

Architect: Give my position to Pandula

Jacqueline Albarran de Mendoza will not seek reappointment to Landmarks Preservation Commission so chairman Gene Pandula can remain on panel.

By **DAVID ROGERS**
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Where one door closes, another one opens.

Architect Jacqueline Albarran de Mendoza, the Landmarks Preservation Commission's nonresident member, has told the town she will not seek reappointment in March when her current term expires.

Albarran de Mendoza's move would allow board chairman Gene Pandula to remain on the board, even though he is preparing to move to West Palm Beach.

A town ordinance requires all but one of the 10 landmark commissioners to be residents of Palm Beach. The nonresident position is appointed once a year while the other positions, including three alternate, non-voting seats, are appointed to three-year terms.

In a letter received Wednesday by Town Planner Tim Frank, Albarran de Mendoza said that the landmarks board "cannot afford to lose as valuable a member as our current chairman, Mr. Eugene Pandula,



Albarran de Mendoza
Holds the only nonresident seat.



Pandula
Plans to move from island to WPB.

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LANDMARKS

Albarran de Mendoza 'a problem solver'

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when he moves his residence to West Palm Beach."

Albarran de Mendoza indicated that she would be happy to be reappointed to the board if "this position ever becomes available in the future."

Albarran de Mendoza, a former Palm Beach resident who works with Palm Beach firm SKA Architect & Planner, was first appointed to the commission in February 1991, serving continuously through February 1997. She was reappointed to the board in May 1998. After she moved to Wellington, Albarran de Mendoza was reappointed to the board the following year, following an ordinance change creating the nonresident position.

At its Jan. 16 meeting, the

commission voted unanimously to ask the Town Council to allow two nonresident architects who work in Palm Beach to serve on their board. Pandula is head of Pandula Architects, a firm at 201 Seaview Ave.

Frank said he would welcome Albarran de Mendoza's return one way or another.

"She's been nothing but an asset to the commission in all the times that she's served. She's been a problem solver, not a problem creator," said Frank. "There have been none finer than Mrs. Albarran de Mendoza. She always conducted herself professionally and when [a design] was architecturally inappropriate, she stood her line there, too."

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A gallant move

Offer to give landmarks seat to chairman shows deep regard for town

A gracious move on the part of a thoughtful board member is keeping the Landmarks Preservation Commission on a firm foundation.

Well-liked Chairman Gene Pandula was facing the loss of his seat on the commission because he is moving to West Palm Beach and a town ordinance requires that all but one of the landmarks commissioners be residents of Palm Beach. Rather than lose the respected leadership of Mr. Pandula, the commission had already voted to ask the Town Council to amend that ordinance to allow additional non-residents.

But before that potentially complicated revision could get rolling, Mr. Pandula's position on the commission was secured when architect Jacqueline Albarran de Mendoza offered to give up her commission seat. Mrs. Albarran de Mendoza, a former Palm Beacher who currently lives in Wellington, holds the one permitted non-resident position. But she has announced that when her term expires next month, she will not seek reappointment in order that Mr. Pandula, who will continue to work in Palm Beach, may remain on the commission.

The Landmarks Preservation Commission "cannot afford to lose as valuable a member as our current chairman," explained Mrs. Albarran de Mendoza in a Jan. 23 letter to Town Planner Tim Frank.

Service on the board is not a responsibility that Mrs. Albarran de Mendoza assumed lightly — or recently.

She works with the Palm Beach SKA Architect & Planner, and was a resident member of the Landmarks Preservation Commission from February 1991 through February 1997, then was reappointed in May 1998. Her sustained efforts were lauded by Mr. Frank, who noted, "She's been nothing but an asset to the commission in all the times that she's served. She's been a problem solver, not a problem creator."

Mrs. Albarran de Mendoza's recent gesture only affirms that endorsement, solving a problem that had threatened the stability of the commission. And, as she has indicated her willingness to return to the commission, the town should not hesitate to accept that offer if the opportunity should arise.