



City of Coral Gables
CITY COMMISSION MEETING
August 25, 2020

ITEM TITLE:

Resolution. A Resolution amending the approved recommendation provided in Resolution No. 2018-222, in order to authorize the City Manager to relocate the Economic Development Department (“Department”) to the H. George Fink Studio (“Fink Studio”), located at 2506 Ponce de Leon Boulevard, Coral Gables, FL 33134, upon completion of the City’s historic restoration of the building.

DEPARTMENT HEAD RECOMMENDATION:

Approval

BRIEF HISTORY:

On February 10, 2016, the City of Coral Gables purchased the subject property in order to preserve this iconic historic building that played a critical role in the City's early development. Designed by H. George Fink in 1925, the Fink Studio remains a model for Mediterranean architecture and is listed in the City’s Register of Historic Places.

In 2018, the City created a Selection Committee (“Committee”) made up of representatives from the Economic Development, Property, Budget, Historic Preservation, and Cultural Advisory Boards to assist in selecting a prospective tenant for the subject property. The Committee recommended the Centro Cultural Español (“CCE Miami”).

On August 28, 2018, pursuant to Resolution 2018-222, the City Commission approved the Committee’s recommendation and authorized the City Manager to negotiate and draft a lease agreement with CCE Miami. In addition, the City Manager was directed that if an agreement could not be reached with CCE Miami, the City Manager would negotiate with the second-place prospective tenant (Società Dante Alighieri (aka Italian Cultural Center) in collaboration with Alliance Francaise (French Cultural Center), and Goethe-Institut (German Cultural Center), hereafter the “Dante Collaboration”).

In March of 2019, Martinez Alvarez Urban Design, Architecture & Interior Design, Inc. (the “design professionals”) completed a comprehensive Building Assessment and Recommendations Report. On June 19, 2019, pursuant to Resolution 2019-167, the Commission directed staff to begin initial design work and determine a source of funding for the Fink Studio’s restoration.

On October 22, 2019, pursuant to Resolution No. 2019-315, the City approved a professional services work order with the design professionals for basic services, historic restoration, repairs, and tenant improvements at the Fink Studio.

On July 14, 2020, pursuant to Resolution No. 2020-154, the City Commission allocated the proceeds from the sale of the city-owned property located at 3501 Granada Boulevard, Coral Gables, FL 33134 for the restoration of the Fink Studio.

Given changes in circumstances due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and after careful consideration and negotiation, the City has been unable to reach an agreement with CCE Miami.

Due to the passage of time, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the May 31, 2021 expiration of the Economic Development Department’s lease at 2121 Ponce de Leon Blvd, Suite 720, Coral Gables, FL 33134, City Staff recommends that the City Commission amend the approval and direction provided in Resolution 2018-222. This amendment would authorize the City Manager not to negotiate with the second-place prospective tenant Dante Collaboration, to throw out the Committee’s recommendations, and take the necessary actions to relocate the Department to the Fink Studio, upon completion of the building’s historic renovation.

The Department’s use of the premises will enable staff to showcase the City’s historic distinction to any potential company looking to relocate to Coral Gables. The Fink Studio’s location is also optimal for the Department’s offices since it is in the business district’s epicenter and only a block away from the City’s future Garage 1 Mobility Hub, where staff and visitors will park. In addition, the building will remain public space and both the City and the Department will be able to use the Fink Studio to hold community workshops, rotating art exhibits, meetings, and city-sponsored events. This menu of activities will enable residents, business-owners, community partners, and stakeholders to visit, appreciate, and celebrate the City’s historic distinction.

LEGISLATIVE ACTION:

Date.	Resolution/Ordinance No.	Comments
August 28, 2018	Resolution 2018-222	Draft and Negotiate Lease with CCE
June 11, 2019	Resolution 2019-167	Begin design process and identify funding
October 22, 2019	Resolution 2019-315	Engagement of Design Professionals
July 14, 2020	Resolution 2020-154	Allocating funding for restoration

ATTACHMENT(S):

- 1. Draft Resolution**