

**City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting**  
**Agenda Item D-4**  
**February 25, 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**  
**Historic Preservation Officer, Anna Pernas**

**Public Speaker(s)**

**Karelia Carbonell**

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Agenda Item D-4 [10:25 a.m.]

A Resolution of the City Commission approving the City Manager to enter into an agreement with PLUSURBIA Design for the North Ponce Neighborhood Historic Resources Survey pursuant to section 2-691, Special Procurement/Bid Waiver of the Procurement Code in an estimated amount of \$98,000.00.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Item D-4, please.

City Clerk Urquia: I'll go ahead and pull agenda item D-4. May I have a motion on the amended Consent Agenda.

Commissioner Fernandez: I'll move it.

Vice Mayor Anderson: I'll second.

City Clerk Urquia: All in favor.

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[Date]

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All: Aye.

Mayor Lago: Move unto item D-4.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Item D-4, I just wanted to – this is going back to the historic preservation study that back in 2023 was an item that this prior Commission, I should say, before the prior Commission, I had the final language drafted and sent to staff and it was a \$50,000 estimated amount to be able to get the study moving forward and at the end of last year, I was informed around November that it was going to be completed in December. It wasn't finished. So, I pulled this for a couple of reasons. Number one, yes, it cost more, but this type of delay in moving something forward should not be something that we encounter ever again, that it needs to be brought to the attention of the Commission that there is some issue with the amount of money that it is costing; and number two, I want to make sure that this historic preservation study does a complete job. It provides our staff, our Historic Preservation Department the necessary tools it needs to evaluate the outlined district that runs from the Flagler District up on Ponce de Leon and Douglas, all the way down to where the district ends at Navarre, between Douglas and LeJeune Road. City Manager, I'm going to direct this question to you to make sure that this is not just identifying these buildings are over 50 years old, we want who the architect was, what the important architectural features are in this building or not in this building that warrant historic preservation for each and every building. Mr. City Manager, can you respond to that. Okay. I want to make sure that this historic preservation study, not only stays on track, on timeline, and if there's an issue with the timeline that is brought to the attention of this Commission, but the result of this study provides our Historic Preservation Department with the necessary information to evaluate whether a building should be preserved historically, each and every individual building. Who is the architect. What are the points that it makes on the evaluation whether or not it should be a designated building for historic preservation. So, when we drill down to the details, this study should provide that detail and not just a glossing over of which buildings are over 50 years old.

City Manager Parjus: Correct Vice Mayor and that's the intention of the study. I have Anna here to provide more information regarding that, but we have conversations regarding what the intent is of what I want to do.

Vice Mayor Anderson: And I'll throw one more question in there so you can just present once. What is the expected timeline we're going to get this report?

Historic Preservation Officer: Good morning, Vice Mayor, Mayor and Commissioners. So, the comprehensive scope of work right now includes that, every property over 50 years old will be evaluated through the Florida Master Site File Form, that will be then registered with the State Historic Preservation Office. That form includes like the construction date, architect, style of the building, whether or not it would be contributing or non-contributing, depending on all of those

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factors that the Secretary of Interior standards use for historic designation. So, its something that we'll then reference in order to be able to jumpstart that, whether a property meets designation criteria or not. The scope of work includes the North Ponce area but can be expanded to include the Flagler area since they are really separate reports that would have to be done, since they are two different sections. So, their backgrounds are a little bit different of how they were developed as one a commercial district and another kind of a mixed-use more residential as you move further west about 8<sup>th</sup> Street. The timeline that was included here is beginning kickoff on March 1<sup>st</sup> depending on whether or not we move forward today. We have the company working on their vendor registration now and our admin is working with them for that, and we'll have a professional service agreement drafted in order to get the contract moving. They are giving us a six-month timeline to complete all of the Florida Master Site Files, have them registered and then at the end they'll put together a comprehensive report that will give a history of the area, and study of all of the buildings and kind of give a comprehensive summary of everything that's been found through that study.

Vice Mayor Anderson: So, I'm going to go back to your comment about the Flagler District. I'm going to ask you to go back to the edits, that I provided and as it was discussed before the Commission, it was always intended that North Ponce included the fact the Flagler District in my edits and if you need me to forward them to you, they are in Word format included the Flagler District, explicitly included the Flagler District. It was not meant to be a stepchild. It was always part of the North Ponce area. Okay. So, although maybe when Merrick first designed an area, he thought it was going to be an industrial area. It was developed as a residential district, and it needs to be included. We clearly have in that area historic buildings. We clearly already have a historic district in that area, it just needs to be finished. Its not a large addition, it never was an addition, and if when this project was presented to this company, Plusurbia, I think the name is, they weren't given that language. I'll be happy to forward it to you again, because I don't want to do this twice. This needs to be done comprehensively. Our staff doesn't have enough time to do this job themselves, the materials that they provide you should help you complete the job of determining which one of those buildings can be not only historically preserved under our city standards, under our state standards, but also under federal standards, because if you truly want to protect them, they have to meet the federal standards as well.

Historic Preservation Officer: Correct.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Okay.

Commissioner Fernandez: I would also like to add, I know we've had conversations, the Manager and the Director and I about in next year's budget expanding that study to include all of the city, and make sure that any properties that could potentially be historic are informed, because what we have seen historically is, properties go on sale, people buy them with an expectation of making

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changes to the property, not knowing that it could be historic and then after a purchase, well now its historic, everything you were planning is changed. So, it's better if we as a city just make the investment to figure out what should be designated historic and address that beforehand, if we can include that as an addendum to this study that they are already working on, but just to make sure that throughout the city any properties that would qualify are informed that they would potentially be deemed historic. I don't know if that's something maybe we can put as a GIS overlay, where realtors can go on there and show their clients to make it easier and facilitate that, but that's what I would like to see going forward into budget season this year.

Historic Preservation Officer: Yes, it's definitely something we're going to be working on starting to budget for and maybe work on it in phases, depending on different factors of historic importance.

Mayor Lago: Thank you very much.

Historic Preservation Officer: Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Anything else.

Commissioner Castro: I put an update on this item. I mean you are already speaking about it. Do you want to continue.

Historic Preservation Officer: The update would depend on what happens with this motion, I guess. So, ideally, we get the funding for today and then we'll move forward with the contract to get the work started on March 1<sup>st</sup>. Based off of the comments by the Vice Mayor, we'll amend, we'll look at amending the scope of work to include the Flagler section and she does provide a section for additional services, so it's something that we had discussed with her. If we need to come back here for additional funding for that, we will and if not, we'll work with Procurement through that process.

Commissioner Castro: Thank you.

Vice Mayor Anderson: I'll be happy to move it, and I'll forward to you what I sent to your staff back in September of 2023, that clearly included the Flagler district, so that we could have a comprehensive study done. I want to make sure this train doesn't come off the tracks again. So, I'll move it.

Commissioner Castro: I'll second.

Vice Mayor Anderson: And then we can come back with a supplemental item for the future budget for the remainder of the city.

Historic Preservation Officer: Thank you.

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Mayor Lago: So, Mr. Clerk we have a motion and a second.

City Clerk Urquia: Mr. Mayor, I have a member of the public requesting to speak on the item, I believe to be Karelia Carbonell.

Mayor Lago: Ms. Carbonell, good morning.

Ms. Carbonell: Good morning, everyone. I just wanted to give my two cents on this item on behalf of the Historic Preservation Association. This study has been a long time coming, I believe almost over ten years where it had been proposed and finally, we're at this point where it can finally happen. In the meantime, we've lost several significant properties in that area and that area is in jeopardy to be overdeveloped or developed beyond what is there. So, it's a full support of the study. Also, just as an aside about historic buildings or potential historic buildings in the city, every building that's over 50 years old, that is a criterion to be reviewed for designation. So, homes that are on the market that are 50 years and older, obviously realtors must have this available to the buyers, but they are potential historically – they are potential historic homes. So, 50 years and older, it shouldn't be a surprise to someone that buys a home that that could be the ultimate objective. Some homes are not, won't be designated because they don't fit the other criteria, but 50 years old is the sort of foundational. So please understand if that's a question that that is understood. Thank you and full support on the study. So, thank you again. Bye-bye.

Mayor Lago: Thank you. We have a motion and a second.

Commissioner Castro: Yes

Commissioner Fernandez: Yes

Commissioner Menendez: Yes

Vice Mayor Anderson: Yes

Mayor Lago: Yes

(Vote: 5-0)