

**City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting**  
**Agenda Item G-1**  
**January 28, 2025**  
**Police and Fire Headquarters**  
**2151 Salzedo Street, Coral Gables, FL**

**City Commission**

**Mayor Vince Lago**

**Vice Mayor Rhonda Anderson**

**Commissioner Melissa Castro**

**Commissioner Ariel Fernandez**

**Commissioner Kirk Menendez**

**City Staff**

**City Attorney, Cristina Suárez**

**City Manager, Alberto Parjus**

**City Clerk, Billy Urquia**

**Arts and Cultural Coordinator, Catherine Cathers**

**Public Speaker(s)**

**Christine Rupp**

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Agenda Item G-1 [11:15 a.m.]

A Resolution of the City Commission approving funding support to Dade Heritage Trust toward the creation of a public sculpture honoring the life and legacy of Arva Parks McCabe to be installed at the entrance hall of the Main Miami-Dade County Public Library; authorizing an amendment to the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Annual Budget to recognize the transfer of funds from the Art in Public Places reserve as revenue and appropriate such funds as determined by the Commission, (unanimously recommended by the Cultural Development Board approval/denial vote: 6 to 0).

Mayor Lago: Item G-1, which is time certain for 11:00 a.m.

City Attorney Suarez: G-1 is a Resolution of the City Commission approving funding support to Dade Heritage Trust toward the creation of a public sculpture honoring the life and legacy of Arva Parks McCabe to be installed at the entrance hall of the Main Miami-Dade County Public Library; authorizing an amendment to the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Annual Budget to recognize the transfer

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*January 28, 2025*

*Agenda Item G-1 – Resolution approving funding support to Dade Heritage Trust honoring the Life and legacy of Arva Parks McCabe*

[Date]

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of funds from the Art in Public Places reserve as revenue and appropriate such funds as determined by the Commission.

Mayor Lago: Good morning.

Arts and Culture Coordinator: Good morning, Catherine Cathers, Arts and Culture Coordinator for the city. Mayor, Vice Mayor, Commissioners. In addition to being a lifelong Miamian, Arva Parks McCabe was a long-time resident in the City of Coral Gables and contributed significantly to long lasting cultural projects in the city. Among her credits, her involvement in the preservation of the Biltmore Hotel, the Venetian Pool, and the historic Merrick House. She helped create the city's historic preservation program in the 1970s and served as a Chair of the first Historic Preservation Board, as well as serving as the Inaugural Director of the Coral Gables Museum. Arva served on the University of Miami Board of Trustees for 26 years and wrote several books on Greater Miami Coral Gables and the University of Miami, including the frequently referenced Geoge Merrick, son of the South Wind, Visionary Creator of Coral Gables. The approved sculpture is being created by Miami artist Freda Coffing Tschumy and features one of Arva's books about Coral Gables. The Cultural Development Board is recommending approval to support this project using funds from the Art in Public Places reserve and have recommended a minimum of \$7,500, with encouragement for the Commission to consider an increased amount. Christine Rupp, Executive Director of Dade Heritage Trust is here to speak on the item and provide further details and was also a Director of the Coral Gables Museum. Christine.

Mayor Lago: Good morning. Thank you for being here with us.

Ms. Rupp: Good morning. Thank you for having me. Its great to be back in the City Beautiful. I desperately miss living here, I have to tell you. Arva loved the City Beautiful, as you all know, writing about George Merrick was her dream. She was instrumental in making people understand the vision that he had for this city and how special the City of Coral Gables truly is, and I can tell you last Sunday, with our local bike organization, Bike Walk Coral Gables, we did a bike tour of the northwest Gables in celebration of the city's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary and I was telling Catherine and Anna that the place just looks beautiful, the neighborhoods are beautiful, the trees are beautiful and for people have not explored the Gables before, I think it was a huge eye-opener. As to the beauty of living and working in the city, and so, that's what Arva was all about. I had the pleasure of working with her at the Coral Gables Museum and I can tell you without Arva that place never would have gotten off the ground. She was passionate about ensuring that that building would be part of the city's legacy and be an educational institution where people could come and learn about the city and George Merrick. So, when this idea came about to honor her, we reached out to Freda Tschumy, who is a renowned sculptorist. She recently had an exhibit at the Coral Gables Museum with her work. She is very passionate about creating the statute in honor of Arva. I had the pleasure of visiting the foundry last week, its looking beautiful and I believe the placement at the main

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library is a beautiful tribute to Arva also, as an author, historian, educator, and obviously with the plaque that will go there recognizing the donors, it will prove that Coral Gables is essentially part of the Greater Miami community, but yet set so far apart from any other place in Miami. So, we truly appreciate your consideration. When the statute is completed and installed in the library, we'll have a kick-off reception, of course, you'll all be invited, and again, just as an organization, we do so much work in the City Beautiful. I appreciate your consideration of this project, funding this project. Thank you. Do you have any questions for me.

Mayor Lago: I think it's a wonderful idea.

Ms. Rupp: Thank you.

Commissioner Castro: The board recommends the \$7,500, right.

Ms. Rupp: Yes.

Vice Mayor Anderson: I'll be happy to support that, and I think the library is an appropriate location. If you stop and look at the White Way Lights, there is a reference to the Riviera of Miami or Miami Riviera, and Arva certainly has had, I would call somewhat bullish approach towards making sure that historic preservation occurred and that the Coral Gables Museum was funded and Mark Trowbridge gave us a rather vivid description of her very thorough efforts, I should say, in raising money for that facility. This is an overdue tribute to her efforts, not only for Coral Gables, but for Miami in general. I am happy to support that. We can move or second, depending on who wants.

Commissioner Castro: Second.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Thank you.

Commissioner Fernandez: I've often said that I don't think there's been a greater loss to Coral Gables when we lost Arva Moore Parks. A lot of our history went with her because there is a lot of knowledge that she had that was never written down, and I think there is one person we should definitely have a tribute for and that's Arva Moore Parks. I'd be happy to support this.

Commissioner Menendez: I want to add that one thing that I loved about Arva's works was that we tend to think that 100 years ago life was simple, and she was able to identify that life back then was actually very complicated and complex. George Merrick and our Founding Fathers of our city, they dealt with a lot of issues that repeat themselves and we deal with them and by learning about how they dealt with it, how they were able to create such an amazing city through her work, we can sort of figure out sometimes how to get things right in the present time.

Mayor Lago: First off, again, thank you so much for being here. Its always a pleasure to have you and your organization. You do great work, splendid work. I'm a big supporter of Arva. She was a mentor, a person who never shy away from calling me and providing the necessary guidance or opinion in regard to what she thought was in the best interest. My wife and I, a few years ago, after being contacted by a good friend, there was an opportunity to purchase a beautiful map, the oldest map in the city's history. We bought it at auction and instead of putting it up in my office, one of the things that we decided as a family was to donate it to the museum on behalf of Arva, her legacy. She had just recently passed and she's a person, again, who is missed dearly, and she was an incredible, besides an incredible person, and mentor, just an incredible resident of South Florida, she was a person that cared deeply about who we are and what is our past and why we should be proud of being an excellent city. We all miss her dearly. She's an amazing person. I think its very well deserved. Anyone in the city can help, we are here to help, we are here to provide guidance, resources, and I think its another opportunity to pay tribute to her. Thank you so much for bringing this before us. Thank you. Mr. Clerk.

Commissioner Fernandez: Yes

Commissioner Menendez: Yes

Vice Mayor Anderson: Yes

Commissioner Castro: Yes

Mayor Lago: Yes

(Vote: 5-0)

Arts and Cultural Coordinator: Excuse me, if I may, we did need to have the amount to include in the resolution. So, the board had made a minimum recommendation of \$7,500 and I just want to clarify it.

Vice Mayor Anderson: That's the amount we discussed on the motion.

Mayor Lago: Okay. That will be included in the resolution.