

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item F-2
March 11, 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
Economic Development Director, Belkys Perez

Public Speaker(s)

Maria Cruz

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A Resolution of the City Commission directing the City Manager to develop a plan for the temporary installation of “Umbrella Sky” at Giralda Plaza and to include funding for such installation in the FY2025-2026 Budget. (Sponsored by Commissioner Castro)

Mayor Lago: Moving onto F-2.

Commissioner Castro: It’s a Resolution of the City Commission directing the City Manager to develop a plan for the temporary installation of “Umbrella Sky” at Giralda Plaza and to include funding for such installation in the FY2025-2026 Budget, sponsored by me. I have brought this up to the Commission several times, no action has been taken. There’s been certain different plans. Right now, I think it’s the moment to take action, that’s why I decided to draft this resolution, and I hope that I can have support from the Commission. I will move it if there is no discussion.

Mayor Lago: Just a quick question. Do we know the cost, what is it going to cost?

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Commissioner Castro: That's what the resolution is for.

Mayor Lago: But we're not committing to it though, right.

Commissioner Castro: No.

Mayor Lago: Okay. You want to find out. Perfect.

Vice Mayor Anderson: What I'd like to see is use our Cultural Art Board to determine whether it should be umbrellas or some other shading. I mean we all like the umbrellas, but some concerns that I had heard expressed is, it might be better to change it up a little bit, whether its umbrella flowers or some other type of design that would make it different. I'm not suggesting that that's what the design should be, but I do think we need the input from our boards that we have for this purpose.

Mayor Lago: I think I agree with you, Madam Vice Mayor, we should put it to the boards, but I heard two different takes on it. I heard people that said, hey, I loved it. It was great, bring it back from the business community; and then I heard other people tell me, Vince, its been done in other places, it hasn't been as successful when they bring it back. Again, maybe it will be amazingly successful here. All I ask is that you put it through the board as part of your plan and then you bring it back to the city to see what the final price is. That's it. I know that when I did this, when I did this on the Commission, it was incredibly successful. The amount of hits that we got on social media, but I think we were the first to do it here in South Florida or in the State of Florida, something to that effect, so there was a lot of traction. So, I'd like to see what our board says and get their input on that front, if you don't mind.

Commissioner Castro: Absolutely – and the business owners on Giralda are the ones really asking for this. They've been asking for this for a while. It would be nice.

Mayor Lago: I've talked to some people like on Giralda that are in favor, and I've talked to some that are kind of wishy-washy whether it's going to be effective. They want to know the price, because I know when we did it, I think it was like \$50,000 when we put the whole thing together. We had to put a whole system together to hold the umbrellas up, it has to be code and the trusses and all that stuff, you remember that, and I don't know what the price would be to do it now. I don't know if it's going to be a lot more money. I imagine, everything has gone up, so just kind of get an idea.

Commissioner Castro: Thank you. I'll move it.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Yes, just a couple of comments to keep in mind and this is for the board too. At the time it was put in before, there are very tiny trees, so they may have to go up a little higher or design it differently so it's more like an arch. I think it's a fabulous idea. I've talked

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about this as well to do something similar, because it added some nice shade, but we also have to be cognizant, and we have to be able to take it down quickly if we have a storm approaching.

Commissioner Castro: Belkys, I think we had explored other options instead of using the trusses and I think it was hanging them from the roof, a different type of installation. Have we gone through with any of that.

Economic Development Director: Belkys Perez, Economic Development Director. We did go, we had an engineer come out and see if it is possible to put it from side to side. Unfortunately, not every building façade is the same and they don't belong to the city, so there is a lot of indemnification that needs to happen. So, the best way of moving forward is to put trusses.

Commissioner Castro: Perfect. Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Take a motion.

Commissioner Menendez: We did.

City Clerk Urquia: We have a motion and a second, Mr. Mayor. I have a member of the public requesting to speak on the item, Mrs. Maria Cruz.

Mrs. Cruz: Mrs. Maria Cruz, 1447 Miller Road. This is – when this was done, it was fabulous. I got comments from people that were not even in this city, because the pictures were all over the place and they loved it. I think this is a great idea. I don't know how cultural it would be. I think it's more like economic development kind of thing, because it will bring business to that area. Listen, we drive by, people were taking pictures. People come here just to take pictures there. So, I think this is a wonderful idea.

Commissioner Castro: And it makes a nice environment for people that come in to dine and some shade that's really needed in that area sometimes.

Commissioner Menendez: I think it was what, seven years ago, that we had it. I know it was before 2019.

Vice Mayor Anderson: My seven-year-old granddaughter was in her stroller, so yes, I have a picture of it. I have the time capsule, so yes.

Commissioner Menendez: Mom was still around, and we took her to see that. I think even from a nostalgic perspective because a lot of people, like you said, Vice Mayor, kids were little, but now they can go back and revisit and I think it will bring a lot of joy, that's what's important.

Commissioner Castro: It feels like it was yesterday.

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Commissioner Fernandez: I think you brought up a good point, that Giralda during the daytime is extremely hot, that will provide some necessary shade to the area as well.

Commissioner Menendez: Yes

Vice Mayor Anderson: Yes

Commissioner Castro: Yes

Commissioner Fernandez: Yes

Mayor Lago: Yes

(Vote: 5-0)