

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item H-7
December 11, 2007
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Slesnick Donald D. Slesnick, II
Vice Mayor Maria Anderson
Commissioner Rafael “Ralph” Cabrera, Jr.
Commissioner William H. Kerdyk, Jr.
Commissioner Wayne “Chip” Withers

City Staff

City Manager, David Brown
City Attorney, Elizabeth Hernandez
City Clerk, Walter J. Foeman
City Clerk Staff, Billy Urquia
Cathy Swanson, Development Director
Dan Keys, Public Service Director

H-7 [10:08 a.m.]

Resolution approving the recommendation of the Cultural Development Board for the placement of three Jean Ward Sculpture in Ingraham Park.

Ms. Swanson: The Commission will recall that the Jean Ward sculptures, the location of the remaining three have been under discussion. You asked us to sit with the University and have discussions with them, and while the University was indeed willing and wanting to accept them, the Board felt that it was important that the public art be placed in the public right-of-way; they had revised their recommendation, previously they had recommended some specific parks, and now they asking you to place them as a cluster in Ingraham Park, and the Board whole-heartedly embraced that recommendation, and they forward it onto you for consideration.

Mayor Slesnick: Do I have a motion?

Commissioner Anderson: I'll move that.

Commissioner Cabrera: Second.

Mayor Slesnick: Second by Mr. Cabrera. Moved by Ms. Anderson, second by Mr. Cabrera. Any discussion?

Mr. Clerk

Commissioner Cabrera: Yes
Commissioner Withers: No

Commissioner Cabrera: What was your vote Chip?

Commissioner Withers: No.

Commissioner Cabrera: Can you tell me – I'm just curious, because I don't have a dog in this fight, so if you want to enlighten me, I may change my vote.

Commissioner Withers: Well, that's why I didn't discuss it. I just have concerns over the art and the attractive nuisance it's going to cause, and we've had graffiti in that area before, and I think the cost of maintaining the sculptures in case its graffitied-up. It's not like its in a secure downtown area, and I'm just concerned about the safety of the kids, number one, and number two the maintenance of the art work in that remote area.

Commissioner Cabrera: You know, I supported – I didn't think of the things that you just brought, but one of the things that I was concerned about is when we have placed some of this artwork, I'm not sure we have done the artwork the justice it deserves, not only in the placement, but also in the identification of the artwork, and so I didn't want to bring that up, and I didn't want to be critical to the City regarding this thing; but if you feel as strongly as you do, and I think you have good cause to feel the way you do; Mr. Clerk, I'm going to change my vote to a no vote, and I'm going to withdraw – first of all I need to withdraw my second, and then if there is a second I'm going to then vote no.

Mayor Slesnick: Why don't we do this – we've heard the presentation; why don't we come back when we have a full Commission, at least give Mr. Kerdyk a chance to either second it or weight in or I...

Commissioner Cabrera: So we are going to defer this vote for now then?

Mayor Slesnick: Well, obviously there could be no better vote than 2-2 right now, so we'll defer that later in the agenda.

Commissioner Cabrera: I understand.

Commissioner Withers: That's why I really didn't want to discuss it, Ralph. It's just a personal feeling; I know what the Board is dealing with; I remember when the Commission first accepted these Ward sculptures, and I felt we had a home at UM especially with Ward's connection at UM.

Commissioner Cabrera: Right.

Commissioner Withers: Again, for the reasons I'm concerned about is that park is a place where parents get their kids off of bicycles and run in that park down there, so I'm a little concerned about that, in addition I'm just concerned about the overall maintenance of them.

Commissioner Cabrera: Really, I didn't mean to put you on the spot like I did.

Commissioner Withers: No, that's fine.

Commissioner Cabrera: But I was caught off guard when you said no.

Mayor Slesnick: Chip raises an issue though – can I ask what happened at the discussions with the University about placing it at the University.

Ms. Swanson: I'm happy to add information on that. The University was willing to receive them; the Board felt that they were sent and donated to the City and that it was appropriate for us to find City space for that. They did agree with New World Festival and the other donors that we would sign them and we would properly mount them once the installation was committed to alleviate some of the concerns that had been expressed by Parker Thompson; and he was present at our meeting when that recommendation happened, encouraged the City to move forward with it, and that he himself committed to raise additional funds, if it was an installation funding issue.

Commissioner Cabrera: OK.

Commissioner Withers: Is there any required refurbishment on those pieces?

Ms. Swanson: The refurbishment is happening – anyway it is the City's responsibility in this instance because we made no maintenance provisions in receiving them, and public Works, Public Service, and Motor Pool have together sanded them down, provided proper paint, and I believe the maintenance schedule on these sculptures now given the paint and the treatment is an every five year cycle.

Commissioner Withers: So when you say the Motor Pool is going to paint these sculptures?

Ms. Swanson: They were housed at the Motor Pool for...

Commissioner Withers: No, but who is actually do the restoration?- because that's a discussion I'm going to have later about, if we are going to really push forward this art in public place agenda, we need to annually budget items for restoration and maintenance of these pieces. So I'm just curious what is the cost of these three or four, six or seven pieces to restore them?

Ms. Swanson: When you come back for a vote, we will have that information; the painting and installing is actually being done by the Public Works Department, and we'll get that information for you, and you'll recall in the Art in Public Places ordinance, it does include maintenance expenditures as an allocation.

Commissioner Withers: No offence to our fine Public Works Department, but are we really qualified to restore works of art?

Commissioner Anderson: That's a concern.

Ms. Swanson: I tip my hat off to the Public Works Department for working with the dollies that we've got. If the Art in Public Places ordinance is approved and private sector contributions come forward, we do have the ability to fund maintenance programs out of that art acquisition fund.

Commissioner Withers: No, that wasn't my question; my question was are we, the City, qualified to handle restoration of public art?

Ms. Swanson: I think they are just doing the best they can; I don't think they have specific credentials, but...

Commissioner Withers: So the answer is no. I'm not being – listen, art is art; we are spending almost what, a million bucks on the DeSoto Fountain, I don't know what the final number is going to be.

City Manager Brown: Seven hundred and fifty thousand (\$750,000).

Commissioner Withers: Yes. In all fairness to these artists and these donors that give us this artwork, I think that we owe them, or we owe responsibility to maintaining it in a curator way, not just in a public works type of way, and throwing – and again, maybe I'm – when you said auto department supplying the paint to paint these sculptures, it concern me a little bit.

Ms. Swanson: We have Dan Keys to add more knowledge to this.

Mr. Keys: I can speak to what I know Public Works...

Mayor Slesnick: Dan, raise your mike.

Mr. Keys: Public Works – once these were installed, the three that were already installed, once they were installed in place, because they get moved around in transit and so forth and might get nixed, so they are not painted before installation. Had a sand blasting company come out with the proper brace and materials and they sand blasted those materials, and they use the paint that is appropriate to steel, weathered, and the environment. In this case I believe that Public Works is qualified to have done what they did. Certainly some other type of art may have to look otherwise for expertise.

Commissioner Withers: Well, you know, I'm concerned about stainless pieces that might be graffitied-up or something like that. Do we really have the skill to remove the graffiti, I mean, that's...?

Mr. Keys: These pieces aren't stainless surfaces, but I think there would be some additional expertise necessary to look into how exactly you would remove graffiti or take care of other problems that occur.

Commissioner Withers: Fair enough.

Ms. Swanson: Commissioner, one of the important additions that we have now in the process that we didn't have before is a maintenance protocol. So if this City receives art it also has instructions on how to maintain it and an estimate on how much that maintenance will cost. That was not in place in 1995.

Commissioner Withers: Listen, I think it's a phenomenal program, and the only reason I thought that UM would be such a great place for Ward is all those issues I've discussed fall on the shoulders of the University of Miami; that's one less headache we have, and that was my primary focus on that; that's why I pushed it early on.

Mayor Slesnick: We'll come back to that.

Ms. Swanson: Thank you for taking this at time certain, Dr. Damian has final exams to give her students soon, so we appreciate that.

[End: 10:17 a.m.]

[Start: 1:08 p.m.]

Mayor Slesnick: H-7 – we are back to H-7. Mr. Kerdyk was out to the room and we looked like we were maybe coming to an impasse on that, and so what I'd like to do is reopen H-7. This is a resolution approving the recommendation of the Cultural Development Board for the placement of three Jean Ward Sculpture in Ingraham Park, and ask if there is a motion.

Commissioner Cabrera: Can we do this – would you consider deferring it to the January meeting? Would you be OK with that?

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: That's good.

Mayor Slesnick: I'm OK with that, it wasn't my item.

Commissioner Cabrera: Would you consider deferring it till January?

City Manager Brown: one-eight.

Commissioner Cabrera: Sir?

City Manager Brown: one-eight.

Commissioner Cabrera: No, H-7

City Manager Brown: Till January 8th.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: That's fine.

Commissioner Cabrera: Can we do that?

Mayor Slesnick: That's fine.

Commissioner Cabrera: If you are going to take it on, we are going to spend a good twenty minutes on it.

Mayor Slesnick: Not really.

Commissioner Cabrera: OK, let's go.

Mayor Slesnick: But that's OK, I'm not opposing the move to defer it.

Commissioner Cabrera: I wanted you all to consider....

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: I'll second it.

Mayor Slesnick: And he seconds it, moved to defer.

Commissioner Cabrera: But I want us all to agree on this one; if you don't want to agree on it then I'm willing to say

Mayor Slesnick: I'm fine with it.

Commissioner Withers: I was just curious of one of the sculptures on the trolley.

Mayor Slesnick: I was just as curious as to...

Commissioner Anderson: And we can put a cell tower thing on top of the trolley too.

Mayor Slesnick: OK, Mr. Clerk, motion to defer H-7 which has been moved by Mr. Cabrera, second by Mr. Kerdyk to January 8th.

Commissioner Withers: Yes

Commissioner Anderson: Yes

Commissioner Cabrera: Yes

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: Yes

Mayor Slesnick: Yes

(Vote: 5-0)

Commissioner Cabrera: Thank you.

[End: 1:10p.m.]