

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item G-1
October 28, 2025
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Vince Lago
Vice Mayor Rhonda Anderson
Commissioner Melissa Castro
Commissioner Ariel Fernandez
Commissioner Richard D. Lara

City Staff

City Attorney, Cristina Suárez
City Manager, Peter Iglesias
City Clerk, Billy Urquia
Arts and Culture Coordinator, Catherine Cathers

Public Speaker(s)

Maria Cruz
Barbara Perez

Agenda Item G-1[Start: 1:43 p.m.]

A Resolution of the City Commission accepting a proposal from Latin Art Core for acquisition of a sculpture by artist Agustín Cárdenas, Le Couple, 1991, (unanimously recommended by the Cultural Development Board approval/denial vote: 7 to 0); authorizing the City Manager or his or her designee to enter into an agreement with Latin Art Core; authorizing an amendment to the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 amended budget to recognize as revenue a transfer from the Art in Public Places reserve, and appropriating such funds to put toward the cost of acquisition, installation, and related expenses regarding the artwork.

Mayor Lago: We're going to do two more items before we go to lunch. Item G-1 and then we'll hear F-5 after.

City Commission Meeting

[Date]

1

October 28, 2025

Agenda Item G-1 – Resolution accepting a proposal from Latin Art Core for acquisition of a Sculptor by artist Agustin Cardenas

City Attorney Suarez: G-1 is a Resolution of the City Commission accepting a proposal from Latin Art Core for acquisition of a sculpture by artist Agustín Cárdenas, *Le Couple*, 1991, (unanimously recommended by the Cultural Development Board approval/denial vote: 7 to 0); authorizing the City Manager or his or her designee to enter into an agreement with Latin Art Core; authorizing an amendment to the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 amended budget to recognize as revenue a transfer from the Art in Public Places reserve, and appropriating such funds to put toward the cost of acquisition, installation, and related expenses regarding the artwork.

Arts and Culture Coordinator: Good afternoon. Mayor, Vice Mayor, Commissioners, Catherine Cather's Arts and Culture Coordinator for the city. We do have a presentation if we can have that up. So, I'm going to provide a brief presentation about the item. We did have a representative Barbara Perez who is here on behalf of the Cultural Development Board. I believe that she still left some remarks that may be read by the City Clerk after the presentation. So, we want to initially just go over the options. The city does have various methods of acquiring works of public art and for this particular item a direct selection of artists and artwork was used. Just to review the process that was used, Mayor Lago forwarded artwork proposals for consideration. The Cultural Development Board reviewed the proposal of artwork by artist Augustine Cardenas and forwarded it to the Arts Advisory Panel and per our process for existing artwork staff had the artwork appraised. The Arts Panel reviewed the proposed artwork and made a recommendation to the Cultural Development Board who requested an assessment for further information and then made a motion recommending acquisition of the piece to the City Commission today. This is an image of the artist and some of his other artwork. A little bit about the artist. Sorry about the -- apologies here. I think I've skipped a slide there. So, a little bit about the artist Augustine Cardenas who was born in 1927 of Cuban heritage and also passed away in Cuba. He was a sculptor of Afro-Caribbean descent and known for his organic fluid forms that bridge surrealism, modernism, and African artistic traditions. He became an active member of the Surrealist Movement of the 50s and from 56 to 97 he exhibited extensively in group shows and solo shows around the world and also worked around the world in France, Canada, Austria, Japan, Israel, Korea, and Italy finally settling again in Cuba. He's widely regarded as I said, one of the most important sculptors of the 20th century and his work is in major museums and collections throughout the world. And here is his image again. Okay. So, a little bit about the artwork. The piece is called *Le Couple* from 1991. It is a white Carrara marble sculpture that stands at about 59 inches tall by about 24 by 24 and a half inches. It is a unique individual work and if we choose to do so we can use a separate tapertine base that's available for the for the work. So, the artwork itself has been described as an exceptional example of Cardenas's mature style, hence Mark ____ abstraction and rich symbolic content. The artwork stands out not only for its artistic excellence but also for its cultural relevance within the broader context of Latin American art closely aligning with the values that Coral Gables promotes, diversity, artistic excellence, and cultural enrichment. There's another image of the artwork and also one in the gallery. Let me show a little bit of the scale. Can we have the next slide please and

the clicker is not seeming to go along with me. Okay. So, we took a look at different proposed locations. Two locations at 427 Biltmore Way including an interior lobby in the Development Services Department and also within the Garden Paseo outdoors. The Coral Gables Museum Loggia on the north end, the Country Club entrance and also on the Art Museum Plaza. So, we're just going to review some of these locations and if I can have you, I'm sorry this clicker is not working, so if I can have CG TV scroll through them, I'll just talk a little bit about them. So based on the assessment and feedback from the Arts Panel the preferred placement is indoors at this location. However, the assessment did state that an outdoor location is feasible with a preference for placement under some sort of cover to minimize the effects of the elements. The Cultural Development Board reviewed all locations and made a motion recommending placement at 427 with a preference for the interior space. However, we would like the Commission's feedback on the locations and permission to work through the City Manager's Office on a final location. If you can just scroll through the remaining slides, please. Thank you. You can just keep going. These are the two within 427 Biltmore Way. Can you keep scrolling please. Thank you. Outdoors at the Paseo.

Mayor Lago: May I say something?

Art and Cultural Coordinator: Of course.

Mayor Lago: I love that location. Go back if you don't mind.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Which one?

Art and Cultural Coordinator: If you can go back to the garden one at 427.

Mayor Lago: And I like that location too by the way. That one right there is really good. Beautiful. So that's a beautiful location also, but if you look at this location look at this. Keep going. You're going to have another sculpture which is a melon by a world-renowned artist that's coming to the museum so you're going to have you're going to have two world-class sculptures. I don't have an issue with 427 also, but I think obviously having it exposed to the public in my opinion is something that would be beautiful. Look at the location. Can we go back to where the Celia Sanchez is? Look at that. I think you also have a little bit of protection from the elements because you have the building next door. I think it's a beautiful, beautiful, we could have maybe a little sculpture garden. We could have two or three pieces there. Maybe put something in the future. And I think it's something that again is very emblematic of the city. Something beautiful.

Commissioner Lara: Through the Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Vice Mayor.

Vice Mayor Anderson: You know I like it outside as long as we keep it coated with whatever to avoid the impact of acids exhaust on it.

Art and Cultural Coordinator: So, it does have a high polish finish to it so the recommendation is that it's just regularly washed and cleaned maybe twice a year would be our recommendation. If we would in order to maintain that very high polish it is possible to do it on occasion. We would not want to do it very often because that actually takes off some of the material of itself.

Mayor Lago: Oh yeah, I also like this location a lot too. This location is amazing.

Art and Culture Coordinator: And this is another location that we may consider for the other piece that we'll talk about.

Mayor Lago: Yes. I think it's a beautiful spot.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Where other people can see it.

Mayor Lago: By the way I think it could be something where we could work around, you know get rid of the tree planters make it a focal point, the garbage can there's things that are in the way, but there's things that you could do that I can make it look really beautiful and be inviting maybe you could add another piece in the near future and you could be something. The goal here is to have multiple locations where we have that, but you know have people come discover the City of Coral Gables based on our beautiful art.

Art and Culture Coordinator: I would finally just like to mention that funding for the -- you can just stop the PowerPoint that's fine thanks. So, funding for the proposed acquisition and related items is being recommended through the Art Fund which is generated through Art in Public Places private development program.

Mayor Lago: So, if I may just have a personal point of privilege. So, I'm a huge fan of Agustin Cárdenas. I've always been a huge fan. I don't own a work, I don't want to work by this artist, but I wrote a memo for you to read, and I sent it to you a while ago to my colleagues on the Commission and this is the memo that I wrote along with some background. This gentleman's story is an amazing story, and I highly recommend that people have the opportunity to really understand a little bit more about this this world-class artist. He's a Cuban artist but he's not really Cuban he belongs to the world. I also wanted to show you this book called the Life of Forms which is an amazing book where if you look at the artists that are that are that are a cover here you have Arp, Asawa, Burgosy, Calder, Cárdenas, Hepworth, Matisse, Moreau, Noguchi, Palin and Turnbull. You have the 10 best sculptures of the last 20th century and to say that you know a Cuban a person of this magnitude is considered to me it carries a lot of significance. If you go to Paris and you have the opportunity to visit the museum in Paris, you will see this artist proudly exhibited in Paris.

City Commission Meeting

October 28, 2025

Agenda Item G-1 – Resolution accepting a proposal from Latin Art Core for acquisition of a Sculptor by artist Agustin Cardenas

[Date]

4

He's represented by two galleries that are in Art Basel, and they always bring his sculptures. So, to me to be able to bring one of these sculptures back to Miami and show it in its glory is a real feather not only in my cap but I think in the City of Coral Gables. Similar to what we did with Celia Sanchez an amazing Cuban artist who just recently passed away she was in Puerto Rico represented by Lelong, Lelong I think, Lelong, correct? Yes. A gallery in New York and just one of the many exceptional Cuban artists that have received world recognition. So, I think this is an opportunity for us to do something incredible and continue to elevate the quality of the work here in the City of Coral Gables. By the way you never see works of this magnitude. He worked in smaller scales which allows the window for collectors like myself to hopefully one day be able to buy maybe not a marble but maybe a small little bronze or in addition but these works are you don't see them that often. Madam Vice Mayor?

Vice Mayor Anderson: You know the area in front of the Art Cinema, I think would get some exposure to folks that you know aren't going to the 427 Building.

Mayor Lago: Yep.

Vice Mayor Anderson: So, I think we need to kind of spread this amazing artwork around and I mean I liked 427 Building location as well, but I think the Art Cinema would be an experience for folks that otherwise wouldn't be able to see it.

Mayor Lago: I'm in favor.

Art and Culture Coordinator: There is another piece that we'll be talking about that we feel may be a good fit for the Art Cinema also. You'll be seeing it today.

Vice Mayor Anderson: We'll be seeing it today, so we can choose...

Mayor Lago: Maybe we can see it right after this one if you don't mind and then we'll hit F-5 after.

Vice Mayor Anderson: We can talk location later but no, beautiful piece.

Mayor Lago: Do we have any public comment, Mr. Clerk?

City Clerk Urquia: Yes Mr. Mayor. First speaker Mrs. Maria Cruz.

Mrs. Cruz: Mrs. Maria Cruz, 1447 Miller Road. I just had a question, and I think I just heard the answer. My only concern every time we go, we get pieces like this, and they go outside is what the maintenance would be. I think she answered it already, but our concern is we've gotten other art pieces that were stuck with the maintenance, so this is my only concern. I like it but I think we need to be very careful that we put it in a place where we don't have to spend lots of money keeping it up.

City Commission Meeting

City Clerk Urquia: Mr. Mayor I'm going to go to Zoom next. I have Barbara Perez from the Cultural Development Board who wanted to speak.

Mayor Lago: Okay. Ms. Perez thank you for being here with us. Ms. Perez.

Ms. Perez: Hello.

Mayor Lago: Yes, ma'am the floor is yours.

Ms. Perez: Sorry about that. I just wanted to – I am not watching but because I'm driving, but I just, I know that the board, on behalf of the board we also agree that the paseo at 427 next to the development.

Mayor Lago: We lost you. Mr. Clerk you want to you want to come back see if we can.

City Clerk Urquia: I have no one else, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Okay. Then we'll close the public comment unless Ms. Perez comes back before. If not there's no further comment I entertain a motion.

Vice Mayor Anderson: I'll move it.

Commissioner Fernandez: I'll second.

Commissioner Fernandez: Yes.

Commissioner Lara: Yes.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Yes.

Commissioner Castro: Yes.

Mayor Lago: Yes.

(Vote: 5-0)

Mayor Lago: Thank you.