, Florida 33134
or facsimile at 305.460.5327

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Applicant:	Somerset Grace Charter School of Coral Gables
Applicatio n(s):	Change in Land Use, Conditio nal Use and Site Plan Review
Property:	624 Anastasia Avenue(University Baptis t Church)

Date: April 15, 2011

I, or We, Carlos and Diana Torres de Navarro

Mailing address: 5520 Margaret St. Coral Gables, Fl 33146

Email todena @ bellsouth.net

Please provide any applicable comments below (attach additional pages as necessary):

☐ Have no comment, or

☑ Do not object to this application, or

☐ Do hereby object.

(Signature)

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Date: 4/18, 2011

I, or We, Jillian Hernandez

Mailing address: 215 Sidonia Ave, Apt. 4 Coral Gables 33144.

Email jillhern @ eden.rutgers.edu

Please provide any applicable comments below (attach additional pages as necessary):

☐ Have no comment, or

☑ Do not object to this application, or

☐ Do hereby object.

(Signature)

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Property:	624 Anastasia Avenue(University Baptis t Church)

Date: April 15, 2011

I, or We, Nancy Stuckert

Mailing address: 917 Medina Ave Coral Gables, Fl. 33134

Email nancystuckert @ yahoo.com

Please provide any applicable comments below (attach additional pages as necessary):

☐ Have no comment, or

☑ Do not object to this application, or

☐ Do hereby object.

Nancy Stuckert
(Signature)

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Application(s):	Change in Land Use, Conditional Use and Site Plan Review
Property:	624 Anastasia Avenue(University Baptist Church)

Date: April 12, 2011

I, or We, Don Baldaccini

Mailing address: 1511 Alegriano Ave, Coral Gables, Fl 33146

Email don @ suncoasthomeloans.com

Please provide any applicable comments below (attach additional pages as necessary):

☐ Have no comment, or

☒ Do not object to this application, or

☐ Do hereby object.

(Signature)

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Property:	624 Anastasia Avenue(University Baptist Church)

Date: April 12, 2011

I, or We, Ivette Baldaccini

Mailing address: 1511 Alegriano Ave, Coral Gables, Fl 33146

Email dbaldaccin @ aol.com

Please provide any applicable comments below (attach additional pages as necessary):

☐ Have no comment, or

☒ Do not object to this application, or

☐ Do hereby object.

(Signature)

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Date: April 15, 2011

I, or We, Fila M. Martinez

Mailing address: 918 Sorolla Avenue, Coral Gables, FL 33134

Email filamartinez@yahoo.com

Please provide any applicable comments below (attach additional pages as necessary):

☐ Have no comment, or

☑ Do not object to this application, or

☐ Do hereby object.

(Signature)

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Date: April 15, 2011

I, or We, Filadelfia A. Martinez

Mailing address: 912 Sorolla Avenue, Coral Gables, FL 33134

Email filaamartinez@gmail.com

Please provide any applicable comments below (attach additional pages as necessary):

☐ Have no comment, or

☑ Do not object to this application, or

☐ Do hereby object.

(Signature)

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Date: 4/14, 2011

I, or We, ESTELA GARCIA

Mailing address: 470 MARQUESA DR. CORAL GABLES FL 33156

Email MGARCIA364 @ aol.com.

Please provide any applicable comments below (attach additional pages as necessary):

☑ Have no comment, or

☑ Do not object to this application, or

☐ Do hereby object.

E Garcia
(Signature)

Return this form to somersetcharterschoolcomments@coralgables.com
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Date: April 18, 2011

I, or We, Mr & Mrs Casado

Mailing address: 4235 Braganza Av.

Email natisca1 @ hotmail.com

Please provide any applicable comments below (attach additional pages as necessary):

☐ Have no comment, or

☒ Do not object to this application, or

☐ Do hereby object.

I truly support expanding Somerset Gables into higher grades. The quality of education is excellent. A great asset to the neighborhood.

Natalia Casado
(Signature)

Return this form to somersetcharterschoolcomments@coralgables.com
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Property:	624 Anastasia Avenue(University Baptis t Church)

Date: 4/14, 2011

I, or We, Ana Martinez

Mailing address: 2710 Colombus Blvd.

Email anamartinez912@yahoo.com

Please provide any applicable comments below (attach additional pages as necessary):

☐ Have no comment, or

☒ Do not object to this application, or

☐ Do hereby object.

(Signature)

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Applicant:	Somerset Grace Charter School of Coral Gables
Applicatio n(s):	Change in Land Use, Conditio nal Use and Site Plan Review
Property:	624 Anastasia Avenue(University Baptis t Church)

Date: APRIL 14, 2011

I, or We, SHAWN THOMPSON / JENNIFER WHITE

Mailing address: 2910 WASHINGTON STREET

Email backdraft84@hotmail.com

Please provide any applicable comments below (attach additional pages as necessary):

☐ Have no comment, or

☒ Do not object to this application, or

☐ Do hereby object.

I COMPLETELY SUPPORT THE EXPANSION OF SOMERSET GRACE CHARTER SCHOOL OF CORAL GABLES AS THERE AS AN OBVIOUS NEED FOR MORE OPTIONS FOR PARENTS SEEKING A BETTER EDUCATION FOR THEIR CHILDREN. THE NUMBERS SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES WHEN THERE IS 100 OR SO SPOTS FOR OVER 1000 APPLICANTS.

(Signature)

Return this form to somersetcharterschoolcomments@coralgables.com
or the Planning Department, 405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, Florida 33134
or facsimile at 305.460.5327